

# SPACE AND IMAGINATION

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## 1. THE EMPTYING OF (SOCIAL) SPACE IN THE GLOBAL AGE: IMAGINED LOCALITIES<sup>1</sup>

In the »Global Age« (Albrow 1996), the evolvment of which we are witnessing, (the control over) space is central. But, at the same time, the ever progressing movement of globalisation creates processes of a diffuse spatial disembedding and a »virtualisation« of real places. Maybe it is because of this both expansive and yet »inconceivable« character of globalisation that Hardt and Negri (2000: p. xii) conclude that the »empire« of global capitalism is »a decentred and deterritorialising apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm with its open, expanding frontiers«. The potential result of the disembedding processes of globalisation is, on the side of the individuals, a loss of anchorage in social space (and in local place). Possibilities of how this loss can be compensated for and especially how it is reflected in the (metaphorical) imaginations of people will be shown in the second part of this paper. In the following, it will be the task to demonstrate that spatial disembedding (on the local level) is a necessary »side effect« of the dialectics of global capitalism:

### A) THE DIALECTICS OF GLOBALISATION AND ITS ROOTS IN THE (ECONOMIC) DYNAMICS OF MODERNITY

Although certain aspects of globalisation, like intercontinental trade, did already exist in antiquity and in the middle ages (see also Wallerstein 1974: pp. 15ff. and ch. 2),<sup>2</sup> globalisation is, in its essence, a phenomenon of modernity. And, reciprocally, it is true: »Modernity is inherently globalising.« (Giddens 1990: p. 63) Following Marx and Engels (1888 [1848]), the driving force which keeps globalisation »in motion« and makes it tear down all borders and exceed all limits can be seen in the dynamics of (modern) capitalism: »The bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation of the world market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country [...] In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations [...]« (Section I)

In accordance to this (farsighted) understanding of modern capitalism, globalisation necessarily means a (spatial) extension, and one can classify its economy-driven movement either as progressive, as a manifestation of (neo-)imperialism or simply as being neutral.<sup>3</sup> Only one thing seems to be clear: globalisation is »the world-wide spread of previously locally bound economic, political and cultural patterns and the consequent construction of a global network« (Jain 2000: p. 73 [own translation]). Along with the global cross linking, a reflexive interdependence between global and local space evolves. This »reciprocity« is a crucial point in Giddens' concept of globalisation, as he asserts: »Globalisation can [...] be defined as the intensification of worldwide

social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa.« (1990: p. 64) Accordingly, in current concepts, globalisation is mostly conceptualised dialectically, i.e. globalisation is understood as necessarily being complemented with processes of (re-)localisation such as the extension of local consciousness or the modulation of the global flows according to the specific local conditions. This is why Roland Robertson (1995) prefers the (economy-biased) hybrid term »glocalization«.

#### B) THE BASIC CONTRADICTION OF GLOBALISATION AND ITS »CREATIVE« SOLUTION

The dialectics of globalisation thus reflects the dialectics of modernity (of universalisation and fragmentation, of integration and differentiation) on the spatial level. And it implies corresponding contradictions, since – confronted with reality – exactly the forward-driven, generalising and universalising tendency of the order of modernity sets a force to differentiation(s). The general creates – by its disaccords – the specific. With the contradictions of globalisation it is a similar case. On the one side, certain tendencies can be traced showing that the global flows (of people, symbols, technologies, money and ideas etc.) are increasingly disconnected; we face the emergence of the separated spheres of »ethnoscapes«, »mediascapes«, »technoscapes«, »financescapes« und »ideoscapes«, as Appadurai (1995) seeks to prove.<sup>4</sup> However, the primary and conjunctive motor of globalisation is still the expansionist dynamics of capitalism. Realising how the capitalist economy works, one is thus drawn to a basic contradiction of globalisation:

Capitalism relies, to put it rather simple, on the *exploitation of difference* (see also Jain 2004b). It can be, for example, a power imbalance (between capital and labour, between the »First« and the »Third World«, etc.), a (technological) competitive edge or a cultural difference (conveying, for example, ideas for new product lines or just creating export possibilities). The possible surplus, which is implied in such differences, is mainly realised through spatial progression, since only expansion allows the achievement of »critical mass« in production and the opening up of new, unsaturated markets. Accordingly, spatial differences become central, especially for advanced capitalism. »Without local differences globalisation could not ›take place‹.« (Jain 2002b: p. 9) It would (at least economically) be »pointless«. This factor can explain a big part of the recent interest for the local and its particularities.

