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A Conceptual and Analytical Framework for Interpreting the Spatiality of Social Life

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Abstract This paper provides a framework for understanding the phenomenon of the discursive-material production of space, and also, for considering how unknowns may be organised. Language is instrumental to the production of place but has been overshadowed by investigations of material transformations. This is partly being redressed by the 'linguistic turn' in urban policy analysis over recent decades which recognise the performative aspects of language. However, the methodological 'gap' between discursivities and materialities remains as too often analysis of urban policy discourse has taken an aspatial analytic approach. Representations of space cannot be divorced from spatial practices and vice versa. Based on my premise that many visions, plans and strategies never materialise, and even some that do materialise have little bearing on what is produced, a mixed-method approach is required that considers the recursive interactions between spatial practices and representations of space.

Grounded in the theories of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault, which conceptualis space as a social process and broaden discourse to embrace spatial practice respectively, I devise a conceptual and operational analytics which I refer to as interpretive-spatial analysis with the goal of helping to bridge the problematic ontological, epistemological and methodological divide between discursivities and materialities.

Keywords spatial practices, social production of space, Lefebvre, Foucault, discourse theory

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Introduction

Models provide an overall framework for knowing reality; how we perceive and construct reality. Any analysis of shifting spatial practices or the spatiality of social life more generally is based on premises about the world (ontology) as well as assumptions about knowledge of this world (epistemology). I wish to challenge the accepted wisdom (spatial logic) underpinning analysis of the production of space. With this in mind, this paper provides a conceptual framework for understanding the phenomenon of the discursive-material production of space, and also, for considering how unknowns may be analytically organised and interpreted.

Language is instrumental to the production of place but has been overshadowed by investigations of material transformations (Tuan, 1991; Valentine et al., 2008). This is partly being redressed by the 'linguistic turn' in urban policy analysis over recent decades (see for example Portugali & Alfasi, 2008) which recognise the performative aspects of language (see for example Wittgenstein, 2001 [1953]). However, the gap between discursivities and materialities remains as too often analysis of spatial policy discourse has taken an aspatial analytic approach (Richardson & Jensen, 2003). It is in light of this that the conceptual and analytical framework put forward in this paper is intended to bridge this methodological 'gap'. In the words of Richardson & Jensen, '[t]he particular challenge is to establish a framework which operationalises an analysis of both the cultural and material dimensions of a cultural sociology of space' (Richardson & Jensen, 2003: 15-16). I take up this challenge by devising a conceptual and implementational analytics – influenced by the works of the theories of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault – that bridge the problematic ontological divide between discursivities and materialities.

Edward Soja calls for 'a critical re-reading of the presuppositional work on space, knowledge and power by Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault' (Soja, 1997: 246), which I perform and is reflected in this article. But I do so with eyes open to their distinct worldviews and epistemic frames, that entails a problematic relationship to which Soja has not always appreciated[1]. Dipping into the works of Foucault and using his theories as a 'tool-box' to be reworked, as he urged his readers to do (Foucault, 1974), helps bring closer some of his notions regarding the institutional embeddedness of power/knowledge with Lefebvre's appreciation of the spatial embeddedness of power and knowledge, most apparent in his theory of the social production of space. By recognising their theoretical overlaps (e.g. Lefebvre

and Foucault are both inspired by Nietzsche) and appreciating their conceptual divergences (e.g. politics), through a creative reappropriation of elements of their extensive corpus of work I seek to use Foucault's writings on discourse theory and Lefebvre's theory of the production of space and the material embeddedness of everyday social space (Hakli, 1998).

Echoing the words of Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) and Foucault (1972), Christopher Mele contends that 'consideration of the significance of urban discourses about the city does not require an abandonment of the analytical focus on urban form and spatial practices' (Mele, 2000: 629-630). Representations of space cannot be divorced from spatial practices and vice versa. Based on my premise that many visions, plans and strategies never materialise, and even some that do materialise have little bearing on what is produced, a multidimensional analytics is required with 'a shift of focus away from the text alone [in the narrow sense] to embrace the events and arenas where struggles over the nature of policy and implementation are played out' (Richardson, 2002: 355), to which I term interpretive-spatial analysis.

