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Fraya Frehse

## On the Temporalities and Spatialities of the Production of Space

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**Author of this Issue:** Fraya Frehse

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E-Mail: [info@sfb1265.tu-berlin.de](mailto:info@sfb1265.tu-berlin.de)

Sonderforschungsbereich 1265 / "Re-Figuration von Räumen"  
Technische Universität Berlin - Sekretariat BH 5-1  
Ernst-Reuter-Platz 1 - 10587 Berlin

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No. 4



Fraya Frehse

# On the Temporalities and Spatialities of the Production of Space\*

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Fraya Frehse is Professor of Sociology at the University of São Paulo, alumna of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and Productivity Research fellow of the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). At the University of São Paulo she coordinates the Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Sociologia do Espaço e do Tempo (Centre for Sociological Studies and Research on Space and Time).

## Abstract

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Since the 1950s, sociology has embraced various theoretical frameworks for coping with the spatialization of social phenomena, which from the 1970s has often been named “the production of space”. The present paper uses these approaches as an opportunity to examine which conceptual insights into the process at hand can be gained by addressing in four analytical steps what time, particularly, discloses in conceptual terms about the sociospatial process at stake. Based on the ascertainment that (section 1) these approaches address the temporalities of their respective research objects by means of definite spatialities, one peculiar history of sociology comes to the forefront. This history comprises (section 2) four original ways of addressing the spatialization of social phenomena methodologically, which are authored by Erving Goffman, Henri Lefebvre, Pierre Bourdieu and Martina Löw. The seven *temporal-spatial scales* implicit in these accounts suggest (section 3) that the production of space is a simultaneously poly-temporal and poly-spatial social phenomenon. Its temporalities and spatialities involve (section 4) two methodological contributions to the recent sociological debate on the production of space.

Keywords: *time; space (production of); spatialization; sociology (of space); relational space; temporality; spatiality; temporal-spatial scale.*

## Introduction

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Fifty-six years ago, Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 2000) became a forerunner for drawing sociologists’ attention to a simultaneous inquiry of the macro- and micro-social processes involved in (re-)generating space, which he defined as a “set of relations” between “things (objects and products)” (ibid.: xx) inseparable from social practice – i.e. the activity, the use, the necessity, the “social being” (ibid.: 100)<sup>1</sup>. Since then, a long-standing theoretical debate on this issue has been underway in sociology. The discussion is mainly concerned with the issue of how to

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<sup>1</sup> All translations from languages other than English are my own.

conceptualize the social elements involved in the social dynamics through which space is brought about.

Authors have, for example, focused on positions in social space (Bourdieu [1991] 2013, [1993] 2003), on the social connections between the production, usage and appropriation of the spatial material “substrate” (Läpple 1991); and more recently on actions (Löw 2001, 2005; Baur 2005; Schuster 2010; Weidenhaus 2015; Steets 2015), especially communicative actions (Christmann 2013, 2015; Knoblauch 2017; Knoblauch/Löw 2017). Other research objects include temporal structures (Rosa 2005), social practices (Reckwitz 2003, 2012), emotions and corporality (Lindón 2009, 2012) as well as historical time (Frehse 2017). From the standpoint of various theoretical frameworks, the production of space has respectively been named the “social construction” of space (Bourdieu [1991] 2013, [1993] 2003; Lindón 2009), its “(self) formation and structuration” (Läpple 1991), or “constitution” (Löw 2001, 2005; Baur 2005; Schuster 2010; Weidenhaus 2015), and “temporal structuration” (Rosa 2005), as well as “communicative (re-)construction” (Christmann 2013, 2015; Knoblauch 2017), “meaningful construction” (Steets 2015), or “re-figuration” (Knoblauch/Löw 2017), not to mention respectively the bonding of space and time in the social world (Reckwitz 2003: 289), the “spatiality” (Lindón 2009, 2012; Reckwitz 2012: 254), the “social spatializing” (Reckwitz 2012: 252), and the “production of space” itself (Frehse 2017).

To put it briefly, the academic debate encompasses diverse theoretical accounts for conceptually coping with the spatialization of peculiar social phenomena. Hereby all of them end up contributing to the theoretical issue of the production of space – a rubric that found a place of its own in sociology even among authors who do not address the phenomenon in Lefebvre’s dialectical terms (see for example Löw 2001, *passim*).

Taking this discussion as a point of departure, this paper addresses a different, so far mostly overlooked dimension of the issue: What is the production of space in *temporal* terms? If one remembers Gottfried W. Leibniz’ ([1715-1716] 1966: 134) influential statement about the difference between time and space – the first follows the logics of succession whereas the latter is an “order” of “the existences together”<sup>2</sup> –, one becomes especially sensitive to the overall presence of the suffix “-tion” in the respective conceptualizations about the production of space.

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<sup>2</sup> For recent analogous predicaments, see Lefebvre ([1974] 2000: 87), and Löw (2001: 27).

From the standpoint of the logics of succession that underpins the definition of time, the suffix signals that we are facing a *process*, which is first and foremost a *temporally* marked social phenomenon, regardless of the relative vagueness that impregnates this term (Schützeichel/Jordan 2015: 2). Hence, it is my intention to answer the question of what time in particular discloses about this sociospatial process.

Considering that since the 2000s the relations between time and space have periodically been conceptual objects of Anglo-American geographical interest (see among others May/Thrift 2001; Crang 2005; Harvey 2006), and that interdisciplinary research initiatives on the issue currently enliven the German-speaking context<sup>3</sup>, my epistemic standpoint is of a sociological nature. In other words, my “point of reference” for describing the social phenomenon at stake is the “tissue of social interactions and relations” (Fernandes 1959: 20-21). Therefore, my focus on time is primarily on the process as such, not so much on the space produced. Secondly, my assessment is that recent sociology only sparsely addresses this issue by means of the theoretically abstract sense of time that is being mobilized in this paper. Indeed, my relative conceptual vagueness regarding time implies the possibility of taking into analytical consideration the various theoretical approaches to time that are made when it comes to conceptualizing the production of space. Differently, the latest sociological debates on the relation between time and the production of space rather examine the role of specific cultural expressions of time (memory, biography and communication) in the sociospatial phenomenon (Christmann 2013, 2015; Knoblauch 2017: 189-215; Weidenhaus 2015), as well as the patterns of temporal change “in” space (Baur 2005), or the impact of temporal structures “on” it (Rosa 2005: 60-62).

