The construction of ethnic boundaries in classroom interaction through social space

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Abstract
This article adds a social-spatial dimension to ethnicity construction while acknowledging the production of ethnicity as constructed through a relation of the "here and now" and an imagined (common) past. Empirically, social-spatial analysis is elaborated by looking at how social difference is produced in multi-ethnic schools through classroom interaction both in the USA and in the Netherlands. In our analysis, we are concerned with how "school" becomes evoked or produced in student discourse while ethnic positions are established. At the same time we show how spaces such as migrant neighborhoods and homelands are evoked and related to school spaces. The results show that more general mechanisms can be distinguished of how students use these spaces in their constructions of otherness across the data sets, but that the quality and complexity of these mechanisms are specific and can be related to the more general (migration) histories of the ethnic groups.

Keywords
academic identity, classroom interaction, ethnicity, migration, social space

Constructing diversity in classrooms from the perspective of social spaces

A theoretical perspective on identity practices, ethnicity, and social space

Diversity in classrooms has been studied in socio-cultural research through interactional analyses, in line with other traditions (e.g., sociolinguistics, conversation

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analysis, critical discourse analysis). In this research diversity has been considered as something that is constructed dialogically, step-by-step in human interaction and is the result of a dynamic mutually constitutive relation between what happens at the (inter)personal level and wider socio-cultural levels (e.g., Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995; Kamberelis & Scott, 1992; Mehan, 1998). Our interest builds on this work but moves in a different direction. While we offer detailed analysis of interactions, in this paper we are less concerned with communicative structures or dialogical relations among turns or episodes of talk and how these refer to broader social spheres. Rather, we focus upon how participants construct and relate social spaces as a social practice of identity work. We analyze the social space as a resource for ethnic identity work, calling attention to the complexities of positioning practices when multiple social spaces are marshalled as resources. By "positioning" we intend the ongoing and mutual production of subject positions through discourse which people offer to one another, impose on one another, and choose for themselves. In particular, it is our intention to show how participants in interaction ascribe certain identities to others, and to themselves, and accomplish these moves relationally. We also intend a broader social process that involves socially producing particular individuals and groups as culturally imagined types (Holland & Leander, 2004, p. 130). Types of individuals and groups are created and re-created through social interaction as it draws on cultural models, which we associate with "figured worlds" (Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998), or simplified social scenes of typified interactions and identities. While addressing both the level of positioning and broader sociocultural processes, we take a cross-contextual perspective that aims at translating between more enduring, broader-scale phenomena and local ones (de Haan & Elbers, 2005).

We draw on and articulate two bodies of work to develop our approach: 1) theories of social space, especially in so far as they extend socio-cultural conceptions of diversity and academic identities; and 2) theories of ethnicity and culture focusing on the relationship between space and culture.

Social space and othering

Spatial metaphors (e.g., "position," "insider/outsider," "center/margin") are useful for understanding the politics of identity work in that they "impose some order on the seemingly chaotic mélange of social difference and social relations" (Smith & Katz, 1993, p. 69). Yet in such metaphors, space is often metaphorically constructed as an inert and empty "container" or "field," a "coordinate system of discrete and mutually exclusive locations" (Smith & Katz, 1993, p. 75). Inspired by the development of rich spatial vocabulary and metaphors, we also seek to specify, beyond a metaphoric level, how spaces are socially constituted and how they are used in practices of identity. Social space is not a static background against which activity develops, but rather space is both produced and productive. Spatial productions, embedded within social practice, constrain and enable productions of identity, including, for example, the construction of racial identity (Haymes, 1995).

To move beyond a metaphoric and politically neutral conception of social space and toward conceiving of social space as historical, produced in activity, and used as a resource in practices of identity, we focus in particular on representations of space-time (Gregory, 1994) and how these representations relate to space-time as it is lived.

How might we understand the use of representations of space – including everyday statements or stories of nations and neighborhoods – as a resource for producing the spaces in which we live out our social lives? A dialectic approach is theorized by spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre (1991), and elaborated by spatial theorist Edward Soja (1989), in which such conceived, discursive and mental spaces (second space, "*espace concu*") enter into dialectical relations with perceptions and experiences in physical space (first space, "*espace perçu*") and also into dialectical relations with everyday life-in-space (third space, "*espace vécu*"). These multiple dialectics, or "trialectical" relations, assert first of all that social space can never be conceived as entirely formed through representational models and discourse, or through materiality, or through lived, embodied experiences, but is rather formed across these moments of social and psychological life. As Kharlamov (2009) argues, following Urry (2000), social space is a hybrid entity, formed in relation to natural space. Rethinking social space in these terms – as a hybrid of the human and social world with the "material, technological, terrestrial, corporeal world" – pushes us outside of the too-familiar limits of conceiving of social life as a "transcendent phenomenon" (Kharlamov, 2009, p. 203).

