Inside Spatial Relations

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Abstract

This paper explores the interaction between domestic spatial organization and the process by which individuals learn by the patterns of their society. Drawing from Humphrey's (1974) study of Mongolian nomads and Okely's (1983) ethnography of Gypsies in England, and using Giddens' theory of structuration as a theoretical underpinning, it is argued that social and spatial relations play an active part in the creation, maintenance and transformation of conceptual frameworks used by the social actor to understand and organize the world. As such, spatial relations are seen not only as integral to social reproduction, but also as a subtle and powerful ethnic boundary.

Résumé

Cet article explore les rapports existant entre l'organisation spatiale domestique et le processus par lequel l'individu assimile sa culture. Nous nous référons à l'étude de Humphrey (1974) sur des nomades mongoliens et à celle de Okely (1983) sur des gitans vivant en Angleterre, ainsi qu'à la théorie de structuration de Giddens. Nous montrons comment les relations sociales et spatiales jouent un rôle actif dans la création, le maintien et la transformation des cadres conceptuels de compréhension et d'organisation du monde. Les relations spatiales ne sont pas seulement part intégrale de la reproduction sociale, elles constituent également un lien subtil et puissant au niveau ethnique.

1. Introduction [1]

> "Space itself may be primordially given, but the organization, use, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience" (Soja, 1980, 210).

1.1 Spatiality

Spatial relations, the interplay of the organization, distribution and categorization of objects and people in space, are an integral part of the study of the social dimensions of the environment. For the spatial appropriation of a locale incorporates the structures and principles of a society or group.

[1] Thanks to Arza Churchman and Denise Lawrence for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. Thanks also to Edward W. Soja for support, comments, and setting space in its proper place. The interpretation remains my own. Both the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning and the Institute of Archaeology at UCLA have continued to back my research endeavours.

The study of spatial relations has as its base the study of the most commonplace, everyday actions of everyday people as well as less frequently performed activities. It tracks the movements and the concrete products wich people negotiate in the performance of these movements. These products consist of mundane physically bounded locales, such as the home, as well as the more extraordinary, such as a religious edifice. They also include geographical areas - villages and towns - wethther or not they are bounded physically by a wall, and areas less visibly bounded, such as a nation or the seating arrangements around a table. The study of spatial relations, as represented in any given context, leads to a deeper understanding of the social relations of the society of which they are an active part. In this paper I am concerned primarily with delving into spatial relations, or spatiality [2] - the arrangement of concrete entities in space with the concomitant, interdependent social relations of individuals and groups - as an essential element of social relations, including relations of power, and social change. In particular, I examine the role of spatiality in the enculturation process, a generative process which both enables and constrains social relations and reproduction.

1.2 Enculturation

Enculturation refers to the lifelong

> "process by which the individual, through informal and non-formal modes of cultural transmission, learns the language, the technological, socioeconomic, ideational, as well as the cognitive and emotional patterns of culture" (Wilbert, 1979,8).

Non-formal modes of education include non-institutional, but systematic forms of learning for selected groups, such as explicitly being taught the skills appropriate to one's status. Informal education is acquired and accumulated

> "knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, quoted in Wilbert, 1979, 8).

It is the informal mode of education which is emphasized here. All modes of education, however, are entwined in the production, maintenance and transformation of society.

1.3 Naturalization

An important aspect of enculturation is the concept of 'naturalization'. Naturalization is the process of making culture appear natural. We do this by organizing, categorizing and interpreting our world so as to make it appear universal, as part of a timeless and inevitable established or natural order rather than as the cultural construct that it is (Barthes, 1972, 141-42). This is not a neutral manipulation of the physical environment but, as will be discussed in a later section, is actively implicated in the transformation of nature into a means by which relations of power may be masked and legitimated.

[2] I use 'spatiality' interchangeably with 'spatial relations'. Soja defines spatiality as existing "in both substantial forms (concrete spatialities) and as a set of relations between individuals and groups" (1985, 92). Both terms connote not only the relation between objects and space, but also the objects which define any space.

> "The space of physical nature is ... *appropriated* in the social production of spatiality - it is literally made social" (Soja, 1985, 93).

Material culture objects and their location in space are fundamental to this process (e.g. Hodder, 1982, 1987; Moore, 1986; Pader, 1982).

The major underlying presuppositions about the social dimensions of space upon which this paper is predicated are:

1. Spatiality is socially produced (see for example the articles in Gregory & Urry, 1985, and in particular the article by Soja);
2. Objects are neither randomly nor arbitrarily selected or positioned in space;
3. Space, objects and people give meaning to each other.

Using Giddens' theory of structuration (1979, 1981, 1984, 1985) as the theoretical underpinning, I argue that the organization of space is an integral part of the structuration of social life, that is, the process by which societies continually reproduce and reinterpret social relations across space and time. Spatial relations are inextricably intertwined with a society's underlying principles of organization, or structural principles (Giddens, 1979, 1984). These concepts will be discussed in a subsequent section of the paper.