In order to provide an empirical demonstration of what an abstract phenomenon such as time may reveal about the no less abstract social phenomenon of space production, this paper’s argumentative structure must follow certain steps. One initial heuristic support explored in the first – brief – section stems from the sociological discovery that social life encompasses *various* socially produced

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<sup>3</sup> Besides the CRC 1265 and the CRC 1199 (see note 1), by August 2019 the German Research Foundation (DFG) was sponsoring the CRC 1015 “Otium. Boundaries, Chronotopes, Practices” at the Universität Freiburg (from 2013), the research programme “Cities and Regions as Open Arenas” at the IRS-Erkner (as of 2019), and both the research training groups “Social Innovation Today” at Technische Universität Berlin (as of 2011), “Critical Infrastructures” at Technische Universität Darmstadt (as of 2016), and “Temporalities of Future in Latin America” at Freie Universität Berlin (as of 2019).

orderings of time. This finding helps to circumscribe a corpus of sociological approaches which are to be analyzed for common patterns in the way they conceptualize the social elements involved in the production of space in temporal terms. As we shall see, they share a single methodology of a conceptual nature when it comes to addressing the temporalities of their respective research objects: they do so by means of definite spatialities<sup>4</sup>. Based on this set of studies, the second – long – section presents a peculiar history of sociology since the 1950s. It comprises a selection of four innovative ways of addressing the spatialization of social phenomena methodologically by means of conceptual combinations of temporalities and spatialities.

In the third section, the seven temporal-spatial articulations that underlie the aforementioned history lead us to this paper's key argument. From the disciplinary standpoint of sociology, they are *temporal-spatial scales* for conceptualizing the production of space. I freely borrow the term from biology for heuristic purposes as it helps me to underline sociology's methodological sensitivity to the fact that the production of space is at least a sevenfold temporal-spatial process. Indeed, this simultaneously poly-temporal and poly-spatial social phenomenon entirely contradicts the temporal linearity suggested by the suffix “-ion” in Western common sense.

Building on this finding, the conclusion briefly addresses two methodological contributions which the temporalities and spatialities of the production of space identified within this paper can add to the recent sociological debate on the issue. First, they suggest that this paper's *temporal-spatial-scales* approach is a methodological tool for evaluating the empirical plausibility of conceptualizations regarding the production of space. Secondly and lastly, they signal by means of precisely the temporal-spatial-scales approach that the poly-temporal-spatial character of the production of space remains a unique challenge for sociology.

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<sup>4</sup> I here recover a rather old, though still helpful methodological distinction regarding sociological research proposed by sociologist Florestan Fernandes (1959: 14): given that the underlying basis of sociological “explanations” is empirical, research in this discipline inevitably counts both on theoretically loaded “methods of interpretation” and on operational “methods of investigation”.



## 1. In search of the role of time in the spatialization of social life

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A first clue stems from the history of sociology: the finding that social life encompasses the coexistence of several “times”, a common sense established in the discipline between the 1930s and 1950s. Indeed, in one way or another this discovery permeates theoretical frameworks as diverse as Alfred Schütz’ pioneering claim ([1932] 2016: 62-70) for the social “construction” of sense by means of various “inner durations”, which he further located within the “temporal structure of the everyday lifeworld” (Schütz [1979] 2003: 81-97); as Robert Merton’s and Piritim Sorokin’s (1937) emphasis on “social time” as a qualitative variable of a social group’s beliefs and customs; as Georges Gurvitch’s ([1957-1958] 1969) focus on socially coexisting “multiple social times”; as Edward E. Evans-Pritchard’s (1940) statement about the co-existence of culturally multiple time concepts and practices; as well as Lefebvre’s approach of 1953 to the “historical dates” of social relations (Lefebvre [1953] 2001; see also Frehse 2014).

This bibliographic array alone shows that sociology has empirically demonstrated that social life is underpinned by various *temporalities*, i.e., by socially produced arrangements of cyclic and linear repetitions that, once measured, make up time (Lefebvre 1992: 17, 99)<sup>5</sup>. Hence, my issue becomes more straightforward: What do the temporalities of social life conceptually reveal about the production of space?

In order to select which social temporalities should be analytically addressed, a second trait of the history of sociology becomes relevant. As of the 1950s a specific range of works expanded the general discussion regarding the role of space in social life (Frehse 2013: 9). These approaches focus on the spatialization of social phenomena and, hence, offer theoretical contributions to space production as a social phenomenon. In fact, these accounts more or less explicitly conceive space in relational terms, i.e., as a product of the relations that human beings nurture with one another and with material/symbolic goods in places through their bodies (Löw 2001).

Based on this criterion, my referential set of accounts here ranges from Lefebvre’s ponderings on everyday life and the production of space ([1946] 1958, [1953] 2001, 1955, 1961, 1965, [1966] 1974, 1968, 1970a, 1970b, [1970] 2001,

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<sup>5</sup> More recently, by using an alternative theoretical framework the sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2005: 27) also argued that cyclic and linear conceptions of time coexist in almost all cultures.

[1973] 2000, [1974] 2000, 1981, 1992) to the aforementioned recent sociological debate on this issue, as well as to Erving Goffman's reflections on social interaction (1959, 1961, 1963, 1967, 1971, 1983a, 1983b). Methodologically speaking, these studies are part of a corpus of sociological documentary material, which I analytically submitted to the so-called record linkage, a primary methodological device for historical research (Winchester [1970] 1973: 40).

Indeed, from this point onwards, I present the results of a documentary research regarding common patterns in how the aforementioned authors have methodologically addressed temporal categories to theorize about the spatialization of their respective research objects.

A first crucial finding within this framework is the insight that the analysed set of studies uses three different kinds of social temporalities in order to conceptualize the spatial dimension of their objects. On the one hand, there is what I term *immediacy*, a condensed term for the "now and then" that underlies the majority of the corpus (Goffman, Lefebvre, Löw, Baur, Rosa, Lindón, Schuster, Reckwitz, Christmann, Weidenhaus, Steets, Knoblauch, Frehse). On the other hand, albeit more sparsely, there is *historicity* in the sense of an entanglement between categories related to the past, present, and future (Lefebvre, Frehse). Finally, some studies explicitly use *history* as a diachronic sequence of social transformations brought about by powerful social forces (Bourdieu, Läßle, Rosa).