The social production of space

Henri Lefebvre set out to expose a unified theory of 'the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory' (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]: 410-411, emphasis added). His ruminations on the analytic notion of the social production of space remain vague, but perhaps because of this it presents stimulating possibilities for interpretive-spatial analyses. The production of space is a continuous process of social development of the dialectical relations of material engagement, scientific conception and cultural expression. A Lefebvrian tripartite view of space exposes the traditional dualism of material space versus mental space for its profound neglect of the third pillar of the triad: social space. Each triadic element is present in the everyday flow of life; in action, thought and interaction; in continual dialogue and interaction with one another.

The 'spatialised trialectic' is to be understood not as three compartmentalised spaces – it cannot be deconstructed and then quantified into three polemics. Lefebvre is interested in the complex interactions between each of his three expressions of space. Each of these expressions is a synarticle of the simultaneous dimensions of space; each space

incorporates the others providing a unionised theoretical structure. Whilst distinguishable, each expression is inseparable though the relations between the three are never stable. Taking that which is perceived as the real material space of geographic locality, that which is conceived as imagined space of representations and the lived space that which stems from social interaction, Figure 1 seeks to illuminate the core aspects of each of the three expressions of space, helping to demonstrate the trialectical interrelations and overlaps. Whereas some have represented Lefebvre's spatial schemata in a triadic arrangement of three points (e.g. Gatrell & Worsham, 2002), I prefer to stress its fluidity, openness and relationality. For Lefebvre, spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces stand in direct relation to the dialectical triad: the perceived, the conceived, and the lived.
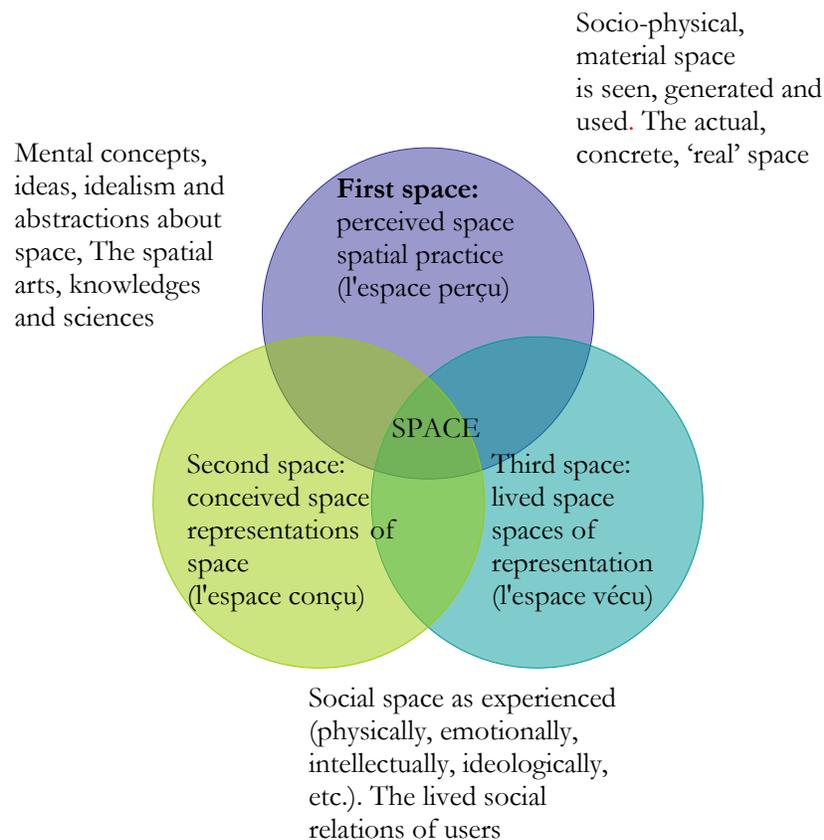

Figure 1: Spatialised trialectic

Following Lefebvre's (1991 [1974]) trialectic understanding of the social production of space, interpretive-spatial analysis has a triple focus on the discursivities, materialities and socialities of the spatiality of social life. 'Social spatialisation' is conceptualised as the social construction of the spatial; the processual practice (i.e. perceived, conceived and lived) by which social agents appropriate and give meaning to spaces (Shields, 1991). This suggests that space is both a field of action and a basis for action. Such an ontological view of the social production of space, open to the notion of multiple foldings of space coexisting within the same material space, is important for it brings to the fore the role of representations; '[w]e must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher. … [T]here is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour' (Foucault, 1981: 67). This is not a rejection of the materiality of events but a recognition that knowledge (and therefore power) is made comprehensible through discourse. Indeed, a Foucauldian influenced interpretive-spatial analysis examines how particular representations of space provoke how people perceive, think and act, and produce socio-material transformations.