The specific context, or locale, which is analyzed here is the home. As Giddens argues, to understand the rules and practices of a society, one must first understand the individuals who comprise that society and their routinized, daily behaviour as integral parts of the "social settings which they confront in their day-to-day lives" (1984, 117). The home setting is the ideal forum for the unselfconscious, everyday behaviour that is required, and for the learning of that behaviour (Goffman, 1959; Okely, 1983). The home is a prime and primary local for enculturation and hence for the reproduction and transformation of society (Bourdieu, 1977; Donley, 1982).

It is in the home that we develop many of our conceptual frameworks. It is largely here that we develop our sense of order and learn how to categorize our world. As Saegert noted,

> "The way we live in our homes reflects, expresses and forms the social relationships among household members, kin, neighbors and even more distant social partners" (Saegert, 1985, 292).

For these reasons, the home is often considered a microcosm of the sociopolitical environment, an important means by which to bridge the gap between the analysis of atomistic individual behaviour and the analysis of the extradomestic, social world (Schminck, 1984; Yanagisako, 1979). Following Kuper's (1972) concepts, the home, as the physical base for much family interaction, contains a "condensation of values"; it is through the mediation of the individual household members that the "politics of space" are played out. Yet because of the routinized, everyday and taken-for-granted nature of the organization of people and actions within the physical home, the inhabitants are often unable to verbalize the meaning of their spatial organization (Bourdieu, 1979, 134, note 3; Okely, 1983, 78). Nor is there a single, 'real' or 'true' set of meanings and values embedded in the home; but rather a multitude of interrelated interpretations depending on the perspective of the individual (Churchman & Sebba, 1983; Hodder, 1986).

2. Social and Spatial Relations

People produce space in an image of themselves and of their place in society. They create physically and/or symbolically bounded areas, organize people and objects within them and allocate uses to those areas which make sense within their general conceptual framework - a culturally constructed, ordered framework. Any concrete object or concept which disrupts the framework by which people classify matter falls into Douglas' definition of dirt as "matter out of place" (1966, 35). That which is out of place, which makes no sense within one's categorizations of the world, appears dirty and polluting. Such 'dirty' matter comes to connote danger and, as such, is powerful and becomes a powerful taboo (Douglas, 1966, 94). With respect to western homes, this perhaps explains why we are hesitant to put kitchen items in the bathroom. Is it truly dangerous to one's health to eat in the bathroom - or only to one's culturally constructed sense of propriety, and therein lies the danger? And why, as will be discussed later, do Gypsies in England not only refuse to eat in a room containing a toilet, but won't even allow a toilet and food in the same physical structure? What is the purpose of this ordering and re-ordering of experience and the environment? And what are the implications of the fact that one person's or society's dirt is another's order?

To understand and explain the organizational principles and the symbolic order underlying spatiality and other facets of society, be it industrialized western or non-industrialized non-western society, I turn to Giddens' theory of structuration for a conceptual framework (Giddens, 1979, 1981, 1984, 1985). His perspective provides insight into the processes by which people, objects and space give meaning to one another and enable a cohesive system of social relations and social change, with transformational properties. This discussion of structuration is not a critique of the theory, but a discussion of the points most relevant for understanding the role of domestic objects and spatial relations in the enculturation and naturalization processes.

Giddens asserts that space and time cannot be treated as "mere environments of action" (Giddens, 1985, 265). The organization and use of space is not a reflector or by-product of culture/environment, but is inextricably and actively intertwined with the fabric of social life. Society functions as a dynamic, chronic and spatial symbolic system which can only be understood in a spatial-temporal context.

In order to clarify this perspective and explore the enculturative aspect of the physical domestic environment, I draw from and develop two primary ethnographies. These are Caroline Humphrey's short, but insightful, article "Inside a Mongolian Tent" (1974) based on the research of Russian ethnolographers and Judith Okely's study of Gypsies in England, "The Traveller-Gypsies" (1983). These studies deal with the normative forces underlying individual action, but the authors present an historical perspective which enables a greater depth of understanding of the conglomerate.

Both the Mongolians and the Gypsies are nomads. The Gypsies move within the realm of, and in opposition to, the dominant industrialized English culture and society, while retaining their separate identity. The Mongolians live on the Asian steppes and, until the early 1920s were part of a feudal mode of production. Unlike the Gypsies, they do not live in opposition to a larger geographically determined society, but have become part of it, adapting many of the latter's values and actions to a new mode of life. Both studies demonstrate that when a subordinate group adapts aspects of the dominant society's culture, the adaptation is not haphazard, but is incorporated into

their material representation of the sociopolitical world, with the home as a major focus of that world.

