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An Overlooked Lens: Applying Structuration Theory, Actor-Network Theory, and Theories of Space to Service-Learning

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Although service-learning is clearly a social phenomenon involving interactions between people in social environments, little scholarly attention has been given to the ways in which sociological theories illuminate how service-learning is enacted and sustained in schools. This conceptual article takes a fresh (and perhaps overdue) look at academic service-learning (both K-12 and higher education) through three sociological lenses: Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, and Henri Lefebvre's theories on the production of space. The article describes each theory as it relates to the understanding, initiation, implementation, institutionalization, and study of service-learning. The theories highlight important aspects of academic service-learning, including areas that other theories have missed such as how service-learning actors must exploit enabling aspects of school structures and spaces to overcome constraints, the importance of non-human agents in service-learning programs, and challenges service-learning advocates face in reconfiguring school spaces for service-learning. The author also describes and examines limits of each theory as well as implications for research and practice.

Keywords: *service-learning, structuration, actor-network, space, civic engagement*

Service-learning (SL) is a teaching and learning strategy in which students conduct service that is directly tied to their academic curricula, education standards, and grades. In SL projects, students apply (through service) a range of academic content and social, civic, or job skills that teachers want them to learn. Student service of this type is thus both a means and an application of learning. Well-designed SL has been shown to improve student academic, social, civic, and career outcomes (Billig, 2000; Furco & Root, 2010; Moely, Furco, & Reed, 2008).

Initiating, supporting, and sustaining SL inherently involves human interactions, practices, structures, and networks. Crotty (1998) characterized such systems as "being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). Service-learning has theoretical roots in the works of Dewey (1916) and James (1912) and is typically viewed through humanist, pragmatist, interpretivist, and constructivist lenses. Service-learning is also a form of experiential learning, and so experiential learning theory and its cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984) offer a relevant overall theoretical framework, or lens, for SL. Kolb, however, does not address SL explicitly.

Since this article examines ways in which sociological theories illuminate practices around service-learning implementation and institutionalization, research related to SL adoption and institutionalization is relevant. Adoption research (Krebs, 2008; Torres & Schaffer, 2000; Umpleby & Rakicevik, 2007;

Young, Shinnar, Ackerman, Carruthers, & Young, 2007) has described supporting and inhibiting factors for initiating service-learning programs. Similarly, sustainability studies have identified SL supports, such as institutional policies, resources, and infrastructure, and strategic actions such as planning, training, and hiring practices (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Furco, 2002; Gelmon & Agre-Kippenhan, 2002; Prentice, 2002; Vogel, Seifer, & Gelmon, 2010; Young et al., 2007). However, these studies have not typically employed a sociological lens.

Because of SL's clear link with social practices, sociological perspectives can help illuminate how SL is established, produced, and sustained at the school and school system levels. This article explores ways in which structuration, actor-network theory, and theories of space resonate with and inform understandings of SL in school settings. Schools—both K-12 and higher education—are fundamentally social systems involving people who interact with each other to achieve a range of individual and shared goals, so it is appropriate to examine them through sociological lenses. It is worth noting, however, that while each of these theories arguably contributes to understanding academic SL, none of them fully encompasses the topic or is wholly applicable.

Methods and Sources

The theory applications herein are exploratory and derive primarily from analysis of the following seminal works: Giddens' (1984) *The Constitution of Society*, Latour's (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, and Lefebvre's (1974, trans. 1991) *The Production of Space*. The author also reviewed secondary literature on these theorists. Sources referenced and cited in the article were obtained through the search engines ALADIN and Google Scholar. The selected articles were accessed from multiple academic databases and online resources, including EBSCO Host, ABI/Inform Complete Plus, ProQuest Information & Learning, Wiley Online Library, JSTOR, Project Muse, and PsycInfo. Only sources in (or translated into) English were reviewed, and no time limits on publishing periods were used in searches.

Giddens, Structuration, and Service-Learning

Anthony Giddens' structuration theories (1984) are a good place to start, as several structuration concepts apply in academic SL efforts. Giddens (1984) defined structures as "organized sets of rules and resources" (p. 25). Human agents form and transform structures, within which they create systems of social practices whereby the "structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize" (p. 25). Structures both support and inhibit human action or agency, and "structuration" refers to the "structuring of social relations across time and space, in virtue of the duality of structure" (p. 376).

School Structures

K-12 and higher education institutions are organizational structures that encompass other structures—that is, they are structures of structures. Relative to Giddens' (1984) broad terms, schools are embodiments of routines, resources, actions, tactics, rules, formulas, and patterns manifested in structures that are produced and repeated through human practices over time. These structures offer both rules and resources into which a new strategy such as SL must be successfully inserted if it is to be institutionalized. The structures—systems, procedures, buildings, practices, hierarchies, funding mechanisms, etc.—mark and confine the context in which SL actors operate.