In line with postmodern spatial theory and other modes of thought such as neo-Marxism and humanism, I work on the premise that space is socialised partly through discourse: 'nothing has any meaning outside discourse' (Foucault, 1972: 32) (i.e. it is through discourse that socio-spatial practices are knowable). This 'way of thinking space' views urban space, and consequently its production, as simultaneously 'real' and 'imagined': a material reality and a symbolic sphere of cultural meanings. As Zukin and colleagues put it, '[w]hile sets of meanings of the social imaginary are conceptualized in symbolic languages, these meanings are materialized and become real in all sorts of spatial and social practices, from urban design to housing policy' (Zukin et al., 1998: 629). Developing this argument further, representations of space not only arise from social experiences and imaginations (spatial practices and representational space)[2], but they also perform back on those forms of practice prescribing a domain of 'meaningful' actions, thus creating a complex dialectics. Hence, the social world is linguistically constructed, but nevertheless remains spatially constituted. In an often cited passage from The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx wrote,

> *"Men [sic] make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please;*
> *they do not make it under the circumstances chosen by themselves, but under*

circumstances [including discourses] directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language" (Marx, 2008 [1852]).

This reading suggests that materialities and discursivities operate dialectically. Discourses are constitutive of reality operating as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972: 49; , 1980). Different agents produce and consume representations, creating discourses and enabling the reproduction of particular spatial formations (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]; Thrift, 1996). In the urban sphere, discourse shapes and is shaped by urban reality: *the materialisation of discourse* and *discourse materialised.* The materialisation of discourse demonstrates the power to transmit idealised spatial imaginaries of present and future needs and desires, whereas discourse materialised demonstrates the power of urban reality to shape future needs and desires as reflected in discourse. In this way, insights into social structures of the material world are mediated through discourse. Flowing from this understanding, Harvey argues that discursive struggles over representations of space are 'as fiercely fought and just as fundamental to the activities of place construction as bricks and mortar' (Harvey, 1996: 322). Underpinning visible changes such as the creation of a regeneration partnership or construction of an edifice, 'there is the creation, thickening or discarding of meanings … arguments might seem factual and scientific, but they are also meaningful, suggestive and atmospheric … Language has the capacity to make politics, to create signs and symbols that shift power balances, to render events harmless or, on the contrary, to create political conflict. The analysis of structures in 'texts' (in the broadest sense) can help to bring this out and thus demystify [policyspeak and policy action/inaction]' (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005: 176 & 179). In other words, 'reality' is always mediated by our representations. However, I would like to stress that the discursive-material articulation of the social production of space does not imply

"that words build houses or discourses drop bombs. Using the language of discursive-material formations does not imply that discourses telekinetically transform reality or that the landscape does not exist prior to our views of it. What it does demonstrate is that the concepts enabling and legitimizing the material reproduction of place originate not from a perception (denotation) of a

material landscape, but from the various conceptualizations (connotations) of that landscape, mediated by discourses that are often quite independent from the materiality of that place" (Davis, 2005: 611).

Following a similar line of reasoning to other commentators such as, Laclau & Mouffe (1985) and Christopher Mele (2000), I uphold that the discursive assemblage of ideas, concepts, and categorisations do not necessarily produce socio-material outcomes in a deterministic fashion, but they do however provide epistemic frames that guide and influence spatial practices. In Foucauldian terms, discourse is productive; it governs what is knowable and in turn it controls – but not without contestation – the production of ideas, concepts and meanings into practice by way of how people act and respond to particular ways of knowing (Foucault, 1972). I would like to sound a note of caution here that Foucauldian discourse theory can give an impression that it leans towards a view of people being subjectified, which has prompted some discourse analysts to use the concept of 'interpretative repertoires' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) in order to place more emphasis on human agency. However, I stress that discourse circulates in a continuous process of contestation by drawing on the Foucauldian notion of subjectivation which refers to a person being at once rendered a subject (through practices of the self) and subjected to relations of power through discourse (constituted through the technologies of disciplinary power):

"This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him [sic] by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscious self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (Foucault, 1982: 212).