3. The Mongolian *Ger*

> "It is because the practice of categorising social relationships by manipulating objects in the space of the tent still occurs, that we can know certain social changes are taking place" (Humphrey, 1974, 275).

The 1921 socialist revolution in Mongolia changed the traditional way of life for the pastoral, nomadic population. The government named progress as the first order of business; with progress defined in part as egalitarian gender relations, greater emphasis on the rights and upbringing of children in their role as the hope of the future, and a move from a religious (Buddhist) society to a state society. According to Humphrey, there is evidence of continuing success of material and administrative goals in the transition from a pre-revolutionary feudal state to a socialist one, but less is known about the success in another, less easily measurable goal - the transformation of social relations.

In order to analyze the progress of social transformation, travellers' records dating back to the 13th century were examined by Russian athnolographers. These show a consistency over time and across the steppes in where objects are positioned in the *ger*, or tent - the parents' bed is always along the centre of the eastern part of the tent - and how objects and people are categorized by the Mongolians according to their positioning. Not only does each object have its prescribed position, but its categorization also helps define social relations through establishing who is associated with the object and whether it is in the part of the tent deemed male and ritually pure (the western half); female, dirty and impure (the eastern half); *xoimor* or honorific and upper (the back half); or junior, lower status (the front half near the entrance). The male section has higher status than the female section, and the upper quadrant formed by the intersection of the male and honorific halves is the highest status area of all (See Figure 1) [3].

A system of categorization still persists in Mongolian *gers*, which led ethnographers to realize that one could learn about current social relations, and by extension, about changing dynamics since the pre-1921 era by comparing the patterns of the old and new systems. Of particular interest were deviations from the traditional pattern and additions to it - or, in other words: to what degree has the overall form remained stable while the contents changed, and what is the significance of any such change, or lack thereof? For example, portable sewing machines are now commonly found in *gers*. Consistently, they are found firmly ensconced on the female side, among the woman's domestic implements, "merged into traditional categories" (Humphrey, 1974, 275). Here, the form is clearly retained while a new object is merged into the pre-existing symbolic order.

[3] Vreeland's (1954) study of the Mongolians, although based on the memories of three Mongolians from different communities who had lived in the United States for between three and 20 years, shows a remarkable similarity (1954, 57). There are certain variations from Humphrey's descriptions, more in the seating arrangements than in the object positioning. However it is not always clear whether Vreeland's informants were talking about the pre- or post-1921 arrangements, nor how accurate their memories were.

Similarly, with the revolution came a new status for children. This too is manifested in the categorization of objects and space: no longer do children sleep on the floor at the head of their parents' bed, the latter perhaps symbolizing the children's lack of individual identity separate from their parents. They now have a bed on the male side of the tent, in the position previously reserved for male guests of junior status. There might even be a curtain around the bed for privacy, a new concept. Thus, by relocating the children within the well-defined categorization system, the new role and higher status of children is objectified, while concurrently helping to change the meaning of that area. Concomitantly came a state emphasis on hygiene and washing oneself: for the first time, a washstand and bucket appeared in the front near the door. This is the first instance of an area equally accessible to all. These objectifications of the social and cultural context are more than a reflection or description of the old and new orders but, I would argue, are essential for the successful implementation of the new order via their participation in the processes of structuration.

4. The Theory of Structuration

A major facet of Giddens' theory of structuration is that any symbolic system must be considered as inextricably related to ideology as a means by which sectional interests of a group are presented as universal interests and legitimated. Unlike traditional structural and semiotic perspectives, but like post-structural and 'second-wave' semiotic ones (Hebidge, 1979), signs are not considered to be arbitrary nor of fixed meaning. They can only be interpreted from the perspective of the total social context, with that interpretation being biased by the perspective of whomever is doing the interpreting. An individual's interpretation is influenced by her/his place within the society that produced the signs, or from her/his relations to the society as an outsider. Thus, the methodological starting point of this approach, like that of other generative theories (such as Bourdieu, 1977) is to remove the emphasis from the end point, from the sign, and transfer it to the act of sign formation itself, to the rules by which signs are generated.

4.1 Terminology

Like many theorists, Giddens refines and redefines some key terms in order to develop a specific connotation (see Giddens, 1984, for a glossary of his terminology). The *locale* in which any interaction occurs sets

> "boundaries which help to concentrate action in one way or another" (Giddens, 1984, 375).

Signification is the theory by which individuals code signs as part of the symbolic order. *Signs* such as language, objects or the placement of objects in space, are the main elements of signification, while *codes* are the "structural properties of social systems" (Giddens, 1979, 99). That is, codes are part of the normative forces by which rules are generated and society reproduced, with examples of structural properties being family patterns and economic units (1984, 165). *Rules* are not the same as norms, in that rules are not formalized prescriptions such as the rules that guide a game. Rather, rules form the basis of meaning and sanctioning of social conduct from which individuals draw in their daily actions by putting boundaries on actions. They both enable and constrain action, but do not function as an absolute, inviolable edict.