School structures take multiple forms, including those related to scheduling of time, student progression, subject, activity, hierarchy, policy, and governance. Action is framed by location, precedent, buildings, time of day and year (to the minute in many cases), subject, age of the student, curricular frameworks, assessments, and many other structures. As Giddens (1984) suggested, the structural properties of schools are human creations carried in reproduced and replicated practices embedded in time and space. These structural properties, asserted Giddens, both constrain and enable (or provide resources for) action such as SL.

Fitting Service-Learning into Existing School Structures

The challenge for those advocating the integration of SL into schools is that doing so represents the introduction of a new and alternate set of structures into an existing system. Recognizing, understanding, and making changes to existing structures brings Giddens' (1984) notions of reflexivity and of discursive and practical consciousness into play. The distinctions between these terms are relevant both for understanding SL and for initiating and sustaining academic SL practice. More than many other structures, school systems are characterized by routine, what Giddens (1984) calls the "*dureé* of day-to-day experience" (p. 8), particularly at the K-12 level.

Roots of this high level of structure lie in the application of factory or industrial models to education in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Mass production models were utilized to accommodate burgeoning numbers of children who were mandated to attend school. Such models were seen as useful for controlling large numbers of children and for training them for future work in factories that utilized similar structures (Geitz & Heideking, 2006; Rose, 2012). Even today, quotidian educative and administrative activities are shaped so significantly by structures that predictability is the expectation and actors operate on a semi-conscious time-space autopilot that Giddens (1984) termed "practical consciousness" (p. 4) and which at times parallels Skinnerian or Pavlovian conditioning—that is, everyone responding to the ringing of a bell (Skinner, 1963).

By contrast, SL is defined by reflective action, nimble response to identified needs, reciprocal relationships, and student empowerment (Follman, 2011; Furco & Root, 2010; National Youth Leadership Council, 2008). Every project is unique, and no project is ever replicated exactly because each project also impacts the specific need it addresses. Service-learning students are encouraged to use their discursive consciousness and re-examine the taken-for-granted world around them to recognize and articulate issues and problems and then apply learning in the design and implementation of SL projects to address identified needs. At the structural levels of a school, the discursive consciousness of actors must also be engaged so policymakers, teachers, and administrators can recognize the limits of established pedagogies, which in many cases lack practical applications, stifle student voice and creativity, are driven by mandated assessments instead of meaningful learning, and bore students to the point of driving many of them to drop out.

In declaring that structural properties both enable and constrain action, Giddens did not identify where the balance lies between enabling and constraint. Regarding SL in schools, the balance would seem to tend more toward constraint. Making time for SL; fitting it into established curricula, pedagogy, syllabi, testing requirements, and schedules; and assessing its interdisciplinary, academic, interpersonal, civic, and skills impacts in a system that is time-, subject-, and routine-bound are all expectations that help to explain why so few schools are able to sustain large-scale or system-wide SL efforts.

Agency, Time, Location, and Routinization as Enabling and Constraining of Action

Institutionalizing SL in school systems requires something akin to Molotch's (1993) structuration comparison of students cutting across a university quadrangle to make a new diagonal path. Such paths are initially informal, even transgressive. Those who blaze them are viewed as pathfinders if they succeed—but as dreamers or disruptors if they fail. The administrators, leaders, or teachers who carve new SL paths are actors who tap the agency they have within existing structures in the school system. To do so, they act consciously and employ what Giddens (1984) termed "discursive consciousness" (p. 45). Such agents do not go along unthinkingly in the normal flow and boundaries of their structures; rather, they use their talents and the enabling aspects of school system structures to overcome the constraining aspects of those same structures.

Because structures are properties of social systems (Giddens, 1984), SL agents need to discursively articulate their vision to gain support and resources; they must be "able to put things into words" (p. 45) to persuade others to join them on a new SL path. Giddens (1984) wrote that making a change within an established structure requires that the change become "grounded in the practical consciousness" (p. 60) and "reflexive monitoring" (p. 376) of others. This grounding is "vital to the theory of structuration" (p. 60). An SL proponent is a "purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if

asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons" (p. 3). Indeed, a consistent feature of schools with sustained SL is the presence and action of agents who are able to articulate an SL vision and enlist others to support it.

Other relevant and entwined structuration concepts include Giddens' (1984) notions of "time-geography," routinization, and location. A new strategy like SL must be incorporated within "the routinized character of daily life" (p. 111) in a school, which has schedules that are strongly fixed because they have worked over time and reflect Hagerstrand's (1975) facets of time-geographic reality and finitude relating to basic human capacity. There are limits to the number and type of tasks that people can do; to their energies, capabilities, and lifespans; and to how they can utilize space. Schools are crammed with activities, and teaching is a mentally and physically taxing profession. Most educators are not trained in the SL pedagogy, and engaging in it requires that they take on more work. If SL efforts result in improved learning, more fulfilling teaching, and support from administrators and peers, the chances are good that SL can become a routinized practice. If positive results cannot be envisioned or do not occur quickly enough, educators and their administrators have little incentive to engage or persist in SL practice.