Therefore, power constitutes and constrains but does not entirely determine the subjects with whom it is concerned. To rephrase Foucault, if subjects tell the 'truth' about themselves, they are in part constituted as subjects across a number of power relations which are exerted over them, which they exert over themselves and which they exert over others (Foucault, 1988: 39).

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Spatial policy-making: a discursive event

The complex policy fields of 'doctors of space' (to borrow Lefebvre's terminology), including architects, regeneration practitioners and planners, is a messy entanglement of formal and informal pathways of collaboration, interactions and contests over claims to *privileged knowledge*. Spatial policy-making (including implementation) is a process whereby the different interests of actors and actants struggle for control over meaning. Competing discourses seek to frame policy issues by means of language use and forms of practice, which themselves express cultural stories, institutional objectives and political ideologies (i.e. forms of power/knowledge). The dialectical relations between socio-spatial practices and symbolic-cultural representations 'suggests the importance of close attention to the fine grain of the [spatial] policy process' (Richardson & Jensen, 2003: 12).

I approach discourse theory as a way of engaging with the empirical world in its entirety. Discourse is the focus of an eclectic body of theory and what constitutes a discourse is not always obvious. In accordance with poststructuralist thought where meaning remains fluctuating in relation to other statements, Foucault does not provide one authoritative definition of discourse preferring to retain its multiplicity, fluidity and interchangeability. Indeed, even if a conclusive definition existed it would be read, interpreted and reproduced in many different ways. Nevertheless, to prevent from falling into the trap of applying discourse theory without elucidating on interpretations (see Lees, 2004), this section cogently explains what I mean by 'discourse' and how I interpret the term and theoretical outlook.

Van Dijk understands 'discourse' as 'language use' (Van Dijk, 1997: 3). Zukin and colleagues refer to it as the sets of meanings of the social imaginary conceptualised in symbolic languages (Zukin et al., 1998: 629). However, I do not consider discourses as mere linguistic expressions, but also understand them to be produced and reproduced in an identifiable set of practices (Hajer, 1993, 1995; Jensen, 1997; Jensen & Richardson, 2004; Hajer, 2005). Discourses are ways of knowing, acting, organising and representing things in particular ways. They are repeatable systems of communication, devices of understanding and instruments of power: linguistic articulations, socio-spatial material practices and power-rationality configurations (Jensen & Richardson, 2004: 56). Multiple discourses exist in the same space, whereby each presents different perspectives on the same policy issue. It is through the realm of discourse that people make sense of the world: understanding realit(ies) in particular ways.

Discourse understood as communicative action '*is here defined as a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities*' (Hajer, 1995: 44). Hajer has since elaborated on this definition, asserting *that '[t]he 'discussion', in other words, is the object of analysis; discourse analysis sets out to trace a particular linguistic regularity that can be found in discussions or debates*' (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005: 175). However, I find this additional component to his definition restrictive. All practice – be it mental, material or social – are discursive in so much that they possess meanings, therefore all practice is discursive in a very broad sense (which is a departure from Foucauldian discourse theory). Discourse enters all realms of social life: materialities and discursivities represent each side of the same coin[3]. Indeed, Hajer's treatment of 'linguistic regularity' would render his work on the dramaturgical aspects of policy-making inconsequential, which views discourse as a set of *acts* not merely a matter of talk that forms a discussion (Hajer, 2005).

I view discourses as being productive (i.e. they have power outcomes or effects). For Foucault, discourses are systems of knowledge such as economics or medicine and also ways of producing space such as prisons or schools. It is this latter form or 'effect' of discourse that I am most concerned with. Discourse is immersed and constitutive of complex social events: historically and spatially contingent, whereby cultural meanings are conditional to change. Discourses are therefore conceived as having material properties (McKenna, 2004; Jacobs, 2006). To reiterate the point made earlier, discourses are expressed through cultural texts such as written content, utterances, practices and artefacts like built space. This implies that discourse theory is not a case of analysing language-use only, but should also consider practice as each aspect is complementary and reinforcing (Sayer, 2000; Richardson, 2002; Richardson & Jensen, 2003; Tait & Jensen, 2007).