Second, by extension, these trialectical relations assert that social space is never settled once and for all as a backdrop to social life, but is rather formed across the multiple dimensions of ongoing social life. Through activity, participants are always constituting spatial identity relations with respect to one another, drawing on resources that include representations of multiple space-times. Thus, we are compelled to trace not simply how participants coordinate their activities in physical space, but also what mental conceptions and symbolic representations of space they have and use, and how such representations change and interact with the lived spaces of face-to-face events. "Fields" of spatiality interact with and influence one another, such that lived space is "simultaneously real and imagined, concrete and abstract, material and metaphorical" (Soja, 1996, p. 65). These dialectical relations are such that the transformation of social and political life, for spatial theorists such as Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1989), involves by necessity the transformation of social space. Conversely, the reproduction of social life involves by necessity the stabilization or reproduction of social space. Such a social-spatial lens, we argue, is essential for understanding how identities are accepted, marked, or "othered" through routine interactions in settings such as schools.

Ethnicity: From place of descent to history of travel

By focusing on the use of social spaces in practices of ethnic othering, we want to do justice to the "travel" character of culture in the construction of difference, opposing this to a place-based or entirely placeless conception of culture. While doing so, our

attempt is to bring ethnicity closer to recent conceptualizations of culture that have criticized the so-called "isomorphism" of space and culture (Bhabha, 1994; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Hannerz, 1992). The concept of ethnicity, as the social construction of ethnic "difference" or "otherness," has been subject to many theoretical debates (e.g., Vermeulen & Govers, 1994; Verkuyten & Wolf, 2002), and the positions taken are indirectly related to how culture is understood. Since Barth's publication of *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* in 1969, the focus has not been so much on the coupling of cultural difference and identity, but on the organization of differences and boundary construction. Since this "critical disruption," as Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, and Cain (1998) call it, issues of power and negotiation in the construction of the other have been central to anthropology. The interactive construction and negotiation of difference was stressed over a one-to-one relationship between "what cultures are" and how people identify with them (Barth, 1994, 1969). Although this earlier shift in perspective informs our analysis, it is the recent re-conceptualization of the relationship between culture and place that calls for yet another shift. The focus on mobility and travel encounters, and therefore on the connectedness of places over "residence," posits that ethnicity is not just the result of the history of confrontations between place-based communities, but rather the history of their travel relationships and the ethnic markers these create. The articulation of "difference" should not just be based on (the history of) ethnic confrontations, but on divergent histories of travel through different places.

Recently, the "location of culture" has become an issue of debate, in particular in relation to globalization and migration. Culture is no longer seen as tied to one particular location: as intensified travel and new communication technologies make communities more dispersed, the link between cultural forms and specific locations becomes disentangled (Hannerz, 1992). Cultural meanings and identities are no longer connected with a particular spatial origin in the sense that a given territory has been "cultivated" and thus brought forward a particular world view. Instead, globalization leads to forms of "sudden contact" between culturally diverse groups removed from their place of origin or between the self and distanced others (Moghaddam, 2006; Valsiner, 2009). Identities are not tied to clearly bounded territories which are unique in a cultural sense, but, given the focus on mobility and travel, identity boundaries can be connected to multiple spaces and can be recruited from personal and collective histories of travel through lived spaces.

Ethnicity as recruitment of lived spaces

A current need is to focus on the ways in which local and non-local communities and their cultural practices are linked. These local/non-local linkages are relevant given a broader effort in Culture and Psychology studies to understand how cultures (communities, or other social units) develop diachronically (same system over time) as well as synchronically (different systems at the same time) (Valsiner, 2001). As Clifford (1997) argues, rethinking culture in terms of such connections, or in terms of travel, means that culture as a rooted body is questioned and sites of displacement,

interference, and interaction are foregrounded. The "chronotope" of culture refers to "a setting or scene organizing time and space in representable whole form," which "comes to resemble as much a site of travel encounters as of residence" (p. 25). At the same time, the focus on travel relations retains the significance of the local and the present, including a new awareness of "the art of the present" (Bhabha, 1994), which calls to attention those moments or processes where cultural differences are articulated rather than when and where they were "initially" formed. This does not mean that ethnicity is not "grounded" in traditions, communities, or social spaces, but that the analytic focus becomes the subsequently or simultaneously lived social spaces and their relatedness. It also means that the focus on the step-by-step construction of ethnicity in the present acquires a different dimension. It implies seeing the construction of difference in terms of the interrelatedness of spaces and histories of travel as they are connected to the moment of the present.

Translating these theoretical perspectives on ethnicity and space to our analysis, we are particularly concerned with how the lived social space of school is not the single social space operating in school-"based" events (Nespor, 1997). Rather, other social spaces are recruited and brought into such events, including unofficial spaces or counter institutional spaces that intersect or are laminated with school spaces (Holland & Leander, 2004; Gutierrez et al., 1995; De Haan, 2005). In this study, we focus in particular upon spatial representations of the other and the self: descriptions and discussions of hallways, homes, neighbourhoods, home countries, and other physical spaces that have been re-mediated as representations and recruited into the lived spaces of the classroom as resources for identity. Given the importance of the notion of history of group contact for ethnicity constructions, we have chosen to do this through a cross-national comparative study, involving multi-ethnic classrooms in the Netherlands and the US. This allows us to include student groups that vary in both their institutional and group contact history.