Quoting Elster (1978), Giddens noted that the "reproduction of particular cultural, economic, and political institutions in time and space are continually bound up with the temporally and spatially specific actions, knowledge build-up, and biographies of particular individuals" (p. 134, in Giddens, 1984, p. 367). Space, locations, buildings, timing, available resources, etc., comprise the milieu in which individuals and groups (such as SL proponents) act. Their actions are framed, bound, and resourced by place, time, and their dealings with others acting more or less consciously around them. Schools with sustained SL have appropriated and transformed existing structures to make SL a routinized part of them.

Confining structures of schools have been articulated, including schedules, rules, systems, procedures, building designs, practices, hierarchies, and funding mechanisms. In schools that have institutionalized SL, there must also be—based on structuration theory—one or more of the following compensatory *enabling* scenarios at work:

(1) These locations have more supportive and facilitative structures than other schools;
(2) These schools possess a serendipitous co-location of multiple discursive SL agents to bring others to a level of consciousness to accept SL; or,
(3) Such schools have one or more SL champions with the skills, talents, and dedication to singlehandedly sway influential others. (Fiske, 2002)

It is worth exploring whether these SL agents might have succeeded in another place, time, or school: Was there something about where one or a few persons happened to be at a particular point in time that determined the success or failure of the SL initiative?

If one accepts Giddens' (1984) theories about agency, the simultaneously confining and enabling aspects of structure, and the inextricably entwined nature of factors such as location, social practice, routine, positioning in time-space and -geography (the latter of which resonates with Latour's ANT theory discussed later), then structuration is a helpful and applicable theory for examining how and why a practice like SL does or does not become sustained in a school. To succeed, SL must fit within a unique time, place, community, school, and set of actors, goals, and policies. In addition, SL proponents must be conscious, articulate, and discursive advocates to help others understand SL's benefits.

Many existing school structures—for example, schedules, costs, extra work, foci on test scores, etc.—serve as SL barriers. This "*dureé* of day-to-day experience" represents a routine that not only must be disrupted to add SL but is temporally bound to individuals (even effective SL agents) and thus inherently finite. For SL to become institutionalized, it must become part of what Giddens (1984) called "the *longue dureé* of institutional time" (p. 35)—enacted by individuals but sustained and embedded into structures to the point that it is "supra-individual" (p. 35) and lasts beyond single teachers, administrators, and lifespans. Schools that have sustained SL have embedded it into key long-term structures such as policies, professional development, leadership, curricula, partnership, hiring practices, rewards, and

budget lines (Fiske, 2002). The term "*longue dureé*" is useful for characterizing instances in which SL has been institutionalized in schools. When this happens, a new SL "path" has indeed become a "structure of behavior … created through the exercise of human agency; the more humans act, the stronger becomes the structure that encourages that human action" (Molotch, 1993, p. 47).

Limits of structuration in explaining service-learning

Structuration theory is ostensibly presented as universally applicable, but Giddens (2000) writes from a perspective that is White, male, Western, and self-avowedly metropolitan. As a result, Giddens' conceptions of structure, agency, and social systems may not be as applicable in non-Western cultures, other ethnic groups, among women or the poor, or in rural areas—which comprise significant fractions or the majority in many U.S. school systems. Giddens (1984) himself articulates another limitation of structuration theory:

> There are no universal laws in the social sciences, and there will not be any … because … the causal conditions involved in generalizations about human social conduct are inherently unstable in respect of the very knowledge (or beliefs) that actors have about the circumstances of their own actions. (p. xxxii)

It is likely that, just as every SL project is unique, there will be unique elements in every school that has been able to sustain it. Therefore, structuration theory is partly applicable to SL, just as Giddens declared it is to the social sciences in general. If "universal laws do not exist in the social sciences" (Giddens, 1984, p. 344), then to what degree do they exist for sustaining SL in schools? Structuration theory, therefore, provides only partial illumination and explanation of the phenomenon of service-learning.

Latour, Actor-Network Theory, and Service-Learning

Latour's (2007) actor-network theory (ANT) also contributes to understanding how SL can become embedded in schools. For Latour, "the social" refers to social processes or actions and influences on them. In his treatise on ANT, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Latour (2007) asserted that conventional sociology is prone to labeling, delimiting, and simplifying influences on human action and society—that is, the "social"—when it should be examining or tracing the "types of aggregates thus assembled and … the ways they are connected to one another" (p. 22). Instead of trying to reductively assert what comprises the social, Latour suggested that we focus on the multitudinously interacting actors (or "actor networks") themselves and trace their activities by examining their associations, networks, and inscriptions (i.e., texts and images). By creating a "sociology of associations" (p. 12) instead of a sociology of the social, we have a better chance of appreciating the nuanced, interactive, and evolving influences and mediators that characterize social action and interaction.