Foucauldian inspired discourse theory

There is no step-by-step procedure for applying Foucauldian analysis. Foucault's complexly mutable focus on discourse theory tends to be at abstract levels and a prescriptive Foucauldian 'method' does not exist. Rather, his theories provide an apparatus for thought and action. They enable new perspectives to be cast on what are accepted as 'truths': alternative ways of (un)knowing regimes of truth. It is therefore necessary to

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set out with a little more clarity how a Foucauldian flavour of discourse theory informs an *interpretive-spatial analytics*.

Following Foucault, it is the effectiveness of sustaining knowledge (truth effects) that is of utmost interest. How truth effects are created and sustained in discourse and which discourses come to be accepted as normal, providing the impression that they represent the truth (regimes of truth) are important aspects of analysis. The notion of 'power/knowledge' was coined to analyse these questions, where it is argued that it is from the practices of power that knowledge is formed: 'there is no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations' (Foucault, 1977: 27). This triadic arrangement of power / knowledge / discourse is used to investigate the rules about the production of knowledge through communicative meanings and how this influences practice.

Discourses help establish norms by conveying messages pertaining to what such norms should consist of. Normalisation is one apparatus of knowledge through which power is deployed (Foucault, 1977, 1990), by establishing the measure of judgement instituting conformity. As well as working in a binary manner between conformity and nonconformity (good or bad), normalisation also functions as a measure to which all should aim (i.e. establishing the norm). Specific to the field of spatial policy, normalisation works to constitute what measures and responses are appropriate and acceptable. In a regulatory capacity (e.g. the planning system) normalisation operates through legislation and legal frameworks and implicitly through normative assumptions that underpin and inform policy and eligibility criteria, with differentiating social effects and fragmentary spatial impacts, penalising some people and places whilst favouring other locales and actors.

Discourses represent the institutionalisation of knowledge, they are never neutral vehicles of ways of knowing but are embedded with cultural, ideological and political objectives (Beauregard, 2003; Oakley, 2007). A powerful aspect of discourse is its capacity to 'naturalise' meaning. By expressing particular ways of knowing, discourses vie for hegemonic knowledge control by embedding, rationalising and normalising certain values to the point where they are accepted as conventional knowledge systems or 'regime of truth' by which the society lives (Foucault, 1972, 1994 [1966]) and may consequently slip from critical attention. In concordance with the view advanced by Foucault, when power operates so as to

normalise knowledge of any set of statements as the 'truth', then such a discursive formation produces a regime of truth.

Discourse produces specific power/knowledge configurations: constructing a regulatory framework and thereby limiting and framing how we think about things. It opens space for knowing, but at the same time sets the boundaries of what is knowable. Discourse is a frame of reference for positioning competing interests and giving meaning to sets of concepts, ideas and categories. Problems are perceived, constructed and understood through discourse, presenting some aspects at the absence of others, which in turn, frames the solution by legitimising and de-legitimising certain socio-spatial practices and actions. This performative role of discourse is crucial as it steers proceedings (mental, linguistic and material) in a way that is congruent with its regime of truth.

Particular ways of knowing space are aided by *tools of representation* such as masterplans and diagrams, together with *practices of representation* such as direct communication in the form of speech and spatial practices. How realit(ies) are perceived, interpreted and conceived as a regime of truth are formed through practices of representation and often institutionalised through tools of representation. Applying this to the field of spatial policy, the communication of discourses – involving the framing and performance of policy issues – inscribes hegemonic conceptions of culture, society, politics and economics in and on space to construct space.

I read discourses are porous but temporarily stable and more or less coherent bundles of exchanges or repeatable discursive-material practices between contentious ways of knowing (Beauregard, 2003). A discourse is understood as being composed of a (limited) set of statements, working together in a system of dispersion to produce what Foucault calls a discursive formation. Statements are not limited to speech acts such as utterances but include all équipements such as: written texts e.g. book, report; visual representations - e.g. photography, cartoon; material representations - e.g. the arrangement of things; urban form, practices – e.g. speech, choices made, dress.

Combined, these cultural texts draw attention to the all-enveloping nature of discourse as a fluid, shifting medium. Statements 'are elements of knowledge which, while deriving much of their intelligibility from the broader

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discursive flows in which they are embedded, rise above the flux of everyday … discourse. They can acquire a broad historical significance and are systematically related to each other … [and] can perform a range of complex functions … [such as] the articulation or synarticle of heterogeneous discursive themes' (Stenson & Watt, 1999: 192). Statements are not fixed or static but exist in systems of dispersion, in their relation to other statements. As statements are repeated they stabilise which is the key means by which a statement is recognisable.

