Research Paper Social Science

World Images and The Time-Space Notions From An Epistemological Point of View

Adrian Scribano | Principal Researcher CONICET-IIGG, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina

ABSTRACT

This paper propose to show the relevance of a reconsideration of the time-space notions, in order to make possible an epistemological analysis of the world images as an ontological component of theories. The argumentative strategy is: (a) the role of notions of time/space in Bourdieu's theory as a component of his world image is summarized, and (b) is synthesized in which direction to reconsider the notions of time/space is important from an epistemological point of view for the social sciences and human existence.

KEYWORDS Time, Space, World Image, Bourdieu

Introduction

Throughout, at least, the last three decades a reflection framework was developed in the field of the Philosophy of Social Sciences called *post-empiricism*, where one of the important points of discussion was established around the ontological context of theories. Taking this into account, it is possible to postulate that, what has been known as the ontology of social theory refers to how different philosophical traditions provide world images that presuppose the theories of social sciences. These images imply the presuppositions of a particular interrelation between agents, time, space and reality, giving theories a pre-comprehensive horizon, i.e. allows social theoreticians the possibility to choose among different alternatives when supposing the existing ways of agent in a particular social world. It is worthy to say it permits to opt between different forms of supposing the modes of existence of social world inhabitants. It is, thus, evident that the decisions taken about time and space notions affect the world image in which the theory lies. Even more, if they are defined in the social sciences context as a group of presuppositions about the existing ways of agents, time, space and their relation with social reality on which theories are based, is more evident its epistemological importance of re-constructing those existing ways as different results or consequence spring from them for the same theory, such as subjects' capacities in a social world. In order to understand a world image, it is necessary to recognize the following suppositions referring to its constitution:

a) The image supposes an agent's notion that implies decisions with reference to the idea of individuals (as subjects) and how these individuals (as agents) produce and reproduce themselves.
b) The image also supposes a vision of the resource an agent makes use of in order to distinguish himself in a hierarchical order. Among these resources we can find: language, knowledge, information, power, wealth.
c) Similarly, it establishes the individuals/objects belonging to other species with which agents shares his living horizons and the conditions of this relation.
d) The image includes a space-time vision easily described in the following combinations: change-stability, transformation-reproduction, horizon-region, process-mechanism.

It is in this sense that any theory can be analyzed and criticized it at different levels: these levels are basically the theoretical/conceptual, ontological, epistemological, methodological and critical. The importance of the ontological level is that is where one can see the 'work' of production and reproduction of the world images. These images correspond to structures in the world by which we can "fit" the facts in a certain way in our perception of social reality That is, are ways to classify and explain of social phenomena, their causes, consistent solutions, place of agents, etc., defining the ways in which what is identified as social problems and "must" be addressed. These world images are closely related, in one way or another, with the everyday life, that is, with the everyday knowledge that subjects share, which is always at hand to explain the social world. The conceptual network of any theory has all this set of assumptions and notions of time/space are a good example to show its performance.

Bourdieu: «Effet de lieu" and Social Space.

The preponderant place occupied by the social space re-definition and the social topology own constitution in Bourdieu's thought, relieves us to emphasize any previous explanation respect to the central role that has the thematic approached in this work to his interpretative framework . In this context, will only be here analyzed the relationship between his concepts "*effet de lieu*" and "temporality".

In relation to regarding the space and its re-signification recalled here, Bourdieu in "*La misère du Monde*" exposes the "*effet de lieu*" notion. The conceptual standpoint is of the physical space and social space distinction. The first is referred to the fact that each individual, as biological entity, occupies a place as all the things. Bourdieu asserts "the place can be defined absolutely as the point in the physical space in the one where an agent or a thing is found located..." (Bourdieu 1993, p.160). Therefore, the *place* exists as **location** and, from a relational point of view, as a **position**. This location will depend on the magnitude and the surface occupied and configures the place of the agent or the thing. The social space also is constituted relatively, but comes defined by the positions and agents conditions in "social fields" practices. These practices produce and reproduce the society through naturalized mental structures. The same phenomenon occurs in the physical space. The agents occupy their positions now defined by the magnitude of symbolic capital, economic, etc. accumulated in their personal history and in relation to the specific field, where the agent develops his struggles by a position in the social space. The social space power is translated power in the physical space in such a way that the relationship between both is perceived diffusely. Thus, the distribution that exists of the agents' visions and divisions in a social space are manifested in the physical space.