Latour's Sources of Uncertainty in Understanding the Social, and Service-Learning

Latour (2007) described five challenges to understanding social interactions and processes:

1. Groups are constantly being formed and re-formed. Therefore, groups should not be studied but rather the processes of group formation and reformation.
2. Individuals never act alone, so networks, not just individuals, must be examined.
3. Even objects possess agency.
4. How does one distinguish between a "matter of fact" and a "matter of concern"?
5. Research should be lively and flexible; it should not just comprise descriptions, numbers, or empty abstractions.

Each of Latour's five "sources of uncertainty" in studying the social resonates with understanding academic SL. Latour noted that groups constantly form and re-form, and thus the "first feature of the social world is … constant tracing of boundaries" (p. 28). In academic SL programs, the partners, networks, leaders, teachers, and students change constantly, as do SL projects. Therefore, Latour (2007) implied, examining group formation processes is critical to understanding how SL works.

The second source of uncertainly relates to agency and who or what is acting when an action is observed or studied. Traditional scholarship focuses on and exalts individuals. Latour (2007) maintained that actors never act alone, and that which presents itself to the observer as an actor may be only the most visible part of an extensive network. Thus, the professor, dean, district superintendent, or SL coordinator may have the most visible roles in SL efforts (and be most accessible for researchers), but the great majority of what makes academic SL function is enacted by others, particularly by students and their community partners.

Latour's (2007) controversial assertion (and third uncertainty) that objects possess agency is a helpful concept for studying SL. A school's size, location, hierarchy, physical plant, fiscal and other resources, professional development, budget, policies, demographics—even its landscape and climate—can all have significant impacts on the design, activities, success, or failure of SL programs. These and other non-human factors are typically not examined by SL scholars, but they have a "role" to play, which makes them "actors" that need to be considered and examined to understand why and how SL initiatives work and do or do not endure over time.

Latour's (2007) fourth uncertainty relates to the inadequacy of social science methods to illuminate the factors that influence the social. Actor-network theory calls for examining not just actors and outputs but the interactions between actors—both animate and inanimate—"that may generate traceable associations" (p. 108) to yield more rigorous findings. Related to SL, ANT might be applied by examining the historical, architectural, demographic, economic, or other elements in a school or university that affect the initiation or integration of SL within it.

Latour's (2007) fifth uncertainty relates to how to write research accounts. He called for vividness, flexibility, and uncritical and non-interpretive observation and writing. One is reminded of the opening of Christopher Isherwood's (1939): *Goodbye to Berlin*: "I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking" (p. 1). Latour's (2007) injunction is a useful reminder that researchers should not be blinkered by preconceptions. However, as addressed later, such advice is easier to dispense than to follow.

Mediators and Intermediaries

Latour's (2007) conception of mediators and intermediaries also resonates with SL and echoes Giddens. He described mediators as actors/entities who multiply difference or change that can lead to transformation. By contrast, intermediaries merely transport meaning or action without yielding transformation (Latour, 2007, p. 39). Service-learning proponents act as mediators and offer occasions "to the next agent to behave as a mediator" (p. 216) as well. In fact, "making other mediators" (p. 217) is a primary goal of SL leaders. As Latour (2007) noted, the more attachments a new structure like SL has, "the more it exists … the more mediators there are the better" (p. 217). As noted by Giddens, no person singlehandedly shoulders the SL load in a school. An actor-network is needed for SL to grow and last, a network Latour (2007) described as a "large star-shaped web of mediators flowing in and out of it" (p. 217). Using Latour's language, it might be said that SL proponents hope to turn un-empowered intermediaries into mediators. The goal is to build ever-widening networks to support the initiation, growth, improvement, and institutionalization of SL.

Like Giddens (1984), Latour (2007) warned that the drive to identify universal truth in social science research results in minimizing the complex, interactive, and evolving universe of mediators (including objects) that characterize social phenomena. Such advice is useful to SL proponents, who may hold naïve hopes for simple, universal, generalizable answers that any school can apply in order to replicate successful models. As Latour (2007) warned, "no place dominates enough to be global" (p. 204). The SL researcher's temptation and facile route is to look at prominent individuals and examples—to conduct

interviews, gather survey data, and make some observations. Such an approach, Latour warned, results in an examination only of surface factors and ignores other influencing agents, both animate and inanimate. Findings of such research are inherently incomplete and can result in unsupported, "magical" conclusions that cannot withstand scrutiny. The researcher, Latour said, must be open to all data and trace the connections from each actor to see where they lead to determine which are important and impactful.

Limitations of Applying Actor-Network Theory to Service-Learning

As with structuration, there are challenges in attempting to apply Latour's (2007) ANT to academic SL. It should first be clarified that, despite its name, actor-network theory is not a theory so much as a proposed method of how to study social phenomena. Actor-network theory is a useful framework for exploring the SL relational ties within a school or school system, but it cannot not explain either *why* or *how* SL networks take the forms they do.