Through the repeated and routinized actions and interpretations of individuals, rules are created and reproduced, but not necessarily in the same form as they started (1984, 18). As in the game of operator ('Chinese whispers' in England), in which a phrase is whispered from person to person, the phrase that starts and the phrase that ends is never the same, yet the players think that they're reproducing the phrase exactly. The implication is that there is a recursive relationship between rules and practice, between the ways in which, for example, the family pattern is manifest and reproduced and the pattern itself. The following example will clarify these points.

In the Mongolian case, part of the theory of coding/signification by which the family pattern (the structural property) is reproduced includes appropriate seating of individuals according to socially significant positions and relations. The seating arrangements become the rules by which practice becomes, in essence, institutionalized in their seeming 'everydayness' or 'naturalness'. When the locale of the children's sleeping area (the sign) moved from the impure, lower status female side on the floor by the parents to the pure, higher status male side (in some 'radically modern' families, the children's bed replaces the Buddhist altar in the *xoimor*, the sacred part of the *ger*), the signification of each of the areas and roles also changed. As a sign's meaning changes, they do not do so in isolation; as an integral part of the symbolic order, the other signs with which it interacts also undergo alteration. In this case, while the children's status rises, the relative, official power position relegated to adult males lessens.

Corresponding to the emphasis on children as 'the future', female and male children are no longer distinguishable according to seating position; they are now treated as one category, not two categories, female child and male child. Inherent in these changing seating positions are changing social relations and thereby changing relations of power. Thus, embedded in any structure of signification and the rules underlying it are hierarchies such as gender/age relations or economic inequalities - as well as the mechanism of their legitimation.

4.2 Social Systems

Central to this theory is the concept of the knowledgeable agent, the individual as capable of reflexively monitoring action, as opposed to the concept of person as a robot, glued to a matrix of action which they can know only implicitly and from which they cannot readily depart. Following from this, Giddens' concept of *social system* includes the individuals who form a group. Social systems are the

> "patterning of social relations across time-space, understood as *reproduced practices*... {they are} widely variable in terms of the degree of 'systemness' they display and rarely have the sort of internal unity which may be found in physical and biological systems" (1984, 377, my emphasis).

4.3 Structure

Structure is used in this theory as a "memory trace" (1984, 377) which exists

> "paradigmatically, as an absent set of differences, 'present' only in their instantiation, in the *constituting moments* of social systems" (1979, 64, my emphasis).

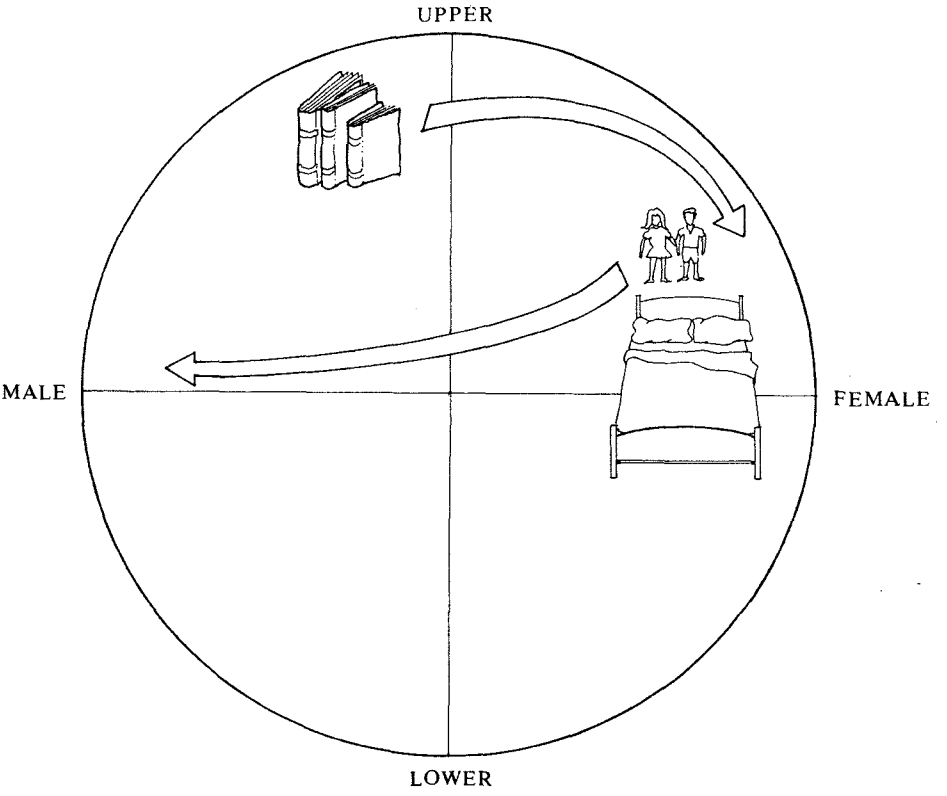

Fig. 1 Changing social and spatial relations in the Mongolian *ger* (after Humphrey, 1974).
L'évolution des relations sociales et spatiales dans le *ger* mongolien (selon Humphrey, 1974).