But globalisation, as an expansive process, causes – however (superficially) locally adjusted – a homogenisation, a (sometimes rather forceful) equalisation of global spaces. (Advanced) capitalism, which is no more caught in the borders the state, thus undermines the base of its economy, for in its globalising dynamics it eliminates the (spatial) differences constituting the »ground« for its (necessary) economic growth. How can this dilemma, this contradiction be resolved? There is only one way out: differences have to be (»virtually«) created, »different spaces«, which satisfy the economic needs for (»useful«, exploitable) difference, have to be

imagined and produced. Hence, the expansionist movement of globalisation eliminates difference – by its mere dynamics, but also whenever difference takes the form of deviance and unfolds resistance. Difference, however, stays the fuel and base of (economic) globalisation. Therefore, certain »valuable« forms of difference (like poverty or a harmless but appealing cultural »flavour«) are artificially and violently sustained or creatively generated wherever they seem to evaporate (see also Jain 2005).

### C) IMAGINED LOCALITIES: THE QUESTION OF SPACE AND PLACE IN THE DIALECTICS OF GLOBALISATION

Accordingly, through globalisation the category of space (and its differences) becomes central. This does not only affect the economic sphere, but the whole society and culture. We face a collapse of temporality, as Fredric Jameson (1991) asserts in regard of the dominance of the spatial logic. That leads, being an effect of a lack of historical consciousness, to phenomenons of cultural »pastiche« and a specific »flatness« of the social space; and »[...] a model of political culture appropriate to our own situation will necessarily have to raise spatial issues as its fundamental organising concern.« (P. 51)<sup>5</sup>

This (real) importance of space (and its gradients), which has to be reflected conceptionally, does, however, not mean that the concrete places actually gained in relevance. In the »space of flows« of the network society, place loses its specifics and importance (see also Castells 1996). A distinct place which keeps an independent characteristic can possibly not be integrated seamlessly into the global network – as it would, maybe, develop a tenacious wilfulness (as its »sense of place«). Indeterminate, freely re-shapeable places are demanded. In order to integrate them into the global network, the »resistance« of the concrete places, which results from the anchorage in history and culture and the linkage to the »lifeworld« of their inhabitants, must be dissolved by the absorbing and – at the same time – disembedding power of globalisation. (Hyper)real non-places do come into being.

Following Michel de Certeau (1984 [1974]), who created this term, non-places are (symbolic) places that can be named but do not bear the character of a (structured) space of action: they are (urban) transient places, places of restless drift, of an endless search, of absence. They are – as Marc Augé (1995 [1992]) additionally and clarifyingly pointed out – places without identity and history that do not possess real relations to other places; they are merely functional places of passage, like waiting lounges or highways, to which their »users« cannot build a real relationship.

However, it is not so much the functional places of passage that I will refer to here. Instead, I will understand by a non-place a »hyperreal« place that was disembedded from its (lifeworldly) context in order to freely re-form its shape just to expose and stage its difference in contrast and in competition to other places. The equalising dynamics of globalisation leads to this kind of paradox production

if a place wants to keep or improve its position in the global network. Thus, the non-places of globalisation are *imagined localities*. They were created or re-shaped according to certain images. They are at the same time real and unreal. Similar to the final ossification of the »imagined communities« of the nation in the process of history (see Anderson 1983), the imagined localities represent a spatial reality that gains momentum with the staging of their fictional characteristic. After a certain time, these non-places are not just a mirror of the images that shaped them, but they reach in fact an »unimaginable« amount of reality.

They ought to bear this exaggerated form of »reality« to credibly expose their particularity, to attract and bind capital, investments and visitors, etc. Mostly, they hide their artificial character by a fiction of authenticity, since otherwise the »miracle of difference« would not work.<sup>6</sup> Their imagined authenticity has to be completed, they are flat and polished spaces, without fractions, without frictions, without starting points for practices of resistance. They duplicate in an accomplished manner their imagined reality, they are *more real than the real*, they are hyperreal »simulacra« of places (see also Baudrillard 1994 [1981]).<sup>7</sup>

As hyperreal non-places they are radically opposed to the non-place of U-topia. They eliminate all alternative visions by their evenness, their frictionless factuality. The imagination of Utopia is frozen to reality in the imagined locality (and is thus abandoned as a horizon), or, as Baudrillard (1990 [1983]: p. 71) remarked on the »postmodern condition« in general: »Everything is here, heaven has come down the earth, the heaven of utopia [...]«