By considering these three temporalities, the conceptual challenge put forth by this paper is to find what *they* disclose about the production of space.

The answer lies in combining these temporalities with a second thought-provoking feature of the corpus: space. Regardless of their diverse theoretical frameworks, whether consciously or not, all of the selected authors address the social elements implicit in the production of space by articulating specific temporal categories from the aforementioned threefold set in combination with definite spatialities. These spatial categories can also be ordered into a threefold set, but now it comprises spatial-sociological abstractions. I refer here, respectively, to the so-called *situation* as a term that sums up the spatial boundaries of social interaction (Goffman, Lefebvre, Löw, Rosa, Lindón, Schuster, Reckwitz, Christmann, Weidenhaus, Steets, Knoblauch, Frehse); to *the everyday* as a spatial level of social reality which implies repetitive, socially taken-for-granted uses of cyclic and linear temporal rhythms (Lefebvre, Löw, Baur, Rosa, Lindón, Schuster, Reckwitz, Christmann, Weidenhaus, Steets, Knoblauch, Frehse); and, finally, to the also

diversely defined *social space* (all of the authors), a sociological abstraction that throughout the discipline's history has been associated to that which socially separates and unites individuals in groups (Frehse 2016: 4).

In light of this common methodological denominator, we are not only reminded of the relatively old philosophical statement that time is inseparable from space (Lefebvre [1974] 2000: 204; May/ Thrift 2001; Crang 2005; Weidenhaus 2015). More importantly, we are now able to make concrete progress as to what the sociological temporalities at stake conceptually reveal about the production of space. Therefore, in the next step one has to re-analyse the corpus chronologically in search of accounts that, at the time of their publication, may be considered original as for their methodologies in *how* to combine temporalities and spatialities when it comes to conceptualizing the spatialization of social life.

## **2. A methodological temporal-spatial history in the sociology of relational space**

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Based on this selection criterium, I arrived at four approaches. I refer here, respectively, to Goffman's considerations on the spatial dimension of face-to-face interaction, to Lefebvre's theoretical project on the production of space, to Pierre Bourdieu's focus on the relationship between social and physical space, and to Martina Löw's theory on the constitution of space.

As we shall see below, the differences between these approaches are inseparable from their respective theoretical ambitions. After all, theories "aim" at a coherent and consistent connection of concepts, which result in "a theoretical explanation" (Knoblauch 2017: 10); or, to put it briefly, they exist on behalf of a knowledge that may be generalized (Fernandes 1959: 32). From this epistemic standpoint, Goffman and Lefebvre have two things in common, whereas Bourdieu's and Löw's approaches share one definite aspect. The first two are equally based on a rather unsystematic approach to their respective research issues (see respectively Smith 2006, *passim*; and Frehse 2017: 515); moreover, each one's aim is to develop an empirically grounded conceptualization – rather than a full-fledged theory. However, the two approaches differ in the empirical scope of their conceptualizations: Goffman focused on the comparative examination of different societies while historically addressing his own "Western society", i.e., the "Anglo-American" one (Goffman 1983a: 2; Frehse 2016: 7). Lefebvre, in turn,

concentrated on the historical possibilities of social transformation implicit in post-war “neocapitalism” (Frehse 2017: 515). Hence, they implicitly end up contributing to “theories of society”, which use categories that aim to “determine” empirically given societies (Knoblauch 2017: 16). In comparison, Bourdieu’s and Löw’s works bear explicit intentions to provide “theories” (Bourdieu 1972; Löw 2001). Hence, they constitute peculiar contributions to “social theory”, if one defines it as a set of logically coherent concepts that aim to elucidate social traits of the existence and transformation of human beings on/of the planet (Giddens 1984: xx) by means of basic notions of the social and cultural sciences (Knoblauch 2017: 11), and without a specific concern for empirical plausibility (ibid.: 17).

## **2.1. The immediacy of both the situation and social space**

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By conceiving social interaction as reciprocal influences and hence communicative sequences of behaviour by individuals in physical co-presence (Goffman 1959: 23; 1961: 28; 1963: 8; 1967: 1; 1971: x; 1983a: 2), both “body idiom” (Goffman 1963: 34) and materiality play a crucial role in Goffman’s conceptualization of the socially established and morally loaded symbolic patterns implicit precisely in social interaction. In his early writing, the author assumed the “conventionalized discourse” implicit in human “physical appearance” and “personal acts” (ibid.: 34) to function as a sign that helps to define the spatial environment circumscribed by social interaction. A similar role is addressed to artefacts and objects either employed or involved within the same social interaction (Goffman 1959: 29-31; 1963: 18).

Against this background, my initial interest lies in what Goffman instantaneously delineated as a precise temporal framework for his explanation of social interaction: the now-and-then of “immediacy” (see for example Goffman 1959: 23; 1961: 19; 1963: 8; 1967: 1; 1971: xi; 1983a: 2). Thereby he developed a peculiar approach to a social phenomenon that had already been under scrutiny by his predecessors at the University of Chicago, Charles Cooley and George H. Mead (Goffman 1963: 16), who, in turn, owe plenty to the pragmatist roots of Chicago sociology and (therefore) to its receptivity to phenomenology (Dennis/Philburn/Smith 2013: 8-62).

I thus arrive at my second point of interest: Goffman soon recognized the need for a referential spatial setting in order to gain an analytical comprehension of the social order implicit in the “rules of conduct” which intermediate temporally

instantaneous contacts (Goffman 1967: 48; 1963: 3). Therefore, he uniquely adapted William I. and Dorothy S. Thomas' influential Chicago theorem "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas/Thomas 1928: 521-522). Primarily conceived as the set of information and actions conveyed by the individual to others "when in co-presence" (Goffman 1959: 15), the situation soon became a "projective field" (Goffman 1961: 102) and, two years later, "the full spatial environment anywhere within which an entering member becomes a member of the gathering that is (or does then become present)" (Goffman 1963: 18; 1971: 28; 1983a: 2). The influence of the environmental psychologist Roger Barker and his concept of "behavior setting" is clear (Frehse 2016: 9). This approach renders a spatial quality to the concept of situation, rather than its subjective and temporal dimensions, which are commonly used in phenomenological sociology (Schütz/Luckmann [1979] 2003: 86-87; Knoblauch 2017: 302).