According to Foucault (1972) the production, organisation, ascendancy and control of discourse/statements is regulated by three reinforcing rules of practice. Firstly, the conditional source or internal delimitation refers to a statements materiality: where it was produced, when and from what position. Secondly, the external rules of exclusion dichotomising between what is true and false, what constitutes accepted knowledge. External limits are those imposed by surrounding statements (neighbouring concepts). And thirdly, the conditions which determine how discourse can be deployed: who can utter truth, in which manner, under which conditions, in which capacity, and from which position. Separately and combined, these characteristics are a means by which statements can be identified. It is the relation between statements and discourse that sustain the potency of a discursive formation: each is constitutive of the other.

I understand *discursive procedures* as the manner in which a statement is temporarily 'stabilised' as it becomes inscribed in a discursive formation through an iterative process of usage (practice) and connections with other statements. Discursive procedures refer to the manner that a discourse is deployed: how meanings are mobilised, the force that it holds, and through which its 'object' is developed and 'subjects' are composed (Carabine, 2003). Discourses can develop opportunistically by drawing on other discourses and interacting with them to 'hook' into normative ideals and sometimes contradictory or different ways of knowing 'cohere' to produce a *stable* representation of a topic (Carabine, 2003). Often a variety of discourses are called upon to produce a new discourse. For example, discourses of urban regeneration utilise, interact and intercede with discourses about the economy, the environment, social inclusion and so on. The procedures that result in discursive formations tend to take two paths: i) they may occur between two or more discourses as they traverse to form a new discourse, or ii) they may be the product of recurring connections and alliances between a relatively coherent pattern of statements. This infers that the range of cultural texts analysed should span the breath of apparatuses of knowledge

including both tools and practices of representation. An intertextual approach will also support the identification and deciphering of statements.

Discourse is not necessarily omnipresent or some unstoppable and uncontestable power 'from above' that controls every thought, perception and action whereby human 'subjects' are brought under control. Rather, discourse is open to challenge and adaptation by human actors, which explains why discursive formations are socially, spatially and historically variable. Discourse applied here, therefore, is conceptualised as operating in a state of constant reconstitution. Discourse can be understood as both space forming and space constitutive, as infused with power/knowledge and also as playing a role in producing power/knowledge networks. In this context it acts recursively with original frames of reference and transforms them. Discourse theory is therefore significant to understanding the processes of spatial restructuring, and thus relevant to the fields of planning, design and regeneration.

In summary, I view discourses in a characteristic fashion as social constructions, but also perceive them to be spatial constructions which is less characteristic. This ontological outlook calls for an analytic framework that accounts for the discursive-material dialectic. A frame of analysis where 'how' something is constituted, 'what' is created and also the spatial 'object' (Richardson & Jensen, 2003) informing and informed by the first two fields are considered in relation to each other. Having set out the ontological spatial framework guiding this study and how I understand discourse as the sum of communicative socio-spatial action, I now move on to discuss how my interpretation of Lefebvre's notion of the social production of space and Foucauldian discourse theory informs my interpretive-spatial analytic approach. My proposition is that the role of discourse needs to be properly integrated into a new methodology for understanding the production of space, which might be termed as *interpretive-spatial analysis.*

In contrast to more orthodox policy analysis working within a positivist framework where the task is to examine empirical material as factual (i.e. a mirror of reality), *interpretive-spatial analysis* looks to the effects of a particular cultural text or bundle of texts. *Interpretive-spatial analysis* examines the production, circulation and dissemination of statements, as 'a series of discontinuous segments' (Foucault, 1998 [1976]: 100), which relate to each other in shifting yet clearly regulated ways. As meanings coalesce discursive formations[4] are produced, constructing a particular way of knowing that is

normalised and accepted as 'truth' (Foucault, 1980).The objective is to analyse rationalities: the rationalisation through discourse of relations of power. To this end, *interpretive-spatial analysis* unravels the; i) production; ii) social context; iii) and intended audience of cultural text to examine the effects on ways of knowing and acting. The methodological strength of this approach is its ability to unpack the power relations that inform particular ways of knowing and acting.