The imagined localities expose their particularity, but they are neither heterotopias:<sup>8</sup> they are not »other places« in the sense of an embracement and enclosure of the other and the deviant, like »mental homes« or prisons, nor are they places that give »real space« to practices of resistance, since anything that is in contrast to the »dream« they stage (in order to position themselves in the global space of difference) has to be excluded. Their difference dissolves in identity as it is an exposure of an extraordinary character which is, however, in accordance to the common: the factual rules. Imagined localities are places of a paradox »compulsion of identity« (Adorno) which consists of the pressure of a performance of difference created by the economy-driven dynamics of globalisation.<sup>9</sup>

As non-places, the imagined localities share the character of being places of exclusion with the peripheral spaces, but the voidness and difference of the latter is of a different kind: the marginal regions of the global space are »different« because, for them, different rules and standards are valid, since, for example, sites of cost efficient production are needed. This form of difference is violently established and sustained (be it through neo-colonial practices or by tariff walls, etc.). Anyhow, the peripheral regions (independent from their actual geographic position) are only partially integrated into the global network – wherever they serve as a production site or as a market. Otherwise, they are shut out, and this exclusion works also symbolically, i.e. they are not represented in the global consciousness, they are inexistent.

The imagined localities are, to the contrary, (omni)present in the global space and consciousness. They are privileged spaces, but in order to enjoy their privilege they ought to pay the cost of adjustment. They must continuously create and stage their singularity and always have to care that it does not take the form of deviance. The permanent pressure for a hyperreal production and simulation of difference inhibits them from becoming real places: places of being, places of community, places of being different. And the »other« places that are left (and lost), the wide peripheral spaces of exclusion which are increasingly disconnected from the global network, do neither provide the framework for a »substantial« life nor the embedment for significant practices of resistance that could challenge the fatal global dominance of the dis-utopian imagined localities – as they are too »wasted« and disconnected from each other.

## 2. RE-CREATING SOCIAL SPACE: GROUP IMAGES

Both of the (contradictory) developments described above – the »assimilation« of global spaces and the resulting pressure for a creation of »virtual« spatial differences – potentially lead to a loss of anchorage in concrete social space: it does no more provide a real embedment. And where people are still bound to their local place(s) they rather feel imprisoned: caught in the narrow boundaries of the »third space« of exclusion, unable to move (because of the lack of money, or, because of the wrong citizenship, etc). If these spaces provide any bond, then it is to be called a limiting bond. What is more, the tendency of a spatial disembedment is fuelled by the general dissolution of social ties and frameworks which we are currently witnessing: the erosion of acknowledged family structures, the radical change of the old work patterns, the breakdown of neighbourhood networks, the corrosion of traditional milieus etc. (see eg Berger et al. 1974 and Jain et al. 2002).

It is, however, exactly these phenomenons of social and spatial disembedment that, in fact, also create a utopian longing for new forms of embedment on the level of the individual – which sometimes manifests in self-established group networks providing for what can be called »posttraditional ligatures« (see Keupp et. al. 2001): new »homesteads« in a world of global (ex)change. But how are those imagined and represented in the individual? Is it rather in the form of an idealising, romantic-nostalgic imaginative »re-creation« of what was lost? Or do the individual imaginations also point to a real utopian social space still to be established?

This important questions was (beside others) addressed in a qualitative study in the context of the »Collaborative Research Centre on Reflexive Modernization« at Munich (see Beck/Bonß 2001). The instrument used was a specific kind of metaphor analysis which will be described in the following.

A) METAPHORS AS A »CREATIVE« MEANS FOR INTER-ACTIVE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: INDUCTIVE METAPHOR ANALYSIS (METHOD)

Metaphors can be a very useful element of theoretical imagination. They offer the possibility to transcend the limits of (traditional) knowledge playfully and creatively, and thus the long history of the disregard of the metaphor seems to be over (see in detail Jain 2002a). Lately, it is also common to use metaphors as therapeutic means since they are in a close relationship to the unconscious (see eg Gordon 1978 or Kleist 2001). Exactly because of this close relationship to the unconscious the metaphor may as well serve as an empirical instrument of analysis. This can be both on the level of culture and society (see eg Cannon 2001) or in order to approach the hidden world of thoughts of »another«. Especially in social psychology metaphor analysis is more and more popular as a method of qualitative research (see Leary 1990 and Moser 2001).