It is important, however, to point out that even though Goffman focused on the immediacy of the situation, he sometimes emphasized that a proper conceptualization of face-to-face interaction would be impossible without addressing the normative order implicit in the "mere-situated aspect of situated activity": i.e., in what happens "*in* situations without being of situations" (Goffman 1963: 22; 1983a: 2). And what would this be? A more precise answer can be found in two posthumous texts, in which the author argues that although he himself personally moved away from this research area in favour of promoting the "acceptance of this face-to-face domain as an analytical viable one" (Goffman 1983a: 4; see also 1983b: 200), the connection between the "occasions" of face-to-face interaction and the "macro-order" concerning "other orders of social, economic, political, etc. life" remains a "problem" (Goffman 1983b: 201-202). These ponderings are a subliminal indication of Goffman's conceptual sensitivity towards the fact that social interaction is also spatially attributable to immediacy. Indeed, in spatial terms this immediacy is tied to what I call social space. For the author, social space is inseparable from interactionally unstable social positions (Frehse 2016: 6).

By simultaneously mobilizing both temporal-spatial pairs, Goffman ultimately develops a peculiar conceptualization of the production of space. He suggests that this process concerns everything that happens among embodied individuals both *here* and *all over the world*, but in temporal terms particularly *now*. To sum it up, space is produced within the temporally and spatially restricted boundaries of social interaction.

## 2.2. The historicity of respectively the situation, the everyday and social space

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Lefebvre, in turn, delivers a comprehensive set of three temporal-spatial combinations for empirically addressing the production of space both in phenomenological and historical terms. This theoretical broadness is not a random by-product. Rather, it is inseparable from this author's decade-long association to the regressive-progressive method (Frehse 2014: 246), which explicitly supports *La production de l'espace* (Lefebvre [1974] 2000: 79). Including both an operational and an interpretative facet, the approach helps to analytically identify and conceptually explain the historical possibilities of social transformation in the phenomenal level of the everyday that is lived in diverse empirically given research locations (for details see Frehse 2014, *passim*).

Indeed, the theoretical framework of this French philosopher and sociologist stems from a critical "return" to Marx's dialectical method, which directly implies a special attention to the historical temporalities "past", "present" and "future", the last of which is conceived by Lefebvre as "the possible" (Lefebvre 1961: 121). His "transductive" way of thinking goes hand in hand with theoretical cum empirical inquiries concerned with society's (and simultaneously humankind's) contradictory, more or less alienated relations between the past, the present and that which is possible (in the future). The historical possibilities of social transformation depend on overcoming social contradictions of a historical nature, whose various temporalities coexist in the present time of reference (Lefebvre [1970] 2001: 101).

This helps us to understand why, long before addressing the production of space, Lefebvre's major research object had already been the contradictory nature of "praxis", or social practice, in everyday life. Indeed, it was part of a life-long project accomplished within the framework of the so-called critique of everyday life and its analytically decisive rhythm analysis (Frehse 2018: 101-102). In this simultaneously most evident and most indiscernible "level of social life" (Lefebvre 1961: 56) every act - i.e., "the dialectical relation between nature and human beings" - bears the possibility of either being repeated, mimetising models, or "inventing" discontinuities within the "global socio-historical process" (Lefebvre [1966] 1974: 41, 47). Therefore, both social practice and everyday life are historical products *en acte*. In other words, the immediacy of each and every situational moment carries in itself the possibility of definite entanglements between the

past, the present and the possible. Or, to put it briefly: *immediacy* and *historicity* both co-exist within social practice (Lefebvre [1974] 2000: 74).

In light of this overarching theoretical framework, Lefebvre's detailed focus on the "problematics of space" during the 1970s is not surprising. It was sparked by the fact that "by involving both the problematics of the urban (the city, its extension) and of the everyday (programmed consumption), the issue of space relocates the problematic of industrialization without abolishing it, given that pre-existing social relations subsist, and the new problem concerns precisely their *reproduction*" (ibid.: 107, original emphasis). At that moment the author had already developed what may be summed up as a "diagnosis of society" (Knoblauch 2017: 17). This diagnosis revolves around the argument that post-war capitalism was strongly mediated by a particular and taken-for-granted "employment of time" within everyday life: the so-called everyday (Lefebvre 1968: 51). It is a peculiar "space-time" (ibid.: 140) that is grounded in the temporally-linear "programming" of the day-to-day by bureaucracy, consumption and the state (ibid.: 125), and simultaneously shaped by the temporal contradictions that help to define the everyday as such: the cyclic rhythms of "the Feast" (ibid.: 73). For Lefebvre, this historically specific product is an important mediation of alienation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (ibid. 51). The temporal paroxysm of the everyday is precisely "the everydayness" (ibid.: 116), and its characteristic spatial expression is the planned, "new city" (ibid.: 115), i.e., a definite (urban) space. It thus comes as no surprise that the city and "the urban" subsequently became Lefebvre's specific research objects (Lefebvre [1968] 2009, 1970a, 1970b: 128-129, [1970] 2001, [1973] 2000), until space itself entered the scene as a socially produced mediation of social practice (Lefebvre [1974] 2000: xx): it implies, contains, and dissimulates social relations (ibid.: 100), which in turn only exist "in and through" space (ibid.: 465).

Based on all this, the temporalities and spatialities of Lefebvre's production of space may at last come to the forefront. The *historicity* of respectively *the situation*, *the everyday* and *social space* become evident in the author's methodological approach to the book's central thesis: "(Social) space is a (social) product" (ibid.: 35).

One methodologically decisive implication of this statement is the fact that social space "contains" social relations of reproduction and production (ibid.: 41) as well as – especially in capitalism – representations of the same relations (ibid.: 42). Therefore, the researcher must empirically focus on relations of reproduction and production as well as representations in order to conceptualize the production of space. But where in spatial terms may they be found empirically? They become

evident in *the everyday*. “Everything (‘the everything’) puts its weight over the inferior level, the ‘micro’, the local and the locatable: on the everyday. Everything (‘the everything’) *rests* on it: the exploration and domination, protection and oppression, inseparably” (ibid.: 422, original emphasis).