Our understanding of comparison in this study is not that the data sets from both countries can be compared directly. Rather, the comparison takes place at a meta-level after the in-context analysis of both data sets has taken place while applying a common frame of analysis. The result of this kind of comparative analysis allows us to understand both general characteristics of ethnic othering as well as how ethnic othering might differ given the different histories of ethnic group contact or institutional contact in these settings. This methodological approach informs our theoretical position on ethnicity and space as it does justice to seeing the construction of difference in terms of histories of travel through different spaces while taking into account histories of group confrontations.

Background and methods

For this study we make use of two different video and audio samples that are part of ethnographic studies collected in two different national contexts. A key methodological issue for researching how emotional and psychological practices are shaped through the social-spatial is to research such practices not only in post-hoc accounts,

but also in the lived experiences of everyday life (Kharlamov, 2009, p. 206). One sample contains data on classroom interactions between minority students (Dutch Moroccan plus a variety of other minorities) and Dutch students in the Netherlands and the other sample contains interactions between African-American and White European-American students in the US. As both studies were originally set up with different goals, the data were re-analyzed to enable the comparative analysis. Concerning the research in the Netherlands by De Haan and colleagues, the sample is part of a study aimed at understanding the role diversity plays in collaboration patterns and knowledge construction in multi-ethnic classrooms (de Haan, 2005).[1] The classrooms that were studied are part of a so called "black" school in the city of Utrecht, which in this case means that 80% of the students have an ethnic minority background. The population consists of, apart from the Dutch students, both relatively more established migrant groups such as Moroccans and Turks that migrated in the 60s as labour migrants, and groups that recently migrated mainly for political reasons from countries such as Somalia, Ghana, or the former Yugoslavia. The school, which was originally a "white" school had gradually turned into a school with a more ethnically varied population in the years before the research took place. Although the school as a community seemed to have accepted this change, ethnicity and race was much discussed in the students' informal talk in classrooms. As for the US research by Leander, the sample was drawn from a 10-month ethnographic study examining the relations of school-related discourse to the production of social space (Leander, 1999). "Kempton High," a mid-sized urban high school in a moderately sized Midwestern city, was the primary institutional context for the study. The school has a racially and socioeconomically diverse student population (65% European-American, 26% African-American, 5% Asian-American, 4% Hispanic).[2] Over the course of two years the school was losing White European-American students and gaining African-American students. This change appeared to enhance racial tensions that were already present. Additionally, the two teachers of the American Studies curriculum (integrated history and English) explicitly engaged the students in conversations about issues of social justice, including race.

A selection was made of both transcribed data sets, and in order to allow a comparative analysis we developed criteria for the selection of our "unit of analysis" focused on the production of diversity in social spaces.

Unit of analysis: Othering and social spaces

In each selected transcript we selected relatively extended sequences of classroom interaction that expressed:

Othering. We defined othering as the creation of discursive boundaries by participants, making a distinction between self and other, or us and them in the sense of articulation of difference set out in the introduction of this paper. An example of

such a discursive boundary setting while recruiting a particular place is "You Moroccans are dirty, especially the ones from this neighbourhood." The episode should at the same time fulfil the criteria of

The creation of a social space (this could be "school" but also other social spaces). These instances of a social space could be both a) a representation of a place or b) configurations of space as expressed in the discourse (discursive-material-social practice).

In the presentation of our analysis below as well as in the discussion that follows we will pay attention to the following issues:

Can we distinguish social spaces that are recruited for othering, and how are these laminated with school spaces?

What kind of spaces are recruited?

How do students move between and manipulate these different spaces for ethnic othering?

Do the mechanisms that can be distinguished differ for both data sets?

Can the different spaces evoked and the way these are used say something about the specific inter-ethnic settings, for instance in terms of histories of group contact?

Multi-ethnic classrooms in the Netherlands: From recent migrants to one generation of group contact

Recent migrants: Homelands and the denial of "school"

What social spaces were recruited for othering in the Dutch data set and how are these laminated with school spaces? Basically, two different patterns were found: one included multiple ethnic groups and another included native Dutch students mixed with students with other ethnic origins. In the groups with multiple ethnic origins, including recent migrants, we found that the kind of identity issues students struggled with centred around questions such as "Who are you? ," "Where do you come from?," and "How are you different from me?." The fact that the students were in school together in the physical, material sense was sometimes stressed but without the implication that they experienced a sense of community. Their talk reflected a certain preoccupation with the other's physical presence, including their diversities in terms of skin colour, dress, and hair style. Their co-presence in the institution seemed to be experienced as partly forced.

