

# The Method of the Socio-Spatial Map for the Reconstruction of Transformative Educational Processes in Educational Contexts

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**Abstract:** This article is concerned with the method of the socio-spatial map. It is a method that combines visual (sketches/drawings) with verbal expressions (interviews) in a triangulating manner. This process is particularly suited to empirical questions and analyses of *educational contexts, processes* and *strategies* within the framework of extended education, as they are too complex to be captured solely by a single method. Rather, educational processes require a methodical-methodological design that enables as holistic a reconstruction as possible, within the mode of language and visualization, fundamental dispositions, experiences and forms of processing (cf. Maschke, 2019).

**Keywords:** triangulating methodology on space, educational research on space, arts-informed research, documentary method

## The Socio-Spatial Map

### Characteristics of the Socio-Spatial Map

On the basis of the narrative map, an instrument used in narrative and visual social research in ethnographic orientation (Behnken & Zinnecker, 2010), we made modifications aimed at creating a *common* methodological basis for analysis (cf. Bohnsack, Michel & Przyborski, 2015, p. 20). In order to do so, the triangulating components of the narrative map – the verbal and visual components – were linked by means of the documentary method (Maschke & Hentschke, 2017). To emphasize the extended expressive possibilities and the interactivity between both methods (interviews and sketches/drawings) and the socio-spatial aspect of the map, we no longer speak of a narrative map, but rather of a *socio-spatial map*. This method has, on the one hand, a certain similarity to arts-informed research (Guruge et al., 2015, p. 1); this is a data collection method that combines “drawing activity” with “focus group discussions”. On the other hand, it is similar to narrative mapping (Thomson, 2019, p. 132) as “a form of visual storytelling” or “mental sketch mapping” (Giesecking, 2013, p. 712).

The socio-spatial perspective focuses on the social creation and appropriation of space and habitus. The tenets are (1) that spaces are constructed interactively. They are constituted “in the interaction between action and structures” (Löw, 2017, p. 191). Actors create spaces,

and in turn, the space also has an effect on them (cf. Hummrich, 2011). In addition (2), the effect of different and also divergent experiential spaces for the creation of habitus is significant. Taken together (3), the interactively generated social (and at the same time, spatial) action practices (cf. Hummrich, 2011) can be taken into account on this basis. In this way, educational processes or (reflective) educational moments can be identified (cf. Maschke, 2013).

### Implementing the Socio-Spatial Map

Like the narrative map, the socio-spatial map combines the graphical element of the drawing with the narrative (also guided) interview. Initially, an introduction impulse, adjusted to topic and age, is given, with which the respondents are invited to make a drawing/sketch of their personal space, e.g. of growing up during childhood or adolescence, or on specific transitions, with biographically relevant experiential spaces, stages, encounters, situations, events etc., and to talk (in parallel) about what seems significant to them. The entire process is recorded; any open questions are noted down for the subsequent interview phase. The first phase ends when the drawing is complete in the view of the respondent. This is followed by a follow-up question section and, if required, by a guided interview, which incorporates new content (cf. Behnken & Zinnecker, 2010). Individual parts/elements are then explained and/or evaluated by the respondents using standardized signs (e.g. plus or minus signs); for this, a transparent sheet can be laid on top of the sketch, or they can use a specially-colored pen to add something directly. The implementation of the socio-spatial map takes between approx. 30 minutes and one and a half hours.

## Theoretical Background

### Transformative Educational Processes

By connecting it to the concept of the subjective education space (in the tradition of socio-spatial analysis, *inter alia*, Kessl & Reutlinger, 2007; Deinet, 2009), the socio-spatial map can determine the habitual conditions of educational acquisition. Here, we refer back to the education-theoretical work on transformative educational processes (*inter alia*, Marotzki, 1990; Koller, 2010; Maschke, 2013; Nohl, Rosenberg & Thomsen, 2015). An international connection is produced via approaches of transformative learning (e.g. Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). In essence, these studies state that the transformation of the habitus arises from new *educational experiences*, which create a 'tension' in the current habitus (Maschke, 2013). The perception and release of this tension takes place within the self-reflective awareness or also the (self-)realization of biographical aspects – in our case with a view to the use and management of educational programs.

In both theoretical as well as methodological terms, the socio-spatial map draws triangulating research attention to cognitive-linguistic forms of expression in an interview as well as to a performative aspect, which finds its physical expression in the drawing/sketch (cf. Maschke, 2013). As such, the spectrum of possibilities of expression expands across a holistic approach, "room for the whole person-feelings as well as thoughts, body and soul, as well as mind" (Schapiro, Wasserman & Gallegos, 2012, p. 358-359) – which is particularly important for international comparative research. Though it hasn't been applied in in-