The most common application of metaphor analysis is the retrospective search and interpretation of metaphorical expressions in given interview sequences. In general, the metaphorical portion of language is underestimated so that this method often can reveal new levels of meaning. However, the interpreter is more or less »floating« in metaphorical space: the readings cannot be reconnected to the »authentic« meanings. Since the metaphor analysis is applied retrospectively, there is no one to ask if the interpretations are/were correct. More advanced techniques of metaphor analysis try to avoid this problem by (methodological) »triangulation« (see in general Flick 2000) and repeated questioning: the metaphor analysis is supported by an extensive content analysis in order to prevent and correct »misunderstandings«; and there is a second round of interviewing discussing the interpretations of the metaphors that were extracted from the first interview with the respondents (see Schmitt 1995: pp. 117ff. and pp. 129ff.).

Beneath its undisputable advantages, this method, however, suffers from the relatively high effort which is needed because of intense preparations and two rounds of interviewing. It is thus not only hardly spontaneous in use, but still it is more or less uncontrollable to which subjects the detected metaphors relate. How to resolve this problem? How could the vivid, sensual-playful and creative-spontaneous moment of the metaphor be preserved and yet be directed to a *specific* field of interest? And how can the effort of a repeated interrogation be avoided without losing the possibility of verifying one's own interpretations?

The solution provided here is an *inductive method of metaphor analysis* – a term which is not meant to point to a possible use of metaphor analysis as a means of theory building, but it rather stresses that it is a method which *actively* seeks to induce metaphorical expressions. That means that the respondents are explicitly asked to generate metaphors and to interpret them immediately themselves and/or to comment on the interjected interpretations of the

interviewer. We may thus call it a reciprocal discursive »quest«, or, referring to Harré (1999) and his »positioning theory«, a doubled »forced positioning«.

In order to avoid too tight parameters and to also have the possibility to draw on given material (if existing) there are three steps each of which narrowing the focus: In the (facultative) first step, (self-)interpretations of metaphors which attracted the interviewer's interest (in a preceding part of the interview) are discussed. In the second step, an active input is set, i.e. it is asked for a metaphor symbolizing a given thing/idea/topic of interest. In the third step the request is concretised, focussed on a specific metaphorical field. This is necessary in order to give some support if an answer to the open question cannot be produced, but also to obtain a certain comparability.

In each step, it is the task to initiate a dialogical process of interpretation, which means to ask for the respondents' own readings, to demand explanations and to give own inputs or to just provoke (seeking to invoke agreement or rejection). The inductive method of metaphor analysis is thus indeed a reciprocal »quest game«: the interviewer forces his/her counterpart to generate and interpret his/her own metaphors. Yet, this means also a »forced positioning« of the interviewer who not only has to »make sense« of the generated metaphors but who as well has to »translate« and discuss the interpretation(s) of the respondent (with the respondent). The moment of discursive force is, however, complemented by a playful moment. The strict pattern of question and answer is loosened – and this way it is, maybe, possible to creatively reveal new levels of meaning.

#### B) CONCRETE GROUP-IMAGES AND THEIR »REFLEXIVE« POTENTIAL (DESIGN AND RESULTS)

The method of an inductive metaphor analysis was applied in the context of a research project which (in its phase one) sought to find and analyse different patterns of social positioning. The primary target was to find out if there are, beneath the processes of disembedding in the course of accelerated modernisation, traces of »posttraditional ligatures« and what they do/might consist of.<sup>10</sup> For this task, 40 people from different (group) settings were interviewed in the form of a – partly narrative, partly focussed – interview. The inductive metaphor analysis was a complementary part of the interview. The expectation was to get thus hints about the more latent positioning of the respondents towards their group contexts, but also to see if there are traces of new forms of social embedment – which, most likely, would be mirrored in the kinds of »group images« brought up by the respondents. Here, I will focus on this part of the results since they are directly connected to the question raised above: do the processes of spatial disembedding create a (utopian) longing for social »re-location« and how is this represented in individual imagination?

The three steps of the inductive metaphor analysis were actually translated into (research) practice as follows: first, »striking« metaphors which were used by the interviewees were focussed. The corresponding manual instruction was to catch up such images/metaphors and to invite the respondents to name further associations and give interpretations. The following short sequence of an interview with a student who belongs to the rave scene may serve as an example for the dynamics of (self-)interpretation which can thus be initiated:

Interviewer: Well, and before, I think, you also brought up an example with these battery powered people.