At the same time, it is in these groups that the students' attempts to investigate and negotiate about "who they are" in relationship to the other is often done through evoking social spaces that directly refer to their countries of origin. Typically these spaces are evoked to give evidence of wealth in their homelands, for instance, when they discuss the size of their houses in Ghana and Morocco and the possession of luxury cars "over there." These evocations appear to be assertions of how their social status back home is at least equal to or better than that of the other student. An example is given below from a group from Grade 7, consisting of

Transcript 1. Dutch data set, Grade 7, group 4, 12-10-2000

1) Fahd	Mijn vader heeft al= (.) nu heeft ie al twee auto's tegelijk hè?	1) Fahd	My father has already= (.) now, he has two cars at the same time.
2) Masoud	Een mercedes ( ).	2) Masoud	A Mercedes ( ).
3) Fahd (...)	Hier niet! Hier niet. Twee. Hier heb ie maar twee auto's.	3) Fahd (...)	Not here! Not here. Two. Here he has only has two cars.
4) Student boy	Maar bij ons mag je ( ) vijf auto's gebruiken!	4) Student boy	(..) But with us ((chez nous)) you are allowed to use ( ) five cars.
5) Fahd	Ik dertig auto's joh mijn vader ( )	5) Fahd	Me thirty cars, my father ( )
6) Ilham	>Marokko oo:k<.	6) Ilham	>Morocco< as well.

students with a variety of ethnic backgrounds, among them Abena, a Ghanaian girl, Fahd, a Dutch-Turkish boy, and Ilham, a Dutch-Moroccan girl.

In this example Fahd starts out in turn 1 claiming that his father uses two cars "here" in the Netherlands but has many more in Turkey. The "here" in turn 3 is used as "in common" and contrasted with somewhere else, their homelands: the "bij ons" ("chez nous") in turns 4–6 to indicate difference. Throughout their discourse their respective homelands are evoked as material places that seem "ready to hand". They are close in terms of memories for themselves, also given their yearly travels to their countries of origin, but unknown to the other. Thus, while the school space here is used mostly as a space to deny a common history or a sense of community, the homeland spaces are used for building inter-ethnic knowledge in an attempt to establish status relationships. In both cases their recruitment of spaces and how they are used seem to reflect the relative novelty of their common social history.

Minority–majority based othering, tutor relationships, and the migrant neighborhood

Another and dominant kind of othering that we found in these classrooms exclusively revolves around majority–minority boundaries. We will illustrate this kind of othering using some examples of a group of Dutch-Moroccan students consisting of two girls, Ilham and Fouzia, and two boys, Ferit and Zakaria. In Transcript 2, Fouzia takes on a tutor role, after being encouraged by the teacher to explain to her fellow students in turn 1. She apparently hesitates in taking up this role, evident from her laughter and her insecure presentation of this role in turn 3. The other students seem to support her tutor position at this point, as evidenced by their encouragement to explain what she wrote down (turns 4 and 5).

Then, in turn 6, Fouzia takes up a different discourse while referring to her earlier conversation with Ilham in which they had been joking about Moroccans being

Transcript 2. Dutch data set, Grade 7, group 2, 25-0-2000

		Dutch	English
1)	Fouzia	((lachend)) Wat moet ik uitleggen?	((laughs)) What do I have to expla:in, tell me,
2)	Ferit	( )	( )
3)	Fouzia	>Zeg maar<, >maar ik weet gewoon niet wat ik moet uitleggen<	>Tell me<, >but I just don't know what I have to explain<
4)	Student	Dee::z!	This one
5)	Student boy	Wat jij hier hebt geschreven.	What you wrote here. ((most likely pointing to Fouzia's writing))
6)	Fouzia	((lachend)) Marokkanen zijn echt vie::::s.... (hhhhhh) ...	((laughs)) Moroccans are really di::::rty.... (hhhhhh)
7)	Ferit	((seriously)) B, B hier.	((seriously)) B,B, here.
8)	Fouzia	Vooral in Hoograven.	Especially in Hoograven.
9)	Ferit	((geïrriteerd/ boos)) Doe normaal jongen!	((irritated/angry)) Behave yourself, man!
10)	Ilham	Ja, ik ben geen jongen??	Yes, I am not a boy.
11)	Fouzia	Ik ben gelukkig maar Ne:derlands! ( )	Luckily I am Dutch! ( )
12)	Ferit	Snap jij C, D?	Do you understand C, D?
13)	Fouzia	((lachend)) ??????	((Laughing)) ??????
14)	Ferit	Acht, zes?	Eight, six?

dirty. Next, she locates Moroccans in the migrant neighbourhood "Hoograven" where the students live and where the school is located. She disassociates implicitly from it, associating the other group members, and more strongly the boys, with "Moroccan" and thus with the migrant neighborhood. Her disassociation evokes a strong reaction by Ferit in turn 9. Ferit indicates that Fouzia is crossing a line and he corrects her behavior with "Behave yourself, man" (in Dutch she says "boy" instead of "man"). The tone of Ferit's voice is serious and angry while Fouzia mostly nervously giggles. Ilham answers for Fouzia with "I am not a boy," and Fouzia reacts to this in turn 11 that she feels lucky to be Dutch. Most likely Fouzia is referring to her Dutch citizenship that she uses to other the rest of the students, asserting their identities as Moroccan, while she associates herself with a Dutch identity. It is striking that Fouzia is othering the rest of the Moroccan students while also playing a tutor role, a role that is typically preserved for the Dutch students in this class (and rarely taken up by migrant students). It seems as if the recruitment of the tutor role in the school space, which is higher in status and is associated with "Dutch" in this classroom, permits her to adopt this "Dutch" position also in the space of the neighbourhood she is evoking. Here she positions her fellow students as minorities, seen through the eyes of the majority (Moroccans are dirty). The lived space she is bringing to the foreground is the immigrant neighbourhood as a location that is associated with ethnic prejudice.