From the perspective of Bourdieu, the social space reifying (that is to say physically accomplished or *objectified*) is

presented as the distribution within physical space of different kind of goods and services, and also of individual agents and of groups physically located (as bodies located in a permanent place), (Bourdieu 1993) This location's naturalization doubly re-locates agents in social space and as bearer of their symbolic of the power, that it is the physical space converted into the reification of said power. The saying: 'Tell me where you live and I'll tell you who you are' allows us to observe in a clear way that "a part of the structures inertia of social space is the result of the structures' inscription in the physical space and of the fact that it will not be possible to change them through a transplantation (work of transplant), things movements, uprooting and deportation of people..." (Bourdieu 1993, p. 161). The place, then, is empowered for the agents' conditions and positions and represents them, yet against their will. The space remains resignified not already only from the speech, but as it is better to understand, from practices that tie in daily life speech and action. The transplant effects indicate the dynamics of the place effect reveal a transformation of the same space idea as limit of our social system. As it can be captured immediately, this effect would not take place without thinking the time is a time lived from a body in connection with a practice. According to Bourdieu habitus and field are manners of the historical existence; the history made things, the history as an object. Consequently, time is born in its way towards action and thought as it is -for him- based on definition, presentification and dis-presentification. Following his own concepts dealing with practical logic, Bourdieu thinks that this is what common sense calls 'passing of time'. (Bourdieu 1994)

The space that takes part in the practices and representations, i.e. that constitutes the habitus, expresses the time in those habitus, expresses the time that nestles in those habitus. Thus it is easy to warn as notions time/space involving a particular image of the world as we have defined in this work.

As we noted at the beginning a world image implies through their notions of time and space modes that theory "ontologically" assumes: change-stability, transformation-reproduction, horizon-region, and process-mechanism.

The world image supposed of the Bourdieu's theory involves the establishment of a social topology that plays the role of understanding horizon about interactions of transformation and reproduction of an ongoing process of change in society. Also involves a notion of subject having strategies to be located in the space/time in relation to their capacity to receive, accumulate and obtain different types of capital. The aforementioned subjects' live a particular time/space on direct connection to how they are able to handle different goods (language, knowledge, information, power, wealth) that come into play in the fields of interrelation and create the conditions of production and reproduction of all living beings in the social world. The world image supposed of the Bourdieu's theory involves a subject capable of living managing the tensions between physical space and social space in the context of the processes that are structured around the "*effet de lieu*". This world images implies a set of assumptions about the connections/disconnections between historicity, subjectivity and experience that are supposed in the ways how Bourdieu understands the degrees of freedom of the subjects regarding the structure. The analysis of the world image supposed by Bourdieu's allows us to better understand what are the assumptions "hosted" in his theory about how subjects construct social reality.

World Image and Social Theory.

The above time-space notions synthetic -and partial- reconstruction supposed by Bourdieu interpretative approaches, allowed thinking the relationships between subject, action, space and time staying in his "world images"

In this context we found an important topic from which we want to point out some epistemological comments. In the one hand, a "new" image of world takes form on Social Theory today, and in another hand, this kind of image involves a new perception horizon.

What is new in this image of world? The "lived time", as condition of possibility to understand the constitution process of identity, is the central feature that this Image involves. From our point of view, the time becomes significant "through" our experience. This experience is our space lived as personal. In this way the agents are thought as "time-spacing" individuals who have the capacity and the necessity of operating a recognition and hetero-recognition process. In connection to this appears the problem of "the others" as first boundary of our perception horizon. The limits of our perception horizon have new cognitive dimensions in the actual process of social and communicably re-definition boundaries. This re-definition aims straightforward to the new self inter-connection at the "beginning of the millennium", which involves a social –especially communicative- complexity interrelationship never saw before our actual informational and global age.

We are those that the recognition process allows to be. The world, the position of things and humans, and our self-identity take place into this horizon. The process of perception had a different path, the way of co-constitutions of the world. The cognitive role of subject and object changes, because emerge other path for they communication. It is the process of knowledge that achieved importance. The relationship between subject and object become the pivot to understand our place in the world and the place of human beings and material world.

In this sense, one of the most important changes in social theory lead to the conceptualization of time/space are permanent changes in our ways of perceiving the world. Therefore, it impacts on cognitive process in the social science.

Finally, if we want to have a satisfactory account about the social reality, we need to understand the impact of time-space notions changes at subjective level. In the globalization context we are and we perceived "from and in" day-to-day time-space transformations. This process touch the centre of social sciences aims and produce a change in our belief, about how is possible to understand the social reality.

REFERENCES

Bourdieu, P. (1994) Raisons Pratiques. París. Seuil. | Bourdieu, P. (1993) The Misére du Munde. París. Seuil. | Scribano, Adrián. (1998) "Complex Society and Social Theory". Social Science Information. 37 (3) Sept, p.p 493-532. Sage. London-Paris