As with rules, this is a notion connected to a chronic, dynamic movement in space and time; to an existence which is both dependent on individual action and knowledge, but which recursively is also enmeshed within that knowledge.

4.4 Signs, Meaning and Change

Each of these elements - locale, signification, signs, coding, social systems and structures - is actively engaged in the definition of the other elements. The corollary of this is that signs and the rules by which they are formed are generative, they could not be static. The transformational possibilities are ever present in that they are socially produced and reproduced; they exist only inasmuch as they are used and reused by people - they cannot exist in a vacuum. Something has no meaning on its own, but only acquires meaning by use and by its relation to other things, by what it is not, by difference. The implication is that meaning depends on context and interpretation (this will be discussed in more detail later).

Something as common to us as books become a powerful sign of social change in the context of the Mongolian nomads. As Humphrey states (1974, 275):

> "In former times, books were appropriate only for lamas and senior men, since they were seen as holy receptacles for truth and sacred history. They were kept in the senior male part of the *xoimor*, if not on the Buddhist altar itself; and, wrapped in several layers of silk, they were read only on special occasions. Women were forbidden to read them. There was a saying, 'For a woman to look at a book is like a wolf looking at a settlement'. But since the revolution, literacy has been one of the most important government policies and now virtually all families possess some books. These are kept together on a shelf by the head of the parents' bed on the woman's side."

Here then, there is a change in the value and meaning of books (the sign), and the locales in which they were and are now positioned. With the same action, there is a simultaneous raising of women's position and a greater interaction of women with the world outside the family (this is only one of several indications of such a change; also see Vreeland, 1954, 55, on the changing status of women). Previously, the head of the parents' bed was used for the children to sleep and to store the women's hats. Here the social system is seen as being in flux by reference to the new practices, and recursively, it is by virtue of such actions as the repositioning of the material object/sign that the system is able to change successfully.

4.5 Duality of structure

With the emphasis put on action in this theory, signs cannot be viewed as merely passive conveyors of communication, a sort of shorthand, as in conventional structuralism and semiotics. Rather, a sign, in being an element of signification, takes on the property of referring

> "to the structural features of social systems, drawn upon and reproduced by actors in the form of *interpretative* schemes" (Giddens, 1979, 98, my emphasis).

Thus, since signs are fundamental aspects of signification, there is a constant interplay between individual action and the theory of coding. In terms of the Mongolians, it is on account of this generative, interpretative property of signs that the structure is sufficiently flexible to enable new meanings that correspond with changing external conditions.

This recursive property of signification - the inderdependency of action, sign formation and structure - in conjunction with the communicative aspect of signs, is what Giddens labels the *duality of structure*. This concept is at the core of the theory of structuration and, as will be seen, forms part of its definition. Structure, as in the duality of structure, is both

> "the medium and the outcome of the conduct it recursively organizes" (1984, 374).

As stated earlier, rules and practices can only exist in conjunction with one another. This means that the actors act and react, they interpret the codes or rules according to the situation (the context), individual predilection and understanding of the rules. For example, it is commonly recognized that one knows to act a certain way in one's own home, and in different ways in a close friend's or a superior's home, or a re-

ligious edifice. Yet exactly how one acts will depend on many factors, including the desire to obey or deviate from the rules to demonstrate one's attitude toward and about the situation. This is no different for the Mongolians who know their place, literally and figuratively; the books and seating arrangement in the *ger* also gain their effectiveness by virtue of the duality of structure. As stated earlier, where a child sits is both part of the message, the medium, as well as being the message, the outcome.

4.6 Rules and Practice

If people alter their behaviour in a given situation and, say, find it permissible to sit in a different area, the rules are in the process of reinterpretation. Not all change is intentional; the unintended consequences of action and varying degrees of competence on the part of individuals also can implement social transformations. The implication is that

> "Social systems are not constituted of roles, but of (reproduced) practices; and it is practices, not roles, which (via the duality of structure) have to be regarded as the 'points of articulation' between actors and structures" (Giddens, 1979, 118).