Somewhat later, when Fouzia continues to claim her tutor role and denies Ferit a tutor position in the group, it is Ferit who explicitly associates with the migrant neighbourhood by saying "I am a Moroccan from Lombok" (Lombok being another migrant neighbourhood in the same town). At this point, he uses Fouzia's disassociation with the migrant neighbourhood against her. He is acknowledging Fouzia's position as "Dutch" and uses this migrant space to evoke the Dutch-Moroccan relationship as Fouzia did. Fouzia's reaction ("Should I be afraid of that?") indicates that here Ferit is using the migrant space to impress Fouzia as a "Dutch" person and to ask her to respect him from a migrant position, most likely as revenge for Fouzia's attempts to create a higher status position. He evokes a Dutch-Moroccan boundary (Moroccans evoke fear/need to be respected) from another position for which he, like Fouzia, chooses the neighbourhood as the lived space that connects with, and perhaps has formed the stage for the genealogy of, these boundaries.

In these examples, the migrant neighbourhood is used as a space where Dutch-Moroccan relationships are represented and confronted. The examples evidence a process of translation between school and non-school spaces as the migrant–non-migrant relationships are translated to the tutor–tutee relationship, functioning as expressions of majority–minority power relations. By adopting the non-Moroccan position in both settings, Fouzia others her fellow students by positioning them respectively as a novice (while she is the expert) and as a "dirty person" (while she is the one who has the right to make such claims), and she is able to construct a higher status position for herself relative to her classmates both in the school space and in the non-school space. Note that in these conversations it is the migrant

neighbourhood that is evoked for othering. Other than in the first examples, the migrant neighbourhood already stands for a common history and mutual knowledge of majority–minority relationships, even if it is only one generation old. Negative stereotypes of immigrants (Moroccans are dirty, the Dutch are afraid of young Moroccan boys) that represent part of the majority–minority history between Moroccans and Dutch are evoked, played with, and associated with the migrant neighbourhood. The migrant neighbourhood seemed to be used here as a space that represents this common history. This common history around majority–minority relationships is playfully recruited and inserted into the school space and used to establish a higher status position.

Multi-ethnic classrooms in the US: Generations of group contact

How does the case of othering between European-American and African-American students compare with the Dutch data? Across the following two episodes, representing a dominant pattern of the larger data set, students create representations and alignments of classroom and non-classroom social spaces in the service of othering, yet they seem reluctant to represent themselves as associated with any geographies outside of the classroom. Explicit association with non-classroom and sometimes even classroom social spaces raises the risk of social exclusion. In this context, students carefully manipulate social spaces through contextual shifting, constructing hypothetical situations, and discursively creating school spaces as powerful ethnic identity markers.

Discussion of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

The following segment of interaction is taken from a classroom discussion of the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The main topic of the discussion concerned whether the novel was racist or not. In one early instance, Ian, a European-American, responded to an earlier statement by Tony (African-American), in which Tony argued that the author overused the word "nigger":

What moves are made by Ian for othering? First, Ian builds a specific association between the represented social space of the novel in the American South of the mid-19th century and the social space of the Academy hallway. The social space of the novel – the story world of Huck Finn – is recruited and laminated onto the "hallway," as a social space of the school. He offers these two social spaces as equivalents. It is important to note that creating this type of comparative relationship at an abstract level, in which the particulars of the social space of the novel and that of the hallway are stripped away, is a valued school practice in many literacy classrooms. Second, simultaneous to this lamination of social spaces, Ian repositions the ethnicities of the perpetrators and victims of othering, thereby reversing the moral critique at hand. While the social space of the novel itself involves European-American characters using derogatory language toward African-Americans, in

Transcript 3. US data set

18) Ian: Or [Tony] said that they don't need to put nigger in every other sentence, as part of
the vocabulary? But if you walk down the hallway here you can hear black people say that
in every sentence, every other word almost.
19) Shameen: Nigger?
20) Ian: Yeah.
21) Shameen: In the Academy.
22) Rod: Not the same thing
23) Male: Differences ( )
24) Maureen: Lot of difference between those words.
25) Shameen: R:::R:::R:::
26) ((laughter, talk by several))
27) Ian: But you said, you said, in today's vocabulary, it said that ( ) if you want to (stop) nigger,
it's the same thing, really
28) Kareena: [Not really, they use, um, they use ( )
29) Tony: I didn't say anything like that.