Sunshine: Yes. That's disturbing, this battery aspect. When it gets too clear, it troubles. Cause nobody wants, yeah, nobody really wants to realize that this battery aspect is behind it. All want to be cheated.

Interviewer: Could one call it thus a soap-bubble machine?

Sunshine: Yes, yes, sure. Yes. That's why it troubles you so much when you realize... Well, with the people who are too much into it you realize the battery. With the others it is like – Well, it becomes secondary. You don't ask about it, you don't want to ask about it. You want to take this beautiful world for real, at least during the party. And everything which is too much into it then disturbs. Alarm whistles then disturb and the white gloves and the floundering and – somehow it disturbs.<sup>11</sup>

»Sunshine« – which is the (indeed metaphorically instructive) self-assigned code name of the student – is clearly distancing here from the trance subscene (for which the alarm whistles and the white gloves are typical signifiers). This rejection is, however, rather a deflective projection, for in the course of the interview it became quite clear that »Sunshine« has an ambiguous position towards her group context. The ambiguity is, however, »overpassed« by a bifurcation of her lifeworld. »Sunshine« remarks: »It is simply a different world. It seems to me indeed a little schizophrenic. I simply can't do it – I may very well switch between the one world and the other, but I cannot connect them well.«

With this example one can clearly see how a simple input – the catching up of a used metaphor – can initiate a process of self-reflection which can reveal interesting details about latent positionings. This is also true for the steps two and three, which set an active input for generating a metaphor. In order to avoid a too narrow scope we first asked: »Can you think of any image or metaphor that could stand for your organisation/group/scene? What do you associate with this image/metaphor?« Then, more concretely, we requested: »Please, imagine your organisation/group/scene were a plant – which plant would it be? What do you associate with this image? Is there an example which could clarify what you mean by that?«<sup>12</sup>

The experience with the instrument of an inductive metaphor analysis was in general positive and encouraging. The element of both force and playfulness which was thus brought into the



interview situation was mostly accepted promptly and worked as a loosening of the dense interview situation. In some cases, the request for the generation of metaphors was, however, felt as an inconvenient discursive pressure, which was avoided by »silence«. We did not insist on an answer then, since when applying too much pressure it, anyway, is impossible to access the sphere a latent positionings (which was indeed our target). For this reason, not all of the 40 interviews could be used for the metaphor analysis, so the following (focussed) sketch of the results was created from the assessment of 35 cases.<sup>13</sup> As expected, it showed that answers to the open input were often rather hesitant (or were not at all given) whereas there were hardly such difficulties with the request for producing a plant metaphor: in a total of ten cases there was no answer to the unspecific invitation, but the specified request was successful. Only in one case it was vice versa and there was a reaction to the open input whereas no plant metaphor could be produced.

But let us now have a look at the results of steps two and three: it was one of the most striking results that, on the open input, the members of a local »amnesty international« group (which was one of our »target« organizations) produced mostly metaphors relying on the »official« imagery of their organization. Answers like »Picasso painting with dove«, »light in a prison cell«, »candle with barbed wire«, »prison gate with a gleam of hope« and »sunbeams shining into a jail« were given – all of them being images and symbols which »amnesty international« uses for its campaigns and which seem to have a great »symbolic power« so that it was obviously quite hard to detach from them for the members. As far as the dialogical interpretation is concerned, there were, accordingly, hardly any surprises, but the reproduction of the group stereotype of being a beneficial human rights organization predominated. Paradoxically, only when the focus of imagination was tightened by demanding a plant metaphor some group members showed a greater reflective distance and left the narrow path of group stereotypes.

It was a similar case with the members of a group of Turkish (second generation) immigrants: this group explicitly considers itself to be a kind of compensational family, and thus two out of four respondents from this group spontaneously answered »family« on the open input. Also a member of the Kolping-organisation relied on this same metaphor (which is indeed even a part of the group labelling).<sup>14</sup> And in two more cases reference was made to (semi-)»official« or other juxtaposed group related imagery: a member of a volunteer fire department answered »fire truck«, and the raver »Sunshine« (whom we already got to know) referred to the »Love Parade«-logo – which she, however, mistook for a sunflower. Of course, with so few cases, one cannot generalize this result, but one may well assume a tendency that whenever group specific symbols exists, these are referred to promptly, do embed in individual thought and thus represent a normalising power which should not be underestimated.