What remains an open question is how to analytically tackle the production of space in this spatiality. The answer lies in assuming space as a product of both the spatially mediated social practice (hence, of “spatial practice”, which simultaneously comprises production and reproduction) and representations (in fact, in capitalism the “representations of space” and “spaces of representation” – ibid.: 42-43). This equation makes it possible to recognize that “*the body*” – which the author later equated with “the everyday lived” (Lefebvre 1992: 18) – is the major (methodological) “reference” for “understanding” space in the three (dialectical) moments through which this same space is produced: i.e., in the “perceived – the conceived – the lived” (Lefebvre [1974] 2000: 50, original emphasis). Indeed, the body is simultaneously underpinned by the dialectical links that spatially (re-)produced social practices nurture both with the rational-scientific conceptions of space (by experts, planners, urbanists; by “agencing” and “fragmenting” technocrats, and “some artists close to scientificity”) and with the “images and symbols” of this same space (by the so-called “dwellers” and “users”, but also by “some artists”, writers and philosophers).

Hence, at least in capitalism the production of space has to be methodologically addressed by focusing on the *immediacy* of the everyday. This is expressed simultaneously in and through the space that is bodily perceived and symbolically lived amidst the rationally loaded conceptions that underpin it.

However, this immediacy is not the Goffmanian “now”. Regardless of “always, nowadays, and formerly” being a “present” space, the latter simultaneously bears traces, inscriptions of the past, “the writing of time” (ibid.: 47). Therefore, Lefebvre focuses on two specific spatialities: “[l]ived situations” (ibid.: 42) and the everyday, in which these same situations take place. In light of empirically given and thus immediately perceived and lived situations – and hence of the everyday that comprises them –, the *historicity* of both spatialities seems to matter just as much<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> It should be stressed that Lefebvre’s methodological attention to historicity decreases significantly when he puts into action his “rhythmanalytical project” during the 1980s. Within this framework, his temporal focus almost exclusively lies on the dialectics between cyclic and linear repetitions that underlie the immediacy of the everyday



In light of all this, Lefebvre's conceptualization of the production of space involves the methodological use of a third crucial temporal-spatial combination. I refer here to the *historicity* of what I have thus far been naming *social space*. In the author's approach this term is explicit, and summons up the productive forces and relations of production. The "sensorial-sensual (practical-sensitive) space", i.e., the empirically both perceived and lived space, is only a "layer" of "social space" (ibid.: 243-244).

However, Lefebvre himself uses a different temporality for addressing this implication of the book's main thesis: history. He argues that "[i]f there is a production and a productive process of space, there is *history*", the history of space, of its production as a "reality" (ibid.: 57, added emphasis). And yet, the term refers to a dialectical periodization of the "productive process" of space based on the analytical identification of social contradictions which, being implicit in historically former spaces, intervene in the possibilities of historically transforming spaces generated by subsequent modes of production. Therefore, nature-loaded "absolute space" may make itself dialectically present in communal "historical space", and those two again may be comprised in the functionalistic and quantified "abstract space", which, in turn, although dominant in capitalism, is not without contradictions. However, these contradictions stem both from historically new *and* old conflictual relations of production (contradictions "of" and "in" space - ibid.: 384-385). Due especially to the first set of contradictions, abstract space bears in itself the possibility of "differential space" (ibid.: 407). Indeed, "a differential time-space" is "formed in the [empirical; FF] field" (Lefebvre 1970b: 129). This "new" space "joins the functions, elements and moments of social practice that abstract space disjoins" (ibid.: 64).

Given that this history of space should not be equalled with a causal enchainment of so-called historical (dated) facts (ibid.: 57), as it dialectically combines the past, the present and the possible, I consider it heuristically more precise to propose that we are also facing a methodological use of historicity as a temporality. But now historicity is connected to social space.

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(for an exception, see Lefebvre/Régulier [1985] 1992: 97-109; for rhythmanalysis in Lefebvre's work see Frehse 2018).

### 2.3. The immediacy and the history of social space

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As for other temporal-spatial combinations, one finds them in specific papers by Bourdieu ([1991] 2013, [1993] 2003) as well as the sociologist Dieter Läßle (1991). Therefore, it remains to be initially clarified why a focus on two texts of Bourdieu – a posthumously published manuscript (Bourdieu [1991] 2013) and a chapter containing this manuscript’s modified version (Bourdieu [1993] 2003) – rather than on Läßle’s work (whose paper came into light at the same year as Bourdieu’s original text) is reasonable.

Given the limitations of this paper and, hence, the inevitability of analytical restrictions, the most significant aspect here is that Bourdieu’s praxeological approach implicit in both papers is methodologically more detailed than Läßle’s Neo-Marxist essay. This level of detail is especially important when it comes to the issue of what it is that time discloses about the production of space. Within the framework of Läßle’s rather theoretical approach to “social space”, which is seen as a three-dimensional “matrix” of bodily “micro-”, regional “meso-” and either national or capitalist “macro-levels” (Läßle 1991: 197-198), the “articulation of spatial and temporal development forms of society” remains an essentially methodological requisite for a future “research approach” (ibid.: 200). Conversely, Bourdieu addressed in the same year an issue hitherto a blind spot in his theory of practice (Bourdieu 1972, 1980, 1989): the (material) spatialization of social space.

At this moment, Bourdieu keeps on conceiving social space as “fields”, i.e. a set of symbolically impregnated social relations that ultimately define social positions. They do so by means of the respectively economic, social and cultural capital that the individual “agents”, on the one hand, accumulate in their trajectory throughout social space and, on the other hand, express in their “habitus” – i.e. in the simultaneously structured and structuring dimension of cognition and motivation implicit in practices and representations (Bourdieu [1991] 2013: 133; see also Bourdieu 1972, *passim*; 1989, *passim*; for further details on the concept of habitus, see Bourdieu 1980: 88-89). But the most important issue of both papers for my purposes is the suspense relationship between Bourdieu’s peculiar definition of social space and physical space. The latter is defined by the “reciprocal exteriority of the parts”, since agents and things are “bodies and biological individuals”, and as such are located in places in a physically non-ubiquitous manner. Social space,

conversely, is defined by the “mutual exclusion (or distinction) of the positions that constitute it” (ibid.: 113).