The three building blocks of an interpretive-spatial analytics

Foucault's genealogy offers a lens to undertake spatial policy analysis and with which discourses can be *read*. The 'tracing' of discourse(s) over time to discover how power/knowledge circulates is central to this method of analysis. Genealogy is a methodology for analysing history but not in the traditional sense of historical analyses: it is a way of reading history through discourse. Genealogy frustrates the 'superhistories' of approaches such as Marxism, disrupting totalising effects of one progressive plan. It is focussed on describing the institutions and apparatuses implicated in the production, circulation and reproduction of discourse; the power/knowledge networks underpinning discourse; and their power effects. Foucault demonstrates the radical shifts in discourse over time, from period to period (e.g. Foucault, 1990). Detecting and analysing the nature of a particular discourse is only a means to an end, I consider the major strength of this analytic approach in its application to establish how discourse is practiced. By this, I mean how discourse is both supportive and supported by institutional, political, professional, economic and social interests. The role and concern of genealogy, is therefore, 'to map those strategies, relations and practices of power in which knowledges are embedded and connected' (Carabine, 2003: 276).

When the objective is to investigate the material as well as discursive effects of regimes of truth, it is de rigueur to move beyond the study of language (e.g. utterances and written text) to also analyse 'the social context and social relations within which power and knowledge occur and are distributed' (Carabine, 2003: 275). Recognition of the limitations posed by a purely text oriented approach, calls for an analytic frame that also comprehends spatial practices; a framework that can grasp the social production of space discussed earlier. By following a discursive-material 'micro-political' analysis as advocated by Tim Richardson (2002) among others, an interpretive-

spatial analytics takes one on a transgressive journey through policy spaces, decision making arenas and social events where representational struggles are played-out. This opens space for the analyst to capture why some discourses fail to materialise during the implementation of projects and why some materialised discourses are absent from policy discourses (representations of space).

I take inspiration from Richardson & Jensen's (2003: 16) proposition that a mode of analysis focussing on the spatial policy-making process can be applied 'to study 'how' something is constituted as an object of knowledge formation', material analysis can be 'used to study 'what' is created' and socio-historical analysis can be harnessed to decipher 'under 'which' material and societal conditions' spatial transformations occur. Therefore, 'to address the 'object' in question' implies that the dialectical relations between discursivities and materiality should be analysed.

Mirroring the theoretical framework of the social production of space which provides the ontological scaffolding for this paper, an interpretive-spatial analytics attempts to bridge the gap between spatial policy discourses (conceived space), spatial practices (perceived space) and spaces of representation (lived space). Socio-spatial practices and symbolic-cultural representations are separated for analytical purposes only (i.e. in ontological terms they are perceived to be co-productive): '[t]hat is to say, we need to conceptualise socio-spatial relations in terms of their practical 'workings' and their symbolic 'meaning'' (Richardson & Jensen, 2003: 10).

Drawing on the works of Foucault, as well as other researchers who embrace the spatial practices of discourse such as Richardson and Jensen, I approach discourse as an actant in the social production of space. Accordingly, three analytic fields constitute this operational framework:

   i.   Language

   ii.   Practice

   iii. Power/knowledge

(Jensen, 1997; Richardson & Jensen, 2003).

Such an approach probes the different ways of framing space (how spatial imaginaries are represented in policy), and how policy discourses manifest and are reproduced in policy debate (through language use and practices). By

doing so, one is able to unravel the power/knowledge knot, whereby conflicting discourses compete for hegemonic status (associated with claims of rationality) in contested policy spaces in order to bring about certain changes in (socio-spatial) relations and prevent others (presence and absence). By examining the reproduction of spatial policy discourses through an interpretive-spatial analytics, opens space for underlying ideologies and rationalities to be revealed, material effects to be probed and rights to the city to be explored.

Having discussed what interpretive-spatial analysis means in practice, I now elucidate the analytic building blocks of this framework. The first building block is to open up the framing of policy issues. By viewing published (as well as unpublished) policy documents as knowledge framing devices and processes, the analyst is able to investigate how particular debates – including institutions, material process and objects, actions and relations – are framed 'in the language of policy documents' (Richardson & Jensen, 2003: 17). This process, scrutinising *tools of representation,* helps to build up a corpus of information about the framing process and can help reveal some of the power struggles and relations that contest the spatial knowledge expressed in the language of policy documents. It 'is important, not least, because organisations and policy decisions are dependent on 'writing' in order to regulate and legitimise their functions' (Jacobs, 1999: 204). However, this text oriented analysis on its own is inadequate for reasons already alluded to.