In general, the most popular metaphors were plant metaphors like »tree«, »blowball«, »colourful bouquet«, »ivy«, etc. so that a subsequent specified input for metaphorisation could be skipped

in eight cases. But also some rather »unconventional« respectively potentially »transcendent-utopian« metaphors were displayed (like »Noah's Ark«, »balance«, »scree slope«, etc.). Two examples shall be examined a bit more in detail, since this kind of material is of a special concern for the question raised if there are traces of new forms of social embedment which are reflected in and revealed through the metaphors chosen. The first sequence is taken from an interview with a member of a local exchange trading system:

Interviewer: Maybe just a last question concerning your volunteering. If you were to symbolize it with a metaphor or with an image, which one would you choose for the local exchange trading system?

Carola: For my volunteering in the local exchange trading system or for the local exchange trading system in general?

Interviewer: No, the local exchange trading system. Which image would you choose?

Carola: Well, it always seems to me, as one would imagine that, like a nerve cell in the brain which – where ever more synapses connect which then more and more network. There are many around, nerve cells, but, well, the connections are becoming more and more. It can grow.

Here, »Carola« (self-assigned code name) describes in an almost paradigmatic manner a model of self-organised networking by using the metaphor of nerve cells. Seeking for metaphoric manifestations of posttraditional ligatures one could be quite happy getting such an answer. On the other hand, the image is so pertinent that it is – in spite of its indeed utopian character – close to a stereotype. This is underlined by the fact that the (bare) self-interpretations do not transcend what anyway would have been expected. So what »Carola« stated herself is quite true: everything is quite »as one would imagine that«. The following sequence with the leader of the second generation immigrants' group gives a different impression:

Interviewer: And when you think of, beneath family, of another metaphor, another image, what comes into your mind for representing this group?

Aische: Well, I don't know, a horde of, maybe, elephants.

Interviewer: A horde of elephants?

Aische: Yes.

Interviewer: But why elephants and why a horde?

Aische: Well, first elephants because elephants are big, quite strong and stick together, they care for their babies and friends, well, in this horde. The cohesion is very much there. And that is, I believe, the same with the elephants. That's why.

Interviewer: But the elephants, well, they seem very big and very powerful, don't they? If one, well, when I now imagine, it could maybe cause fear seeing such a horde of elephants which...

Aische: Should indeed cause fear.

Interviewer: Yes?

Aische: That's my wish, yes. Perhaps elephants because, actually, I see the future lying in them. I suppose, it is them who, maybe, will change something in this society. Well, because there is also a rising generation, well, the children are the future of this society, but also these parents, the second generation.

This is indeed rather an unconventional metaphor. It clearly conveys a positively biased view towards the own group context, but, on the other hand, the chosen image and its (self-)interpretation reflects the problematic situation of immigrants: one has to bear up against a hostile environment and this is only possible through solidarity. And »Aische« (self-assigned code name) knows that certain targets (like political and legal equality or the elimination of prejudice) will not be realised in the generation of the parents, who themselves were mostly born and brought up in Germany, but will only be reachable for the generation of the children – if there is a lot of effort and support. It is thus not an »plain« metaphor. There are, also in the interpretation, ambivalences and distractions which provide anchor points for further explorations and give clues about latent positionings.

In combination with the analysis of the other parts of the interview it becomes quite apparent that »Aische« herself is a rather active, vigorous person, who, however, shows little understanding if others do not share this attitude towards life. The elephant horde is both an idealised image and the realistic metaphorical description of the social position of immigrants who are »condemned« to solidarity and collective action in order to change something. This view is also expressed through the plant metaphor that »Aische« picked:

Interviewer: And if you now imagine that it were a plant, what kind of plant could it be?

Aische: A plant? I wish, maybe, yes, weed.

Interviewer: Weed?

Aische: Yes. Bad weeds grow tall.

Interviewer: Bad weeds grow tall. Mhm.

Aische: Well, something vivid, immortal.

Interviewer: But it is fought, isn't it?

Aische: It should be.

Interviewer: It should be?

Aische: That's good that way. Since by fighting it new energies arise to survive.

The quite combative attitude of Aische becomes clearly visible with this weed-metaphor. The span of plant metaphors in general varied from rather common images like »green meadow« and various sorts of trees, etc. to more exotic metaphors such as »opium poppy« or »trumpet flowers«. It was striking (however, not very surprising) that certain metaphors like »rose« or

»blowball« were picked from several respondents. Also »cactus« was chosen from three persons. Yet, »Sunflower« was, by far the most popular metaphor (five references).