Latour offered little practical guidance on how to operationalize ANT to study SL. It is not clear how to either conduct research using ANT or apply it in practice. If one assumes all actors are equal in a network, how does one determine which or how many actors to study in a given situation or account for power imbalances? It is clear that, while they rely on other agents, key individuals are fundamental to the success or failure of SL (Fiske, 2002). In this regard, it is hard to agree with Latour's (2007) pronouncement that "things, quasi-objects, and attachments are the real center of the social world" (p. 238)—not persons. The importance of the human agent is not sufficiently recognized in ANT as it relates to social systems like SL.

Further, not every influence can be studied, for influences expand in multiple directions upon examination. In exploring the factors that may lead to sustaining SL, how does one "bound" the influences, actors, or networks so that it is possible to actually complete a study? By way of assistance, Latour (2007) offered two suggestions: (1) "Follow the actors themselves" (p. 12), and examine inscriptions and textual accounts. However, because he considered a very broad range of entities as actors, the first suggestion is of little use in delimiting the units of study. Moreover, as applied to SL, Latour's conceptions of the volume, availability, and utility of documents are too sanguine in many cases, SL networks and structures are often not well-documented or studied, and in many cases limited narrative information is available.

A third limitation related to Latour's prescription of tracing associations is that it would result in a study that is entirely descriptive and devoid of analysis or interpretation—a study both impossible and of little value. First, all acts of recording involve discrimination and interpretation—even a camera has to be pointed in a particular direction, framing what is pictured. Second, despite the realities and dangers of bias, human beings depend on the interpretations of others to develop, learn, and function. A study of SL that simply listed SL staff, courses, projects, syllabi, assessments, and a chronology of events offering only the "what" of the SL program and not the vitally important "how" or "why" would be of limited value.

Finally, Latour's (2007) argument that social ties are traceable only when they are being modified suggests both that the social is always in flux and, more fundamentally, that the social is basically untraceable because "the very existence of society or, more generally, of a social realm" (p. 161) is ever-changing. Yet, all research must be conducted in a temporal context and is thus a snapshot of a particular place and point or span of time. Service-learning is envisioned as a way to improve education, address needs, and help mold youth into agents for positive change. In order to accomplish these important ends, researchers recognize that they will not answer every question or promulgate universal truths. Actor-network theory, however, proposes endless investigation and seems indifferent to real-time problems and logistical limitations.

Actor-network theory is thus useful as a lens for understanding that actors in many forms, texts, and collective influences need to be examined from a wider and more open-minded perspective on SL. It provides a needed rebuttal to the notion that the "social" regarding SL represents a reified and "essential property that can be discovered and measured" (Czarniawska, 2006, p. 1553). However, ANT's almost complete abstraction, non-recognition of differences in groups or societies, lack of real-world models,

diminution of human agency, and absence of operationalizing guidance suggest that it is best viewed as a mindset for studying SL rather than as a workable strategy for describing the "sociology of associations" related to the SL phenomenon.

Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, and Service-Learning

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) theories on the production of space offer another lens for understanding how academic SL practices can become sustained. Lefebvre argued that the central importance of space in societal formation and action has been ignored, fragmented into disciplines that balkanize its encompassing consequence, or abstracted out of appreciation. All human social action, he asserted, occurs in space (either physical or abstract) and is therefore "socio-spatial." Acting in space (or nature) changes and shapes that space, is how humans interact and become social, and can thus be considered a "production of space" (p. 43). In other words, social space incorporates social action and constitutes an act of creation—a process of production in which spatial theory is a social theory and vice versa (Swyn, 1992). Space, said Simonson (1992), is "produced" so that people may live and act in it. Indeed, Lefebvre (1991) asserted that social relations have no real existence except in and through space because "their underpinning is spatial" (p. 404).

Lefebvre (1991) employed a Marxian framework in arguing that ideology and class struggles arise primarily as discourses on social space (p. 44) and in asserting that social space is indistinguishable from physical and mental spaces. Lefebvre's triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space as a framework for understanding social space—as well as the human history of its use and misuse--is a powerful lens for his case that space is the site, means, expression, and result of class struggle in and across time. Dominating "powers" hijack space and shape/reconceive it as representations of space via expressions of their control. However, a proletarian-esque re-appropriation of space can creatively confront dominating powers and reimagine spaces for more positive purposes. For example, the National Mall in Washington, DC, was envisioned as a space to inspire emulation of government-approved heroes and actions. Over time, however, individuals and citizen groups re-appropriated this "national" space as a platform for freedom of expression, protest, civil rights, and discussion of the nation's shortcomings (Savage, 2009). Through models of art, abstract expression, spatialities of daily life, and openness to new ideas, there is opportunity to create "a planet-wide space as the social foundation of a transformed everyday life" (p. 422).