4.7 Structural Principles

The codes by which meaningful interaction can occur are possible because they are embedded in the enculturation process, in the processes of informal and non-formal learning. Understanding comes not just from the end results, for example from the particular object itself or the positioning of objects, but from the principles of organization which underlie the use and signification of those objects and their organization, and which thereby legitimate them. These principles of organization of society are *structural principles*. Some examples of structural principles which might be active in the organization of society are progress, individuality, communality, sedentarism, nomadism, urban and rural. All these principles of organization engender relations of power and domination. Different societies demonstrate different degrees of interest in any particular principle of organization, with the specific mode of manifestation being both culturally specific and affecting all levels of the societal totality. Structural principles can be known either tacitly, as what Giddens refers to as practical consciousness, or explicitly, as discursive consciousness. These principles of organization are indeed open to studied, conscious alteration by the participants of a society. The exploration of the structural principles and the results of action, together, make it possible to move beyond the superficial inconsistencies and into the motivating forces.

4.8 Structuration defined

To finally get to the term which gives Giddens' theory its name, *structuration* refers to the process by which societies constantly reproduce themselves, re-producing and re-presenting the structural principles, as if in a spiralling motion, never quite returning to the place where they started. Giddens defines structuration as

> "The structuring of social relations across time and space, in virtue of the duality of structure" (1983, 376).

Structure, it will be remembered, is not a grid or pattern limiting action, it is a set of rules and resources from which individuals "draw" in some manner in the moment of its utilization. Again, this points to the notion that the substance of social codes, such as a family pattern, has a normative force, although the codes themselves are not normative. In this way rules, which form the basis of meaning and are routinized and reinterpreted by individuals in daily life, are both constitutive and regulating, enabling and constraining.

Within the theory of structuration, objects and spatiality must be interpreted in their own contexts. The same object may have different meanings in different locales: a certain bench style becomes a pew in the context of a religious edifice and causes a different reaction than the same bench - no longer a pew - in a train station. Signs and symbolic systems must then be considered within their contextual setting and be open to multiple interpretations and meanings. Symbolism and the theory of sign coding function as a means of communication but, more, they have a constitutive function by which they are interwoven with the ideological dimension. While often appearing and 'feeling' neutral and devoid of deeper sociopolitical consequences, the very fact that coding systems are produced within social contexts means that they interact with the structures by which relations of power are enabled and reproduced:

> "Whenever a sign is present, ideology is present too" (Volosinov, 1973, 10).

How does this relate to the study of spatiality? In the Mongolian example, social relations are a motivating force underlying the spatial organization within the *ger*. The people, objects and specific locations become the signs, the pattern of positioning the theory of coding. The rules governing the spatial organization envelop the social relations. They include and legitimate relations of power, while hiding their cultural origins. The physical organization of people according to gender exemplifies the concept of duality of structure: it is the medium by which conduct is organized while simultaneously being the outcome of that conduct. Through an understanding of the rules - be it implicit or explicit - through the process of enculturation, the individuals know how to set up their home. It is one of the important ways they learn to categorize their world and their place in it. This point was illustrated when the children of both sexes, as the hope of the future in an atmosphere of progress, moved from the traditional mother's side to the father's side, with the changing connotations embedded in each side. Thus, the organization and categorization of space in the home is a fundamental part of the structuration of social life.

Concomitantly, if a particular organization of space is seen as valid, proper and appropriate, it is because it represents the expected behaviour, based on previous experience. Over time, the structuring 'feels' right because it meshes with other signs within the total symbolic order, while recursively and cyclically being the medium of its own signification. Hence, the physical and the conceptual structurings come to appear as part of an established and natural order, reinterpreting and reproducing the entire system of signification.

The Gypsies in Britain have a different interpretation of the world and of their place in it. The following ethnographic study presents a second case, with the emphasis being on the structural and symbolic underpinnings which interact with spatial choices.

5. The Traveller-Gypsies

> "The sedentary society seems to need to identify Gypsies in terms of spatial location. Defining persons who travel is among other things an attempt to pin them down in space. The trouble is, Gypsies are moving through space" (Okely, 1979, 82).

The Gypsies not only have a different concept of spatial organization than the dominant British in whose physical territory they dwell, but that difference is one of their most outstanding structural principles. Many of those differences relate to the home and are

> "allied to daily, often commonplace practices {which are} concerned, for example, with eating, washing, the use of space and the placing of objects in that space" (Okely, 1983, 78).

The particular aspect of the coding system which will be explored is that which relates to their concepts of cleanliness and pollution. Unless otherwise specified, all data derive from Okely (1983).

Until the mid-nineteenth century most Gypsies traveled with pack horses and tents. From then until the 1950s most used horse-drawn wagons, built by *gorgios*, or non-Gypsies. There are five basic styles of wagons, plus an additional sleeping cart used by some families (Huth, 1940; Ward-Jackson & Harvey, 1986). Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the interior organization is essentially identical in all types.