Here, it is quite interesting to analyse if one can find differences in the associations and self-interpretations in spite of the use of the same metaphor. In the case of »sunflower« almost everybody had positive associations such as »light«, »hope«, »flourishing«, »growth«, »warmth«, etc. Only the raver »Sunshine« also mentioned the moment of fading which she associated with the giddiness of the scene: »As I told, new styles develop very fast and old ones, well, they don't vanish, but they tail away relatively soon.« She also stressed that sunflowers need a lot of water and light in order to survive. This demonstrates that »Sunshine« does critically reflect the chosen image and also points to negative points that might apply to her scene context.

Such a comparison of associations and interpretations is even more instructive in the case of the »family«-metaphor which was, as mentioned above, picked by two members of the immigrants' group and by one member of the Kolping-organisation. While the first exclusively referred to moments like growing together, solidarity and trust, the Kolping-member showed a more differentiated interpretation. »Ralf« (self-assigned code name) answered on the question which image could match his group: »Well, a rather well-worn one that Kolping itself likes to use a lot: I would indeed use the image of family. Since, well, for me it represents everything that is there; that is the problem of adults with teenagers which might become fullfledged and have different needs and wishes than adults. Yes, and also quarrel, but then, perhaps, also, when attacked from the outside, that everybody stays together even if there are other points where there is no agreement. Well, in my opinion the term family is quite matching.«

In this understanding of family there are thus both elements present: solidarity and trust are reported to be important but also internal problems and frictions are not excluded, while the two members of the immigrants' group exhibited a heavily idealized understanding of family. This idealised view of family is possibly predominating here since with most members of this group, the »real« family structures are everything else than fortunate: many family-related problems were reported. The group therefore in fact works as a kind of compensational family providing in fact »posttraditional ligatures« – bonds, but without unnecessarily limiting individual freedom and resting on the principle of volutary membership. In this example we therefore find a rare combination of both idealised – and (with the case of Aische also) utopian – imagery and a real social space providing a new kind of ties.

### C) IMAGINATIVE FULFILMENT? (CONCLUSION)

But what can we learn in general from the analysis of the space of metaphorical imagination? In our world of an endangered social and local space, do we have hints about a longing for

the re-establishment of lost embedment? Or does the imaginative representation of social context even point to a utopian space?

In order to properly answer this question we first have to make a distinction between the sphere of metaphor itself and the sphere of interpretation. Concerning the concrete image sphere, we may find both reflexive and »deflexive« metaphors. Reflexive metaphors I call those which a) represent unconventional, utopian-transcendent imaginations (examples: scree slope or opium poppy) and/or b) imply some sort of tension, dynamics or ambivalence (example: horde of elephants) – since only then they do provide anchor points for imaginations reaching further than the »original« notion. The term »reflexive« thus means in this context the reflection of ambivalence and the contradictions of being in order to change the world. Deflexive metaphors, to the contrary, work towards a deflection of ambivalence and contradictions in order to keep things as they are (see for a more detailed outline of this distinction Jain 2000: ch. 5.2). Deflexive metaphors can thus be a) stereotypes and adopted images (like, in the case of amnesty, »light in a prison cell«) or b) idealising, static-descriptive images (like »balance«). However, the same distinction can be applied on the sphere of interpretation, and a metaphor which itself seems to be rather »reflexive« (as it is unconventional and/or provides anchor points for utopian imaginations) can be interpreted deflexively, while a rather deflexive metaphor (a stereotype etc.) can as well be interpreted in an (unconventional) reflexive way (as the example of »family« – as it was interpreted by the Kolping-member – demonstrated). So we can divide the »metaphorical field« as follows:

Image Sphere	Sphere of Interpretation
reflexive: a) unconventional, utopian-transcendent imaginations b) vigorous, tense, dynamic and ambivalent images	reflexive
	deflexive
deflexive: a) stereotypes, adopted images b) idealising, static images	reflexive
	deflexive

**Table 1: Distinctions in the Space of Imagination**

Both reflexive and deflexive metaphors are rather expressions of wishes than mere »descriptions« of factual group structures (although one might thus get important clues of the latent positionings of the respondents towards their social group contexts). Obviously, deflexive metaphors (especially idealising, static images) and deflexive ways of interpretation are most likely manifestations

of a longing for the reestablishment of lost (social and local) embedment – especially where no signs of disembedding appear at all and the moment of challenge is totally neglected. They seek to »virtually« recreate a secure space of belonging. Reflexive metaphors and ways of interpretation can also be expressions of that loss, but instead of simply seeking for (imaginary) reestablishment, they point to new ways of situating oneself and social interaction.