Abstract Space, Representations of Space, and Representational Space in a Service-Learning Context

Parallels can be drawn between Lefebvre's (1991) triad of "perceived-conceived-lived space" (p. 40) and the challenge of producing "space" for SL in schools. To illustrate the parallels, it is useful to provide brief descriptions of Lefebvre's (1991) three kinds of space:

(1) Abstract (or dominated or absolute) space represents "the dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power" (p. 49). Abstract spaces are transformed by technology and the exercise of hegemony. Such spaces are sustained by violence if necessary but also by the acquiescence of those being controlled.
(2) Representations of space are physical expressions of knowledge and power and of how space is portrayed by those in control—the leaders, planners, technocrats, bureaucrats, and scientists.
(3) Representational (or differential or appropriated) spaces, by contrast, are typically symbolic, abstract, or intellectual productions of space that are expressed in the lived space of inhabitants, users, and artists. Representational space counters the power-based, dominating, abstract elements of socio-spatial practice through the "living, passionate, and sensual spatialities of everyday life" (Simonson, 1991, p. 81). As Lefebvre (1991) describes, such space "may be directional, situational, or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid, and dynamic" (p. 42).

Using Lefebvre's construct, established and controlling practices in schools are akin to abstract or dominated spaces. Abstract spatial practices are expressed in terms that are

(1) physical—buildings, campuses, buses, areas designated for specific purposes/uses at specific times, classrooms, the regulation and control of students' bodies, restrictions on movement in space and time, etc., or
(2) abstract—control over how and when knowledge content is endorsed, taught, delivered, and assessed; how power is established, exercised, and enabled in produced space; how the space itself may be used, etc.

In such abstract educative spaces, the who, where, what, when, how, and why of student learning are controlled and directed by what Lefebvre calls "political power" (p. 152). Those in power shape, focus, and reproduce the social relations they seek and which maintain their power.

Schools and school systems have been called benevolent dictatorships; they are designed on a factory model to turn out students with the knowledge, skills, and habits of citizenship to become productive members of society (Geitz & Heideking, 2006; Rose, 2012). Students—and, for the most part, their parents—have little input into what or how knowledge, skills, and habits are taught. The abstract space and representations of space at schools are designed to control students so they will do and learn what the system wants, and while these spaces often generate skilled and productive citizens, research and practice suggest that current structures and practice fail large numbers of students who drop out or graduate ill-equipped to function effectively in the world (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Wulsin, 2008; Duckinfield, Drew, & Flood, 2008; Smink & Schargel, 2004). In addition, it can be argued that what the powers define as "productive citizens" comprise a populace that does not challenge (and thereby sustains) existing structures. Echoing Lefebvre (1991), such productions of space and control of spatial practices serve power structures by eliminating difference—that is, everyone is taught the same things and the same ways to act and think. The physical and social spaces of the school are designed by political powers to serve and perpetuate their economic and other hegemony.

Service-Learning as Differential or Representational Space

By contrast, the integration of SL into a school may be viewed as an effort to re-appropriate existing spatial practice into a representational space that employs the "artful" pedagogy of SL. As noted earlier, SL empowers students to identify problems in communities and society (including in the abstract space of the school), plan solutions, implement them, and then teach others about them. While a goal of SL is for service to be a means and application of what students are supposed to learn, these means and applications are grounded in the interdisciplinary rhythms of everyday life—a key component of representational space (Lefebvre, 1991). Service-learning's experiential emphasis, combined with student empowerment and an interdisciplinary focus, challenge abstract and dominated school spaces: Even though research shows that well-designed SL projects can result in academic, affective, civic, and job skills gains—all things that every school system supports—SL design and practice also represent a dialectical alternative to established structures (both physical and abstract).

For example, components of SL often occur outside of the classroom and away from school. Service-learning projects are typically group efforts, disrupting the paradigm of students working individually and competitively in rows of desks. Service-learning projects have multiple components, and students often self-select the tasks on which they will work; this means students are not all working on the same things or at the same times, and will learn differently based on their individual project roles. Addressing real problems, SL is fundamentally interdisciplinary, while schools silo knowledge into disciplines and subjects. Well-designed SL projects extend over months and evolve over time—lesson plans must change constantly or even be discarded. The role of the educator is changed from a "sage on a stage" to a facilitator of learning. Most fundamentally, SL projects require students to not only explore what problems exist and how to address them but also to critically examine the structures, policies, and societal

priorities that contribute to or cause the problems. Such exploration often results in student advocacy to change current systems, practices, priorities, and structures, which represents a challenge to the status quo.

For the reasons discussed previously, it can be difficult for SL to coexist with traditional educative practices and spaces. This dialectic aligns with Lefebvre's (1991) notion of a "differential space": "Inasmuch as abstract space trends toward homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences" (p. 52). For SL to become sustained in a school system, Lefebvre (1991) suggested there must be a transformation in the socio-spatial practices of conceived, perceived, and lived spaces. In an SL context, teachers transform from deliverers of content to facilitators of learning. Students are transformed from passive and un-empowered recipients of knowledge to active designers of projects and learning. Such transformation represents an "appropriation" (p. 165) of the educative space by and for SL. Lefebvre (1991) also noted that "reappropriation of the body … is a non-negotiable part" (pp. 166-167) of the representational space agenda. A school must surrender some of its power and some of its dominated space to free both student bodies (from traditional routines and strictures) and minds and allow for effective SL to occur.