Ian's new formulation those using derogatory language in the hallway are African-Americans. Moreover, the main topic under consideration in the immediate discussion ("Is the novel racist?") and the moral responsibility of the (European-American) author, are displaced in this repositioning.

Third, Ian positions himself as an insider to the African-American social space of the hallway and thereby appropriates their social space (See Transcript 3). He claims that he knows what they are saying and how often ("in every sentence, every other word almost"). Since these ethnically diverse groups share the same physical school space, he appears to assert, he is thus an insider to African-American cultural practices, including language use. He can completely understand this space as an insider, and morally evaluate it as an outsider. This stance of appropriating and erasing differences in a (physically) shared school space is quickly denied. Four African-American students chime in with challenges of questions (19, 21), disagreement (22), mockery (25), and rejection of evidence (28, 29). The effect of their critique is that Ian is refused entry inside their shared social space; Ian's attempt at othering is in this sense reversed. It is important to note that Ian's social-spatial moves – including turn-taking, chaining his contribution to a preceding remark, and giving an example for an argument – are forms of action that evoke and reproduce school discursively.

(continuing Transcript 3. US data set)

37) Kareena: OK, two things. To what Ian was sayin'? I don't think that the way people use, when he
was talkin' about people in the hallway, I don't think the way that people use nigger now, is the
same way that they meant it to hurt, that's totally different, and another thing, um, I know if I
was like sittin' in the classroom, and the majority was white, I wouldn't feel comfortable at all
readin' this book so I think that maybe it's good that they should ban this book cause it might
make black kids feel uncomfortable reading it. It might also make white kids feel uncomfortable
reading it to see how white people are ( ) in this book.

Kareena (an African-American student) offers the most extensive critique of Ian's argument several turns later:

Kareena's response involves two significant social-spatial moves. First, she dissociates or "breaks apart" the lamination of the social space of the hallway, as a schooled space, with the social space of the novel ("that's totally different, and another thing"). Like Ian's language, hers is somewhat abstracted from the actual situation; "people" are commented on but not ethnically different people. Kareena's second move is more complex. She is *in fact* an African-American who is sitting in a classroom, and "the majority [is] White," reading *Huck Finn*. Yet her commentary recasts the present social space of the classroom and her position in it as a hypothetical. In this manner, she relocates the conversation back in "the classroom" space (in contrast to the hallway, or the novel) without invoking this particular classroom and her own position in it. Kareena's use of the hypothetical is clever in that she can critique the activity of a "classroom" without precisely positioning herself in it, such that she avoids becoming the target of othering in future responses.

Tribal chief college mascot

In the following segment (See Transcript 4), students were discussing a documentary video they had seen concerning the use of a mock Native American tribal chief as a sports mascot for the local university. The mascot, a European-American male in costume, performed at sporting events, dancing and leading the crowd in mock-Native American cheers. Controversy surrounded the tribal chief mascot, as many believed him to perpetuate ethnically insensitive stereotypes, while others regarded him as important to the identity of the university and its teams. The teacher showed the documentary in class, and also invited a Native American guest speaker into class to share her views about the controversy. One student critiqued the documentary as follows:

Sam begins by critiquing the veracity of the account by the Native American woman speaking on the video. Like Ian in the previous data example, Sam appropriates the social space of the other. Here, in order to do so, Sam positions himself, historically, as sharing the "same" space: he is "at that age," going to "college games." As with the previous example of appropriation, differences between the social spaces are erased in the service of othering: the Native American boy's

Transcript 4. US data set

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75) Sam: And um, I wanted to say about the video, where [an interviewed Native American mother] is talking about her son going to the U. of A. game, at halftime, um:, her son like saw the chief come out, and he started, like, to cry because he felt he that he was being made fun of, or something like that, and uh, I just, I didn't really think that was, like, as truthful as she thought it was, or simply because, I just didn't think that could happen. Because I know when I was at that age and I used to go to college games, I never thought of the chief as, like, an Indian.
76) Benjamin: [to Sam, side-sequence] //What if it was a rabbi out there
77) Sam: A rabbi isn't a mascot.=

social space and position at the game is implicitly made to be the same as Sam's social space and position. Yet, unlike the Native American boy in the documentary, Sam is naïve and seemingly happy, not attending to ethnic identities. Because he does not take offense at the dancing chief, his account of himself is morally superior to the account of the Native American boy; moreover, his story is asserted to be more "truthful."

However, as Sam is building this argument, he is soon offered an alternative represented social space and identity position by Benjamin (European-American). Benjamin targets Sam's Jewish identity with the comment (76), offering it as side commentary. The move holds some features of the documentary film social space stable (e.g., the sporting event), yet Benjamin makes a character substitution, placing a rabbi in the tribal chief "slot." Next, two other African-American (male) students either repeat or affirm Benjamin's idea of the "rabbi" substitution. Ian's recreation of the represented game social space is a significant shift for othering in the classroom in that the conversation about ethnic difference at this point invokes someone in the classroom: represented (e.g., rabbi) and embodied (Sam as Jewish) classroom spaces are brought into alignment. Sam's quick and emotional response (77) in some ways shows that he has fallen for the trap – he has entered into the created association rather than distancing or abstracting himself from it (as did Kareena, above).