I am well aware that this spatial equation lies within a conceptual debate as to whether Bourdieu’s “physical space” contradicts the relational framework that underpins his approach to social space (Löw 2001: 179-183; Ruhne 2003: 175). However, my interest here lies in a different dimension of this conceptual construction: the temporalities and spatialities employed by the author when it comes to arguing that social space “tends to translate itself in more or less rigorous terms into physical space by means of a definite distributive arrangement both of the agents and properties”, i.e., of appropriated things (Bourdieu [1991] 2013: 133). By also recovering Leibniz, Bourdieu (ibid.: 133) speaks of a “correspondence” between a definite order of co-existences of the agents and a definite order of co-existences between the properties, and later (ibid.: 136) refers to physical space as “a social construction and a projection of social space”.

It seems clear that all these synonyms for the production of space evoke the processual character of this phenomenon, but what is its temporality? Like Goffman, whose work Bourdieu (1982) openly admired, the French sociologist focuses on *immediacy*. And this goes hand in hand with *history*. After all, the methodologically decisive spatiality is *social space*. As Bourdieu explains – alluding to a collaborative statistical unfinished research he took part in some years earlier regarding the spatial distribution of ownership or opportunities of access to rare goods and services in the French territorial-administrative divisions named “departments” –, the “transformation of social space into physically appropriated space” is an “effect of the structure of spatial distribution of public and private resources and goods”, which in turn is “a crystallization of all the history of the unity in the considered local basis (region, departments) at a given moment in time” (Bourdieu [1991] 2013: 141). We are thus faced with two simultaneous temporal layers concerning social space. The first relates to the agents’ immediate position in social space, which translates into “spatial structures” through arrangements of the agents’ “*body movements, poses and postures*” (ibid.: 134, original emphasis; see also Bourdieu [1993] 2003). This is how social space becomes the “physically appropriated space”. The second temporal layer, in turn, concerns the previous history of social space *en acte*, i.e., the trajectory of all preceding conflicts, which by being intermediated by symbolic power are implicit in social space (“unit”) at a definite temporal moment (“in time”).

Therefore, what comes to the methodological forefront is precisely a set of two temporal-spatial articulations. The immediacy and the history of social space make it easier to understand Bourdieu's main thesis regarding the production of space: places have synchronic effects on social positions; or, in other words, there are "effects of place", as announced in the title of the modified version of the manuscript published by the author ([1993] 2003). These effects are due to both the immediate and historical ways through which the habitus as "embodied history" (Bourdieu 1989: 82) contributes to "making" the habitat (Bourdieu, [1991] 2013: 139). The decisive aspect here concerns the synchronic correspondences between positions both in the historically constructed and the immediately given social space (ibid.: 141) as well as in places that exist in "the reified social space or appropriated physical space" (ibid.: 137).

#### **2.4. The immediacy of the situation, the everyday and social space**

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In search of a uniquely broad combination of spatialities concerning *immediacy* – respectively *the situation, the everyday and social space* –, one must address Löw's (2001, 2005) approach to the "constitution" of space as a relationally social product resulting from the (order-)ing of human (living) beings and social goods of both material and symbolic natures in places. In fact, the aim behind this author's actor-oriented concept of space goes hand in hand with establishing a dialogue between the way Bourdieu links habitus action and structures (Löw 2001: 132), and his "field" concept, which proposes a simultaneous analytical attention to both the relations between human beings and social goods as such (ibid.: 156). However, given that Löw follows a "dual" methodological perspective regarding the relationship between action and social structures (ibid.: 171-172), she mainly relies on Anthony Giddens' structuration theory when it comes to addressing the production of space.

For the author, the process implies that two particular kinds of actions produce space through the specific way in which they recursively reproduce social structures (in other words, institutional rules and resources) via a mainly "practical conscience" of humans (i.e., a non-reflexive, as well as bodily and emotionally based knowledge). It does not matter that a discursive (reflexive) conscience may also enter the scene (ibid.: 158-172). If actions are practices of respectively spacing – which concern locating human beings and/or material/symbolic goods (ibid.: 158) –

and synthesis – i.e., the symbolic connection of these beings and goods in respectively their perception, memory, and abstract representations (ibid.: 199) –, what remains open is *how* the recursive reproduction of social structures by action through human practical and discursive consciences constitutes space.

At this point the argument concerning immediacy becomes methodologically relevant. Löw's approach is explicitly grounded on an essential Giddensian assumption regarding the understanding of social processes: "Routines are integral both to the continuity of the personality of the agent, [...] and to the institutions of society" (Giddens 1984: 60; see Löw 2001: 163). In Löw's words, "[a]s a general rule, human beings act repetitively" (Löw 2001: 161). This implies the simultaneous "development of a set of habitual actions" (ibid.) and the reproduction of institutions in routines (ibid.: 163), which underlie an essentially "repetitive everyday" (ibid.: 161). If the recurrent everyday is conceptually decisive for understanding how actions simultaneously constitute institutions (Giddens) and space (Löw), my interest here lies in how this temporal reference regarding the everyday interferes with the constitution of space in Löw's approach. Even though Löw does not explicitly address the issue, she demonstrates a strong analytical sensitivity both to the bodily dimension of spacing and synthesis as well as to the ways in which the bodies reproduce spatial structures (ibid.: 153-157, 173-218). This emphasis indirectly suggests that, for Löw, the sociospatial process is due to the instantaneous effect of the practices of spacing and synthesis on institutions. This happens by means of the *institutional* rules and resources of which these practices are, in turn, an instantaneous effect. To put it briefly, immediacy is the determinant temporality.

However, as well as in the aforementioned three cases, this temporality is mobilized together with singular spatialities. Based on everything that has been said thus far, it should come as no surprise that, first of all, there is conceptual space left for the everyday. Even though not defined as such, Löw's explicit reference to German phenomenological conceptions about the "taken-for-granted everyday life" (ibid.: 19) suggests that the everyday is a decisive spatial realm where practices of spacing and synthesis are immediately repeated/routinized and, in so doing, constitute space as a conceptual abstraction (ibid.: 131).

Given the phenomenologically sensitive nature of Löw's approach, one could ask whether she somehow addresses the micro-sociology involved in the bodily immediate routinization of action that brings about space. Indeed, the answer may be found in a second spatiality: the situation. Inspired by sociologist

Reinhard Kreckel's thoughts on both the material and symbolic dimension of action Löw (ibid.: 192) conceives the situation as "situation of action". She thereby proposes that "the possibilities" of constituting space also depend on symbolic and material "factors" found in a given situation of action. After all, actions always depend on the situation, which, in turn, encompasses both material and symbolic "components" (ibid.: 191-192).