In successful SL schools, the producers of space act in accord with representations of that space, and users positively experience it (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 43) through ongoing SL pedagogy and practice. The SL goal is not to become a new "abstract space" (p. 49) that dominates, controls, and effaces. Rather, its institutionalization can serve as a representational space that is symbolic of a new educational "foundation of a transformed everyday life" (p. 422) for students, schools, and the communities where all stakeholders are learning by serving.

Limitations of Theories of Space as Applied to Service-Learning

The first challenge in applying Lefebvre's ideas is comprehending them! Lefebvre (1991) conceded that the meaning of his ideas "may at times have been discernible only by reading between the lines" (p. 419). His final comment, in fact, was that his book is "nothing that even remotely resembles a system" (p. 423). Therefore, and as with Latour, one is not applying a theory so much as viewing Lefebvre's ideas on the production of space as a new way of examining how SL can occur and succeed in schools. From this perspective, some of the same limitations that attend Latour's work apply to Lefebvre.

For example, this article draws a parallel between Lefebvre's (1991) conceptions of representational space and integrating SL into school "spaces." However, Lefebvre might not agree with the analogy. His description of the concept is abstract; the only example of representational space he provided was the 1910 Bauhaus art movement, which is not sufficiently detailed for this writer to know with certainty if SL is an accurate parallel. Another limitation is the degree to which Lefebvre exalted the importance of space in social action. In so doing, he (like Latour) diminished the importance of human agency. For Lefebvre (1991), space is the site, means, expression, and result of class struggle in and across time. While it is clear that space both acts and is acted upon, space does not appear to carry quite the level of importance in SL programs as Lefebvre might argue—that is, it is critical but not *more* important than human actors.

Also like Latour, Lefebvre's high level of abstraction and inversely proportional number of concrete ideas and examples render his ideas difficult to envision in the concrete world of SL implementation. Finally, while the U.S. economic system is exploitive in many instances, a Marxian perspective never had an exact correspondence here, and its underpinning of economic exploitation has somewhat limited relevance in a study of SL practice, even if there are parallels related to the use of abstract space and representations of space in school systems as mechanisms to maintain dominant social practices.

Concluding Thoughts

This conceptual article examines ways in which structuration, ANT, and theories of space help explain the challenges of initiating and sustaining quality SL practice in schools. In addition, it offers an initial exploration of ways in which select contemporary sociological theories advance understanding of SL from a research perspective. Schools are manifestly social systems and structures, so there are areas of alignment between SL and the theories discussed. As no other research linking SL with these theories could be found, this article also addresses a gap in the literature linking SL and sociological theory, as well as a new vein for scholarly exploration.

Table 1 summarizes of the major concepts from Giddens, Latour, and Lefebvre, and outlines the areas in which these theorists' ideas help illuminate understanding of service-learning adoption, institutionalization, and research.

Table 1. Summary of Select Sociological Theories and Their Implications for Service-Learning

Concept	Description	Implications for / Alignment with Service-Learning
Structuration (Giddens)		
Structures	People create, shape, and act/operate within structures.	School systems, schools, and classrooms are examples of multi-layered structures.
Properties of structures	Structures both support and inhibit human action or agency.	School structures provide resources and limitations for SL programming.
	Structures are embodiments of routines, resources, actions, tactics, and rules and are produced and repeated through human practices over time.	School structures—systems, procedures, buildings, practices, hierarchies, funding mechanisms, etc.—define and confine the context in which SL actors operate.
Practical consciousness	Structures create predictable routines that result in people acting on a semi-conscious auto-pilot much of the time. Predictability is expected, and non-normative action is the exception and can be seen as disruptive.	Schools are highly regulated structures supporting longstanding and taken-for-granted actions and schedules. Rigid school structures inhibit student learning and application of curricula to the real world, hindering SL.
Discursive consciousness	A higher awareness that re-examines existing structures and includes the ability to articulate limitations in them and describe/forge new pathways.	SL proponents recognize the limits of existing school structures (pedagogies, curricula, use of time and space) and convince others to support SL approaches.
	Discursive agents exploit the enabling aspects of existing structures to overcome the constraining aspects of those structures to create new routines/structures.	SL agents/actors use their talents, voices, and the supportive aspects of school structures to overcome the constraining aspects of those same structures.
Time-geography and routinization	Facets of time-geographic reality and finitude relating to basic human capacity limit actors' abilities to change existing and routinized structures. There is only so much that can be done at a time, in one place, by individuals.	Engaging in SL requires that teachers take on more work. Unless SL efforts result in improved learning, more fulfilling teaching, and support from the school, teachers will not likely persist with SL.
Enabling elements of structures	Rules, resources, individuals, loopholes, or other aspects of existing structures that support innovative action.	School structures that enable SL include supportive policies, administrators and parents; having multiple SL proponents; financial resources; SL training; etc.
Dureé of day-to-day experience	Quotidian elements and requirements of structures inhibit adoption of new practices and development of new structures.	Daily demands and requirements of schools can inhibit adoption of SL programming.
Longue dureé of institutional time	When new practices and structures become "supra-individual" and last beyond specific individuals.	The point at which SL programs are built into policies, funding, training, hiring decisions, evaluation, promotion, and rewards.