Now most Gypsies live in trailers pulled by a motor vehicle, enabling greater mobility through the British landscape. The trailers are either bought with ready-made interiors or, preferably, are custom designed. When ready-made, certain alterations are made immediately in order to avoid polluting behaviour: the sink is covered with formica and replaced by two bowls which can be distinguished easily from one another, one for washing dishes and dish towels and the other for personal washing. The bowl for personal washing is kept physically separate from dish washing and cooking. If a family can afford two trailers, the activities related to eating - cooking and dish washing - are relegated to a different trailer than the activities related to personal washing. In the theory of structuration, the bowls and their placement are elements of signification, and function as part of a complex of normative forces through which rules can be generated and society reproduced; the bowls do more than just differentiate two types of washing.

Following this sense of ordering, toothbrushes and hand soap are never kept near the dish washing area. It is interesting that soap, which Gorgios see as the ultimate source of cleanliness, it to the Gypsies potential dirt when out of its appropriate categorical location. In Douglas' terms, it becomes "matter out of place" (1966, 35) and hence taboo. In the Gypsy signification system, in the context of the personal washing area, hand soap is clean, while in the context of the dish washing area, it is dirty; there a different type of soap is clean.

Within their emic categorization, in ready-made trailers the bathing/toilet area is converted to a closet to avert polluting behaviour (Okely, 1983, 86) [4]. Other activities are allocated to specified areas, following from the same underlying principles of organization and as part of the same system of signification. Conflicting constructs, or "structural contradictions" (Giddens, 1984, 198) between Gypsies and Gorgios, that affect attitudes toward hand soap and proper toilet location, toward what is considered to be 'naturally' right and appropriate, together demonstrate to the Gypsy the inherent dirtiness of Gorgios (Okely, 1983, 82).

Okely argues that

> "the primary pollution taboos {are} associated with the symbolic separation of the inside of the body. The other taboos follow from this" (1983, 83).

Hence, a major structural principle which enables the maintenance of the structural property of Gypsy ethnicity is the separation of inside and outside. Anything which goes into the body must be clean, what is outside is less important. Clothes washing takes place outside the trailer, for clothes, which touch the outside body, must not be conceptually nor literally mixed with food preparation which takes place inside the trailer. The inside of the trailer is kept spotless, while the periphery of the Gypsy encampment might be strewn with rubbish and debris from metal scrapping. The trailers are organized in a radiating pattern with the central, communal area of the 'star' being an extension of the trailer, of Gypsy ethnicity; hence it is also kept spotless. Gorgio planners once designed a permanent Gypsy site with toilets located in the centre; not surprisingly it was rather unsuccessful (Okely, 1983, 88). The food which goes into the body and that which comes out are appropriately separated by space and physical boundaries.

The Gypsies often comment on how the Gorgios have beautifully tended gardens outside, but despair of the condition inside the home and refuse to drink from a cup in a Gorgio home. One sign of the 'dirtiness' of Gorgio homes is that they keep rubbish of all types in the home. Even when they move into houses, Gypsies tend not to keep waste baskets inside the house. As argued earlier, to do otherwise would be to confuse categories, to violate the coding system and thereby to cause all havoc to organizational principles, creating an environment of danger [5].

Within the Gypsy categorization system, privacy from neighbouring Gypsies is not an important issue. Despite the proximity of trailers, curtains are usually kept open day and night (Okely, 1983, 88). One exception is that when a woman breast-feeds she might close the curtains so that no man can see (ibid., 298). The trailer

[4] In a recent book, *English Gypsy Caravans*, Ward-Jackson & Harvey (1986) discuss the 'deficiencies' of the horse-drawn wagon (and by extension, the trailer), from a thoroughly ethnocentric perspective: "Compared with the house dweller, the inmates of a van do suffer two deficiencies - the privy is external, and a bath may be had only by friendly invitation, resort to a public bath house, or by opportunistic improvisation. But there are compensations, and no domicile is perfect" (1986, 74). From an emic perspective, these are hardly 'deficiencies', but matters of carefully considered choice. It is also interesting to note that the Gypsies use the term 'trailer' in contradistinction to the English term 'caravan'.

[5] Similarly, Kent found that when Navajos moved from traditional ramadas to tract houses, they continued to organize space according to their own conceptual framework, not according to that of the Euro-American house builders (1984, 185); while Pader found a similar interplay of spatial and social relations among rural Mexicans moving to Los Angeles (1987). Conversely, Moore found that when young Marakwet (Kenya) men explicitly want to break with tradition, they consciously reorganize space (1986, 131).

consists of only one 'room', making it impossible for individuals to retire to their own bedrooms. This is yet one more way in which the structural principle of sharing with one's kin is continually recreated and reinforced. Such a structural principle might make it more difficult, even incomprehensible, to put an elderly parent into a home with strangers when all your life your system of enculturation has emphasized constant interactions and sharing rather than the individuality implied by owning a room. Elderly Gypsies are taken care of by families, although recently more are moving onto permanent sites, in opposition to the fundamental principle of nomadism (ibid., 160).