The third and last spatiality becomes evident when one remembers that the process at stake follows the logic of the "duality of space" (ibid.: 171). We have already seen that the immediacy of the practices of spacing and synthesis that bring about space takes place in the actor's everyday, which comprises various situations of action. But then it simultaneously takes place in what I have been terming social space. By adapting Giddens' theory to her theoretical needs, Löw assumes that the term "structure" is "an isolable set of recursively institutionalized rules and resources (ibid.: 178). This way she is able to synthesize what she conceives as the abstract outcome of a "coaction" of diverse "structures": the social structure, which, in turn, comprises spatial, economic, legal and those social structures (ibid.: 168) based on "structural principles" such as class and gender (ibid.: 179) as well as ethnicity (Löw 2005: 266). This characterization allows me to deduce that the abstraction in focus is of a specific spatial nature. After all, it concerns the rather structural dimension of social space, although this also bears a processual facet, which both Giddens and Löw address by means of the concept of "constitution".

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Based on this temporally and spatially far-reaching, albeit concise, inquiry into the history of sociology across three different national-academic contexts, it becomes clear that the discipline's last seven decades were underpinned by at least four original conceptualizations regarding the production of space. Although their influence reaches further theoretical developments on this issue, it would be impossible to explore such ramifications within the limits of this paper<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> For a brief overview regarding Goffman's impact, see Frehse (2016: 1-2); on Lefebvre, see Schmid (2005), and Stanek/Moravánsky/Schmid (2014, passim); Frehse (2014, 2017); on Bourdieu, see among others Löw (2001: 179), Ruhne (2003: 67-70), Schuster (2010: 35-41), and recent studies on urban segregation (among others Wacquant 2008). In turn, Löw's approach lately became a theoretical parameter for alternative conceptual frameworks regarding the influence of either social practices (Schuster 2010, passim; Reckwitz 2012: 252), communication (Christmann 2013, 2015; Knoblauch 2017: 296-300; Knoblauch/Löw 2017), biographical historicity (Weidenhaus 2015), or materiality (Steets 2015) on the production of space.

Instead, what matters the most here is the temporal-spatial singularity of the respective methods of interpretation. Very diverse theoretical frameworks did not prevent their authors from using sets of temporalities and spatialities that uniquely reveal the sociospatial process in focus.

### 3. A simultaneously poly-temporal and poly-spatial process

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A synoptic table of the seven aforementioned temporal-spatial combinations helps us to reach the core of the argument:

Temporality	Spatiality		
	situation	the everyday	social space
immediacy	Goffman  Löw	  Löw	Goffman Bourdieu Löw
historicity	Lefebvre	Lefebvre	Lefebvre
history			Bourdieu

Firstly, the scheme indicates why Goffman, at the end of his life, concluded that “the majority of my works do not offer concepts for the study of everyday life”, rather addressing “the forms of interaction”, whereas “all that we know about the macro world, [...] the class and cast relations, etc. happens and is produced during face-to-face interactions” (Goffman 1983b: 200-201). Given that this phenomenon may become empirically approachable via morally-loaded rules of conduct, the immediacy of the situation and social space may be seen as two temporal-spatial assortments, suggesting that the production of space is a process of temporal *re*production of both situations and social space here and now. Goffman’s approach does not allow for much conceptual leeway when it comes to situational or social-spatial inventions regarding the unpredictable.

An almost similar impression emerges with regard to Bourdieu’s two temporal-spatial combinations. If the author’s oeuvre is underpinned by a conceptual focus on

social reproduction, the same applies to the relationship between social and physical space: the “object” of “struggles for space” is “*the construction of spatially-based homogeneous groups*”; in other words, “the reproduction of these groups” (Bourdieu [1991] 2013: 138, original emphasis). Indeed, the sociospatially reproductive character of the production of space becomes empirically evident when one addresses social space from the methodological standpoint of two different temporalities: not only Goffmanian immediacy, but also its diachronic trajectory, namely the past history of the same social space at a given temporal moment. Even though the habitus simultaneously comprises “structured” *and* “structuring” dispositions, for Bourdieu social space materializes in physical space through the immediate ways in which the habitus converts one empirically given structure and history of social positions into the specific, mainly *reproductive*, bodily-mediated cognitions and motivations that underpin the structure of the appropriated physical space.

Social reproduction also manifests itself as an essential trait of Löw’s constitution of space. Even though the author emphasizes that “structural changes” – which includes spatial structures – are “thinkable”, she also stresses that these same structures are “mostly durable”, given their institutional embeddedness (Löw 2001: 188). From an action-theoretical standpoint, “social change” with its spatial implications – literally a *production* of space – presupposes an “organized reflexivity” embedded in “collective practices”; or, in more precisely, “a recourse both to relevant rules and resources and to collective action” (ibid.: 188).

Nevertheless, it is important to add that this *reproductive* state of – social – affairs goes hand in hand with a conceptually unique receptivity to possible spatial invention, hence production. As the table shows, Löw’s approach is uniquely comprehensive in methodological terms when it comes to assuming immediacy in order to address spatialities ranging from the situation to social space as well as to the everyday, which following this author is underpinned by situations. This rather phenomenological, actor-oriented perspective subsides Löw’s understanding that although individual structures tend to reproduce themselves, there is always a possibility of “*individual* changes in relation to the initial position” (ibid.: 189, added emphasis).

In search of a less unilateral view of the production of space as an essentially reproductive process, Lefebvre offers a bodily-mediated dialectic between social production and reproduction. Indeed, the table indicates that the simultaneous possibility of these processes is spatially embedded in the situation, in the everyday



- which according to this author comprises lived situations -, and in social space. But why? One should not forget this author's dialectical epistemic "reference framework" for addressing human reality both in theoretical and practical terms: an open-ended and contradictory "totality" (Lefebvre 1961: 181). If all of this seems too philosophical, one should also remember that this standpoint implies a unique receptiveness to historicity, as demonstrated by the scheme. Lefebvre is methodologically very sensitive to the question of what the empirically given (contradictory) relations between the past and the present of various spatialities can reveal about future possibilities regarding the production of space. This methodological sensitivity surely plays a role in this author's conceptual emphasis on the open-endedness of the process. The approach suggests that the temporal traits of the sociospatial phenomenon depend on how the historicities of the different spatialities are empirically combined within the spatial practice. Of course, this is not to deny that the production of space in neocapitalism is predominantly reproductive. The crucial conceptual aspect is that, due to its own (theoretical-practical) nature, the process is simultaneously plain of contradictions - of and in space.