As if picking up on Sam's emotion and agitating it further, two students elaborate the relationship of the (newly) represented game space with the dancing rabbi. Shameen and Trent (African-American), sitting in a row of desks behind Sam and others, enact a lively pantomime of the rabbi's dance. Hence, the social space of the rabbi, dancing in the arena, was collaboratively extended even further into the classroom space across representations and embodied activity. Sam seemed angry and simultaneously embarrassed, or perhaps amused, smiling shyly in the midst of the increasingly boisterous interaction. Sam's final response in the extended episode, "You guys are always taking stuff I say out of context" is suggestive, in that Sam is responding to all of the contextual shifting occurring, even if the notion of notion of "taking out of context" does not precisely describe the constitution of social spaces as mechanisms of othering, described in this case.

Discussion

Our argument began with a socio-cultural perspective on ethnic identity production and reframed that view through a social-spatial lens. We claimed that through the spatial perspective on ethnicity we are putting forward, we are able to see how the construction of ethnic identities does not merely lead back to an ethnically associated place or origin, such as in arguments based on common or uncommon "descent." We have argued that ethnicity construction at the same time is not entirely removed from ethnic places. Instead, in line with current reconceptualizations of mobile culture, there is a need to understand the construction of difference in terms of the interrelatedness of spaces and the particular histories and meanings these have undergone through time. The complexities of the relations between the spaces

students recruited while constructing their ethnic identities that resulted from our analysis support these claims, as we will show below. We believe a historical lens, focused on the different ethnic intergroup relations through time, can be insightful for understanding the particular ethnic-spatial patterns found.

Different ways of recruiting social spaces for othering

In the Dutch classrooms, in the groups including the new migrants, students explicitly represent and compare homelands in the service of othering. In this case, where children have histories in multiple countries of origin, and where the history of immigration is relatively short, representations of other countries and places of origin is not obviously negative or risky; on the contrary, such representations are fronted in the service of comparing oneself to another, and especially (in our data) with respect to economic advantage or disadvantage. Students rank and sort one another relative to places of origin as a means of establishing school for themselves and potentially denying others rights or a sense of value. In the case of migrants who have had longer-term (20–30 year) contact with non-migrants, as is the case in the Dutch groups with only majority-minority students, at issue is not so much gatekeeping with respect to the possibility of a schooled identity, but rather the establishment of hierarchies within school. Such hierarchies are constituted by laminating schooled identities (e.g., tutor–tutee roles) with direct representations of social space, and in particular the migrant neighborhood. At this level of social history, disavowals of ethnic identity are also evident, a seeming trade-off for higher status in school.

With the much longer histories of group contact between African-Americans and European-Americans in the US, explicit references to other spaces outside of the classroom as a means of signifying identity become increasingly fewer in number. As social geographies of ethnic origin and neighborhood spaces of ethnic division develop longer histories, these histories are made less explicitly present as identity markers within school. Yet, ethnic identity marking itself does not drop away. On the contrary, school spaces become "loaded" or marked by ethnic confrontations. It appears that resources for othering become compressed within school spaces; social geographies of ethnicity become mapped onto the schoolyard. Comparing these three cases using an historical lens leads us to assume that the relation between space and ethnicity does not stay stable over time but changes fundamentally in character. Longer histories of group contact seem to make the reference to ethnically loaded spaces more complex and the use of spaces for ethnic othering more delicate or potentially risky, most likely due to the multiple meanings they carry along.

To what extent can we say that the recruitment of spaces for ethnic identity construction processes is typical for a particular inter-ethnic group, both in terms of the kind of spaces recruited and how they are used for boundary creation? The analysis revealed that the recruited spaces, as well as how they functioned in identity work, differed significantly across groups, although similar patterns could be found. In the Dutch data sets, the geographical space of the migrant neighbourhood is