Concepts of clean and dirty are coded into the Gypsies' notion of women as potentially polluted and polluting; their underwear, which touch their body, cannot be hung on the line in the open to dry nor washed in the same bowl as men's clothes, for a dress could pollute them. The gender relations are further seen in that women and men use separate bowls for washing, the women's having the potential of polluting the male, and that one of the most common reasons for preferring segregated toilets was to prevent men from possible pollution by seeing a woman exposed (Okely, 1983, 208).

Death and birth are also polluting activities, relegated to areas outside the trailer complex. In earlier times, birth took place in a tent on the periphery of the encampment and all utensils therein were burnt, as was the wagon or trailer in which death occurred (ibid., 210). Nowadays the Gypsies consign these activities to Gorgio-run hospitals, thereby maintaining the symbolic order, albeit through a reinterpretation of the details. Having the Gorgios deal with death reinforces their attitudes towards both death and the Gorgios.

Although I have simplified a complex conceptual framework in this discussion, it should be clear that spatial relations in the Gypsy material life are integrally intertwined with the process of enculturation and the naturalization of the cultural environment. To keep scrap paper inside the home would be as 'uncomfortable' and 'unnatural' as to have the toilet, cooking and washing facilities within one structure. The structural principles and the symbolic order underlying spatial relations in and around the home are integral elements of how Gypsies learn the importance of ethnic identity. Spatial relations are part of the Gypsies' self-ascribed identity, a fundamental means of differentiating themselves from the Gorgio and and intrinsic part of the structuration of their daily life.

6. Recapitulation

The preceding discussion on the theory of structuration formed the basis for interpreting the social meaning and production of spatiality amongst the Mongolian nomads and the Gypsies in England. The following are some of the basic properties and key points underlying this interpretation:

1. There is an inextricable, recursive relationship between ideology, action and spatiality - including objects, the organization of objects and the relations between the individual responsible for the selection and organization of objects. Spatiality is not merely a residue of action, but, by virtue of the duality of structure, spatiality is an integral part of social action and ideology, as medium and outcome.
2. Signs are not arbitrary; they are appropriate within their context of use.

3. Symbolic meanings are only interpretable by reference to their context of use. Hence, form and content are inseparable.
4. The same object, or combination of objects, may have a different meaning depending on the context and the person doing the interpreting.
5. The entire structure of signification is important for interpreting structural principles: the specific object/sign used, how it is used and the fact that something is positioned in a specific way are all essential elements in the categorization of the world.
6. The structuration of social life exists within a spatial-temporal context.

The implications of these points is that, when examined from the perspective of structuration, spatiality is an integral part of the total societal context and as such plays a critical role in the formation and reformation, interpretation and reinterpretation of society [6]. As Soja states (1985, 92):

> "Spatiality is portrayed as a social product and an integral part of the material constitution and structuration of social life. Above all else, this means that spatiality cannot be appropriately understood and theorized apart from society and social relationships and, conversely, that social theory must contain a central and encompassing spatial dimension".

7. Conclusion

Any initial ambiguities concerning the title of the paper, "Inside Spatial Relations", should now be resolved. In the exploration of the structural principles by which the Mongolian nomads and Gypsies in England organize and reproduce their societies, and as a means of exploring the structuration of their social lives, I have concentrated on the following:

1. The primary data are the organization and use of the internal domestic arena, that is, of the home;
2. I am looking inside spatial relations to discover their deeper socio-political meanings and their correlations with social relations; and
3. Because spatial relations are a powerful form of enculturation 'inside' also connotes delving into the process by which people, as individuals and as part of a larger socio-cultural process, learn, use, interpret and reinterpret the values and codes of their culture - whether or not they adhere to them or use them as a base from which to deviate is another matter.

Spatial relations are an integral part of the process by which people "naturalize" their environment, legitimate power relations through masking cultural constructions and making their own social life appear timeless, inevitable and proper in contradistinction to people from different backgrounds. Like other non-verbal actions, spatial organization reinforces culture by seeming to be naturally determined, rather than socially produced. Objects and their spatial organization within the domestic dwelling

[6] Not included in the discussion are the relations of the family's life cycle to spatial relations nor the need to delve into class differences when appropriate for the society in question. These are areas requiring further research.

are active and integral elements in the lifelong process of enculturation. By continually repeating and thereby transforming these behaviours in everyday actions, members of a group are actively part of the spatial-temporal process by which individuals enable society to reproduce itself, affecting and being affected by how people perceive themselves and their place in the world. In the home, the recursive relationship between ideology, action and spatial relations is intensified, with each giving meaning to the other, as both the medium and outcome of social reproduction.

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