In light of all these partial ponderings, the seven temporal-spatial combinations summarized in the synoptic table may finally be considered altogether. From this standpoint, they first become components of a methodological toolset for coping with especially *two* temporalities implicit in the production of space as a social phenomenon. Depending on the theoretical lenses under which the process is methodologically addressed, it either *mostly* or *simultaneously* reproduces itself in temporal terms.

Hence, as for the research question at stake here, the seven temporal-spatial articulations first signal that, in conceptual terms, the production of space is bi-temporal. It seems to follow the processual logics of linearity implicit in the suffix "-ion": things *either* change *or* not, or they *simultaneously* transform themselves *and* do not.

However, the seven temporal-spatial articulations also suggest that there are more temporalities - alongside spatialities - at play. Hence, we finally arrive at this paper's key statement. Each combination is a methodological tool through which the aforementioned sociologists either explicitly or not address specific temporal-spatial dimensions of the social phenomenon at stake: the immediacy or the historicity of the situation, the everyday, and social space, as well as the history of this same social space. By considering this aspect, we are led to a methodological standpoint of a disciplinary nature regarding the conceptualization of the production of

space. Each tool is a temporal-spatial scale mobilized within the relational-spatial sociological debate theorizing this process. It signals that sociology, as a disciplinary field, seems especially receptive to the fact that the bi-temporality, which at first glance characterizes the production of space, may conceptually be addressed by means of seven temporal-spatial sets.

Underpinned by these methodological procedures, sociology offers a specific conception about the sociospatial process at hand to the scientific debate on this issue. Not only are space and time multiple, but the same applies to the social phenomenon that brings about space (and hence also time, whose production however has not been addressed here due to my interest precisely in space). The production of space is underlain by *at least* seven simultaneous couples of temporalities-spatialities. In principle the methods of interpretation of the four aforementioned accounts coexist with the possibility of other temporal-spatial couplings, which only future research on still unexplored conceptual frameworks may disclose. Indeed, the production of space is both a poly-temporal and poly-spatial social phenomenon.

#### **4. Conclusion**

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Against the backdrop of the present findings, this paper and its argumentative structure appear in a different light. This study presents the step-by-step of a peculiar methodological approach to empirically identifying the poly-temporality cum poly-spatiality implicit in this social phenomenon with the aid of sociological accounts on this issue. To this end, I turned these approaches into sociological documentary sources. In this broad corpus, I focused on four approaches to the process. I subsequently examined those regarding their methodological use of temporalities of social life while explaining the interference of their respective research objects in the production of space. What thus came to the conceptual forefront was a common analytical sensitivity to specific spatialities. Furthermore, these temporal-spatial combinations were especially revealing in methodological terms. From this standpoint, they may be conceived as sociological temporal-spatial scales for theoretically addressing the production of space.

I now arrive to the issue of the usefulness of all of these temporalities and spatialities – and hence, to a first contribution of my temporal-spatial-scales

approach to the recent sociological discussion on the sociospatial process at stake. My statement is that identifying the respectively used temporal-spatial scales is a unique way of assessing the empirical reach of corresponding conceptualizations of the production of space.

As I for example demonstrated elsewhere (Frehse 2017), Lefebvre's singular sensitivity for the historicity of the situation, the everyday, and social space is especially revealing for researches about the relations that socially marginalized pedestrians of São Paulo in recent years (2007-2014) daily (re-)established with each other and with material/symbolic goods in the city's downtown streets and squares by means of their bodies. In light of such an empirical case, in which space is produced within the spatial framework of an essentially non-repetitive and random everyday, an approach that methodologically addresses the historical temporalities of this (non-)everyday is able to both conceptually and empirically reveal a *different* sociocultural logic for producing urban space *amidst* capitalist economic globalization (ibid.: 527). One only has to assume "difference" as both a (logical) concept and as (factual) content historically produced in the wake of the "reciprocal, conflictive, and appeased relationships" between the "qualities" of the "particularities" that "survived" these encounters (Lefebvre 1970b: 65). From this theoretical standpoint, the urban space produced in downtown São Paulo is, on the one hand, empirically different. The historicity of the rules of body conduct by the socially marginalized pedestrians of the São Paulo central public places insinuates bodies who, by daily *not* passing-by amidst the frenetic thru and fro of passers-by, are historically multiple. The recurrently non-everyday body relations implicit in their periodic physical permanence in the streets and squares signal to the active presence of various pre-capitalist temporalities implicit in Brazil's longstanding slaveholding past. Hence, these patterns of body conduct contribute to empirically distancing the recent production of space in the largest Latin American city from Western European and North-American modernity. Indeed, until today this modernity underpins the increasingly accelerated and individualized mobility of passers-by, which are urban types that vigorously prevail in the streets and public squares of the 21<sup>st</sup> century European and North American countries. On the other hand, the space produced in recent São Paulo differs not only empirically but also conceptually from the notions of public space that currently inspire the sociological debate (see among others Klamt, 2012; Harding/Blokland, 2014: 186–214).

If Lefebvre's temporal-spatial approach favours this kind of interpretation, there are surely other prospects. In fact, as for the possibilities and limitations implicit in alternative temporal-spatial scales of analysis, only future specific research may provide answers.

Hence, I reach the second and last methodological contribution of the temporalities and spatialities of the production of space to the recent sociological debate on this issue. As we have extensively seen here, the discussion vividly focuses on the spatialization of definite research objects. However, it still does not sufficiently address, both in methodological and conceptual terms, the fact that this spatialization implies a temporalization, and vice-versa. To put it more precisely: this spatialization comprises various coexisting spatialities and temporalities. Exactly these were the ones that mattered here. However, they may only be depicted in analytical terms with the aid of a method – and thus it becomes possible to finally sum up the second methodological contribution of the temporal-spatial-scales approach to sociology. Based on all what has been elucidated so far, the method not only makes evident the empirical complexity of the production of space. It also indicates that the poly-temporal-spatial character of the sociospatial process on focus within this paper remains a notable challenge for sociology.

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Technische Universität Berlin  
SFB 1265

mail [info@sfb1265.tu-berlin.de](mailto:info@sfb1265.tu-berlin.de)

web <https://sfb1265.de>

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