Although being far away from being able to making »representative« statements, it was a very striking observation to find that many respondents originating from rather »traditional« group settings (such as Kolping) had a tendency to choose »tense« metaphors or to show ambivalent positionings in their interpretations. One reason could be that the traditional contexts are more affected from the ongoing transformation processes so that contradictions become visible: the pressure from the outside translates into internal tensions, which not only – sometimes – create a significant amount of self-reflexivity but also manifest in the chosen metaphors and their interpretation.

A similar amount of (self-)reflexivity was rare with members of groups belonging to what could be called the cluster of »classic« new social movements (such as amnesty international). To the contrary, a tendency was predominant to lean on given imagery and stereotypes. Current processes of change and (resulting) problems, which, of course, are as well present here, were mostly deflected in order to stabilize the existing self-image of the group. This is possible since, in these contexts, it is – still – relatively easy to bridge the tensions and ignore the transformations. Utopian-transcendent images were in general rare and the few examples came mostly from members of the rather fluid and posttraditional group contexts. Possibly it is especially these contexts which provide the space for (imaginative) fulfilment of new visions of social space – and thus create the basis for a real building up of utopian space.

**NOTES:**

1. For a more detailed discussion with the example of the village of Oberammergau, please, see Jain 2004a.
2. The famous distinction between core, semi-periphery and periphery was established by Wallerstein in this volume.
3. In spite of their critique of capitalism and imperialism, Marx and Engels seem to have interpreted globalisation in the first sense, as they (appreciatory) remarked on the historical mission of the bourgeois class: »The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian [!], nations into civilization.« (Ibid.)
4. Appadurai thus considers concepts referring to the opposition of core and periphery as outdated. And, beneath tendencies of nationalist or fundamentalist regress, he also sees the opening up of new spaces in the system of global flows, which can be used for progressive transnational alliances and for a widening of individual horizons (see *ibid.*: p. 308).
5. Similarly, Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) revealed already in the 1970s that the survival of capitalism is currently increasingly dependent on its capacity of a capturing of (global) space, which is why a spatial thinking has to complement historical analysis.
6. The »virtual« worlds of amusement parks like »Disney World« or artificial landscapes like in the »Eden Project« (see <http://www.edenproject.com>) make an exception.
7. Thus, hyperreal simulation is in explicit contrast to the symbolic (and the metaphoric), which do not duplicate reality but represent a (u-topian) alternative (see Baudrillard 1993 [1976] as well as, in an overview, Jain 2002a: 122–133).
8. For Foucault (1986 [1967]: p. 24) heterotopic places are »real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.« He differentiates crisis heterotopias (special places for people in a special situation), heterotopias of deviation (where the deviant is locked), heterotopias of illusion (representing an illusionary space, which means that the entering of this space is in fact an exit) and heterotopias of compensation (which do compensate, on a limited space, for the deficiencies of reality by the realisation of an ideal).
9. Accordingly, the imagined localities cannot count as heterotopias of illusion nor of compensation (see above), since they are not the limited reality of a dream nor are they an illusionary space of difference; they are not opposed to reality, they are the (hyperreal) duplication reality within their imagined space.
10. The project is titled »Individualisation and Posttraditional Ligatures«, and it is part of the »Collaborative Research Centre on Reflexive Modernisation« at Munich. For an overview of the total agenda, please, see Beck/Bonß 2001. I am here referring to the first period from 1999 to 2002.

11. All the quotations from interviews were translated from German into English.

12. The actual formulation, had, of course, to be adopted to the respective interview situation.

13. We questioned people from ten different group settings (four from each), which itself were chosen by the method of theoretical sampling in order to ensure the most possible achievable diversity. In fact, this led us to interview people from a local »amnesty international« group, a volunteer fire department, the »Kolping« organization, a local group of the »Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants«, a neighbourhood network, the »Naturfreunde« (a workers' recreation organisation), the rave scene, members of a local exchange trading system, members of an second generation immigrants' group and four internet »networkers«. For details also about the sampling criteria etc. see Keupp et al. 2001.

14. The Kolping-organisation is a beneficial Catholic lay men's organisation, which is structured by so called »families«.



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