offered (and contested) as an ethnic boundary to work out majority–minority or Dutch–non-Dutch relationships, whereas the geographical boundaries of home-lands are used to mark ethnic boundaries between the multi-ethnic and recent migrants. Furthermore, in the groups where majority–minority relationships were stressed (as with the US students), students seem reluctant to represent themselves as associated with any geographies outside of the classroom, as so doing raises the risk of social exclusion. Fouzia, for instance, dissociates from the Moroccans in Hoograven (her own neighborhood), indicating it as a dirty and dangerous social space and using this space for ethnic "othering." At the same time, suggesting that she cannot entirely dissociate from Hoograven, Fouzia asserts and reasserts that it is "lucky" she is Dutch. Fouzia's simultaneous othering and appropriation of a Dutch identity for her emplacement in Hoograven exemplifies a creative refashioning of self-in-place. In contrast, for the multi-ethnic groups, including recent immigrants, homelands were more straightforwardly evoked without the need to escape from or rework these places for identity purposes. The complexity of spatial representation and positioning was also evident in the case of the US classroom. Here, we see stu-dents disavow their own presence in ethnically charged spaces, including Kareena's disavowal of being black in a majority white classroom, which she offers as a hypo-thetical situation. Explicit talk of home country, home region, city, or neighborhood is absent in so far that it represents those who are actively present in the classroom. In its stead, discussions of social spaces beyond the school (related to class members) become highly abstracted, or occasions to develop the abstract space of schooled talk, which, although it may be personalized, is divorced from the social structures and spaces outside of school that impinge on the actual lives of students. A notable exception to this abstract talk is the manner in which representations of social spaces within school are used to signify ethnic identity. Ian's story of the term "nigger" being used regularly in the hallway by "black people" is his means of assuming knowledge and authority over a social space he assumes to be shared.

Historicizing the spatial production of ethnic identities

While bearing in mind that the construction of difference is a historically situated and spatially constituted phenomenon, we consider spatial practices of ethnic other-ing as a function of the histories of group contact among our three cases. Of course, there are other ways we could interpret this data, for instance, focusing on the developmental levels of participants, drawing contrasts between the various cultures involved, and others. We do not wish to deny the validity of such approaches, but rather posit the utility and potential power of a more fully developed spatial-historical analysis of ethnic othering, in school or out.

The picture is complex not only because of the relations of social space to history, but also because the histories of group contact are themselves multiple, including ethnic group level contact, individual contact in region, school integration, and classroom integration. As we are interested in broad patterns of practice and iden-tity, we have focused on group or social histories, contrasting groups who have

recently migrated with others who have several decennia of contact, and finally with groups who have over a few hundred years of contact.

A spatial methodology to analyze ethnic othering in schools

Reflecting back on the use of spatial methodology to study ethnic othering, we find that it has enabled us to do two different things. Apart from showing the multiple spaces that students recruit to construct ethnic identities – a direct response contrary to the traditional idea of a unique descent in ethnicity accounts – the social-spatial lens allows us to better trace how complex, nuanced, and often contradictory representations of ethnic identity can be in school. What the patterns across these various cases of representation make clear is that such representations are not merely flat semiotic relations of place–person–identity, but rather complex social fields on which particular positions (and counter-positions) are creatively constituted. The notion of the lamination of multiple spaces, as well as the idea that these spaces can be connected in several specific ways informing certain identity positions, has served to characterize inter-ethnic relationships in terms of particular ethno-spatial patterns.

Second, a social-spatial lens has permitted us to analyze how explicit or implicit representations are accompanied by specific school identity practices in which power relations between ethnic groups are implied. Fouzia, for instance, while dissociating from her own ethnic (Moroccan) neighborhood and claiming to be Dutch, simultaneously takes on the authoritative position of the tutor in the classroom. Similarly, while Ian attempts to appropriate and offer critique from "within" an African-American social space in the US classroom, he assumes school-sanctioned, authoritative practices such as chaining his discussion contributions, giving examples for arguments, and creating parallels among distant social situations. These powerful approximations of school – productions of social space in their own right – are also used for positioning and status marking of ethnicity. One's level of ability to create an insider position with respect to schooled behaviors and spaces is directly related to one's available set of resources for engaging in ethnic othering, should one so choose, while maintaining or furthering one's own status with respect to school. Therefore, if school becomes a more intensely negotiated and contested ethnic space over social history, as our data suggest, then specific institutional and interactional practices that appear to "domesticate" and support ethnic othering should come under greater scrutiny by researchers and educators. This kind of scrutiny and understanding of ethnic othering in schooling, we have argued in developing this new methodological approach, involves (re)asserting a perspective that the struggle for ethnic identity involves a struggle over social space.

Acknowledgment

Notes

1. The Dutch data set used for this analysis consists of video and audio taped math lessons of the same group of students that is followed in the 7th grade and in the 8th grade, meaning that students are from 11 to 13 years old. In these lessons, the students work in ethnically mixed groups involving Dutch, Dutch-Moroccan (the majority), Dutch-Turkish, Dutch-Yugoslavian, and Dutch-Ghanaian students. In Grade 7, 4 lessons of all the 5 groups were taped in May and June 2000 (20 lessons) and in grade 8, 5 lessons of 4 groups were taped in October 2000 (also 20 lessons) so that the whole set, from which the focal interactions were selected according to the above-mentioned criteria, comprises 40 lessons.

2. The research setting and population for the US study was the junior level (11th Grade, on average 16 years old) students within the Kempton Technological Academy (KTA), a school-within-a-school at Kempton High, in its fourth year of development during the research period. The data were collected through interviewing, video recording, field notes, and the collection of artefacts. The focal interactions were selected from a corpus of data that includes 85 hours of audio taped interaction (large and small student groups) and 45 hours of video taped interaction (mostly large group discussions) over a 10-month period.

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