In light of recognition that discourse is embedded within a social field of actors, institutions and power/knowledge, the second building block analyses the live policy debate: where struggles are being fought out in so far as different interests seek to impose their way of knowing (representations of space). By building on the textual analysis of the language of policy documents and other tools of representation, a detailed analysis of institutional practices (practices of representation) focussing on performances, actions and social practices opens up the investigative process to consider the policy debate in a more holistic manner. Constituting what Healey (1995: 272) describes as an 'ethnography of institutional practices', this building block looks to expose the messy world of policy-making that tends to be ironed out in some tools of representation such as published masterplans or vision statements. Conducting spatial policy research in place can therefore be used to uncover the performative qualities of actors and the power plays that pervade the process.

The third building block looks to connect the discursive-material realities of the policy-making process with the discursive-material realities of urban/social space. An analysis of *everyday practices* (practices of representation) looks to examine policy-making from an implementation aspect to reveal the presence and absence of different citizen's rights to the city (see Lefebvre, 1996). This building block helps the analyst identify the changing urban sphere and shifting social dynamics that *perform back* to inform institutional practices and tools of representation. It is a bridging mechanism that helps close the gaps between discursivities and materialities with the aim to 'expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory' (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]: 410-411).

Parallels can perhaps be drawn with interpretive-spatial analytics and Fairclough's (1989; 1995) three-dimensional framework that looks remarkably similar on the surface for it analyses the relations of texts, discursive practices and social practices. However, a closer inspection reveals a purely text oriented analysis that seeks to relate to the contexts and wider social structures in which texts are framed (i.e. through an intertextual reading). Where an interpretive-spatial analytics differs is that, as well as being multidimensional and sensitive to historical, political and contextual relations, it is also dynamic; tackling representations of space, spatial practices and spaces of representation in situ as the live policy debate is produced and reproduced in tools of representation, institutional practices and everyday practices. This is in line with Lefebvre's spatiality; his triadic composition of space is inherently 'turbulent' (Gregory, 1994); actively produced which is expressed for example in his history of space and also at the level of the everyday (Lefebvre, 1991 [1958], , 1991 [1974], , 2004).

Concluding Remarks

The outlined reading of discourse – as a productive, socially constructed regime of knowledge and truth, that forms the social reality about which it speaks – provides the backdrop and intellectual scaffolding for the blend of interpretive-spatial analytics sketched-out in this paper. Adding a new layer of social critique to the (re)production of urban space (Zukin *et al.*, 1998), I employ a spatial policy analysis of cultural images, social practices and urban space (the conceived, perceived and lived) to unpack how representations of

space, spatial practices and representational spaces recursively interact to effect the production of space.

Adopting a multidimensional analytics goes some way to help dispels criticisms that research drawing on discourse theory can over-emphasise the role of language through a myopic focus on written texts and spoken utterances (Jacobs, 1999; Lees, 2004). I maintain that this analytic technique is well equipped to deal with spatiality as it embraces the three moments of space: perceived, conceived and lived. By linking discourse and space, this conceptual and analytic framework demonstrates how spatial thinking can benefit analysis of urban policy discourse (Richardson & Jensen, 2003). Whilst I have endeavoured to illuminate the practicalities and specifics of interpretive-spatial analytics, the actualities of this approach can never be made fully transparent as it is highly dynamic and multidimensional. Empirical studies are required so that this conceptual and analytical framework for interpreting the spatiality of social life can be *practised* and refined.

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[1] For a critique of the Anglo-American engagement with Lefebvre see (Elden, 2001).

[2] Marx, for example, famously stated that 'we erect our structure in imagination before we erect it in reality' (Marx, 1967 [1867-1886]: 178).

[3] An ontological division of space into either material or discursive is problematic. Spatial formations are a mesh of natural and social processes (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]; Latour, 1993; Haraway, 1997).

[4] Discursive formation is often used synonymously by Foucault to describe discourse. I refer to discursive formations as repositories of meaning and shared ways of knowing.

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