Concept	Description	Implications for / Alignment with Service-Learning
	Actor-Network Theory (Latour)	
Five sources of uncertainty	1. Groups change constantly, so the processes of group formation and reformation must be a locus of study.	In academic SL programs, the partners, networks, leaders, teachers, and students change constantly, as do SL projects.
	2. Individuals never act alone, so research must examine networks as well.	While individual SL professors or coordinators are the most accessible SL actors for researchers to examine, most SL activity is enacted by other people or networks.
	3. Objects possess agency so must also be included in research.	A school's size, location, , training, budget, policies, demographics, resources, landscape, and climate—all impact the design, activities, and success of SL.
	4. Social science methods fail to account for the many factors that influence social phenomena.	The interaction of historical, personnel, economic, architectural, demographic, etc., elements in a school impact the design and success of SL programming.
	5. Sociological research is often dry and overemphasizes descriptions, data, and abstractions.	Researchers, policymakers, and funders tend to emphasize the need for data on academic impacts of SL, even though such impacts are (a) difficult to isolate, (b) often narrow and limited, and (c) only one of many areas of SL impacts.
Mediators	Actors who multiply difference or change that can lead to transformation.	Akin to proponents who tout SL as an effective—even transformational—teaching and learning strategy.
Intermediaries	Actors who merely transport meaning or action that does not lead to improvement or transformation.	Teachers and others who support the status quo and who must be convinced of the value of SL.
Actor-network	Needed to create transformational change—such change is beyond the capacity of an individual.	SL proponents need to build ever-widening networks to support the growth, improvement, expansion, and institutionalization of SL.
No universal social truths	The drive to identify universal truth in social science research results in minimizing the complex and evolving nature of social phenomena.	The SL researcher's facile route is to study individuals, shining examples, or numbers alone, but such approaches miss other influencing actors and factors.
	Production of Space (Lefebvre)	
Space	All human social action occurs in space (either physical or abstract) and is therefore 'socio-spatial.'	SL represents human social action that occurs in a range of educative and community spaces.

Concept	Description	Implications for / Alignment with Service-Learning
Production of space	Acting in space changes and shapes that space, is how humans interact and become social, and can thus be considered a "production of space"	SL actors create or produce SL spaces when and where they engage in service-learning.
Abstract space	Places that are used for the exercise of control and hegemony.	Education spaces control how and when knowledge is accepted, taught, delivered, and assessed.
Representations of space	Physical expressions (e.g., structures) of power by those who are control.	Buildings, campuses, buses, areas designated for specific uses, and classrooms are expressions of control of students' bodies and restrictions on students' movements in space and time.
Representational space	Productions of space expressed in the lived spaces of inhabitants, users, and artists which counter the dominating elements of socio-spatial practice through the "living, passionate, and sensual spatialities of everyday life" (Simonson, 1991, p. 81).	SL participants "re-produce" school and community spaces into mutually defined platforms where service that meets real needs is the vehicle for both the acquisition and the expression of learning. SL empowers students, re-imagines or dispenses with classroom spaces, focuses on real issues, is interdisciplinary, and often results in student advocacy to change current systems, practices, priorities, and structures.

Although this is not an empirical study, it is prudent to include an epoché statement and caveat about the author's assumptions, beliefs, and personal prejudices. The author supports SL and hopes research on K-12 schools and universities that employ it can lead to expansion of the practice. In addition, the author does not believe any single theory can be all-encompassing in explaining SL. Harvard's William Perry, Jr., said, "to have any idea of what is going on in a situation, you need at least three good theories" (as cited in Daloz, 2012, p. 43). Perry's maxim applies in this examination, in which three theoretical perspectives each offer significant (but incomplete) insight into understanding the phenomenon of academic SL. Such theoretical eclecticism provides a useful critical perspective but carries the danger of cherry-picking the aspects of theories that support one's existing beliefs and ignoring ideas that may contradict them. This article attempts to examine the works of Giddens, Latour, and Lefebvre with an open and curious mind, but personal prejudices are persistent and cannot all (or always) be set aside.

Finally, while the scope of the theories, ideas, and prescriptions of the authors examined in this article is large, the author read only a handful of books by the theorists. An in-depth process of digesting, understanding, synthesizing, and applying sociological theories to SL requires a more comprehensive examination. Hopefully, however, this study identifies both some broad and specific ways in which concepts of Giddens, Latour, and Lefebvre contribute to understanding how schools can initiate and sustain service-learning programming.

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