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# **The Respatialization of the World as one of the Driving Dialectics under the Global Condition**

This volume is the result of intense collaboration among scholars from various disciplines – geography, sociology, history, cultural studies, political science, international studies, and international history – as well as area studies expertise – on Africa, the Americas, and Europe in particular. Furthermore, it is the outcome of various modes of translation across those disciplinary and area boundaries. The invitation to collaborate on the project was to test a conceptual vocabulary. More than a common language, this vocabulary acts as a heuristic repertoire to investigate how the intensification and acceleration of global connectedness has caused reactions by various actors at different times and in varying geographies to deal with these challenges. These reactions have essentially taken spatial forms, not only as efforts to contain, limit, and stem flows of goods, people, or ideas – by establishing borders, circumscribing hermetic spaces of activity, preventing mobility, prohibiting access, or excluding competitors – but also as struggles to manage, redirect, profit from, fuel, and appropriate those flows – by creating networks, promoting hubs, or pushing for more exchange to the benefit of diverse, often conflicting projects. Accordingly, all authors within this volume share an understanding of globalization as a dialectic of flows and controls as well as of de- and reterritorialization, essentially the result of multiple globalization projects, including the activities of actors with specific agendas, resources, and instruments to pursue them.

The role of space in social interaction has attracted rapidly growing interest over the past decades – both in academia in particular and society in general. This interest is certainly maintained through the perception that new technologies and forms of communication – often encapsulated in the term digitalization – as well as new configurations of political affairs at a global scale – often summarized under the notion of the new world order – are about to bring new forms and functions of space into existence. This has led to a proliferation of – often metaphorically used – spatial semantics, which seem to indicate that new phenomena are emerging.

Within the search for an explanation of such new spatial configurations, this newness is related to and even integrated into the most powerful narrative of our times: that being that globalization is both the driving force and the framework for a multitude of societal changes. After a period of overoptimistic speculations

that globalization would erase the traditional forms of territoriality to the profit of border-transcending fluidity, the debate has waned in light of real world observations. The nation-state has not disappeared, instead remaining, for example, during the global financial crisis in 2007/08 powerful enough to buy banks that were estimated “too big to fail”, or in other words too pivotal for the functioning of societies to be exposed to the rules of a pure market mechanism. But ironically, it were exactly these banks as well as economists convinced of the superiority of such market mechanisms that had propagated in the 1990s a rather borderless world of digitized trade with ever more complex transnational and transregional assets and investments. Some even had spoken of the end of the nation-state and started to search for alternative forms of (global) governance. Such hopes, however, were frustrated at many occasions while, at the same time, an entire world of transnational connections (from communication infrastructures to NGOs) emerged and developed agency.

But the seemingly surprising return of some nation-states to the stage at times of fundamental crisis should not be misinterpreted as the revival of a period when the nation-state not only was the sole spatial format in the world but in fact was also able to assert control over many – if not all – other spatial forms of societal self-organization, from the local to the international. This period can be located in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the nation-state was recognized as a very efficient tool to regain control over border-crossing flows, which characterized the global condition of the time. This global condition was the product of steam ships and telegraph, together with the slow emergence of the first world markets, an increasing urbanization, and steps into the first and second waves of industrialization. Terms such as “Weltpolitik” or “Weltwirtschaft” indicate that not only German was a recognized cultural context from which experience and aspiration was copied into other societies but above all that also the times of strong nationalization coincided with the discovery of an ever-increasing list of items that were only able to be solved and regulated with the help of transnational regulation and international organizations.

What is interesting to observe is that the most powerful states in a world, which were characterized by globalization and nationalization as a reaction to such border-crossing connections, were not nation-states in the purest sense of the word. What is evident already from the official label for the British Empire was true for the French state as well; it as well applied to the USA and to Belgium and Russia and so on. Until the emergence of the Third French Republic, out of the ashes of a war with Prussia and a revolution in Paris, non-monarchic forms of government were rather to be found in the Americas than in Europe. But even in the case of the USA as well as France, a unique mixture

of constitutionalism at home and imperialist behaviour in regions to be conquered or already colonized was characteristic of a spatial format that should not be confined to the definition of a nation-state.

People of the late nineteenth century were convinced that their nation-states or empires would be able to gain control over global flows and therefore built alliances of political, economic, and cultural elites mainly along such national categories to develop appropriate institutions, strategies, and practices for the necessary self-positioning under the global condition. However, World War I already demonstrated the uncertainty of the situation. As recognized by a growing number of critical commentators, the competition between states had led to a deadly and highly destructive four-year period of warfare and stalemate. Furthermore, on the one hand, it had given rise to the understanding that an exponentially rising number of issues could no longer be solved at the national level only. As a consequence, the League of Nations was established and continued ongoing efforts to systematize the actions of international organizations. But, on the other hand, the principle of self-determination of the people – which, concurrently, was a historical echo of the anti-imperial foundation of the USA in the late eighteenth century and an attack on empires still existing in Central Europe – continuously sought solutions to global problems involving sovereign states, but not necessarily nation-states.

Today, the situation seems to have changed – at least to a certain extent. Often heard is the argument that nation-states are too small to find appropriate answers to global challenges as well as to compete with big powers. Regional associations of states have overcome the first period of hesitation between a purely national and a consequently continental approach and have been greatly institutionalized over the last three decades – claiming authority over a series of issues that were before under the complete authority of their member states. Such a shift has not been without conflict, but these conflicts indicate that the number is increasing of those who do not believe any longer that the state is the preeminent actor for controlling global flows. And this holds true despite the fact that major powers seem to fall back into protectionist behaviour that such arguments influence political cultures since they resonate with historical references easy to mobilize.

Multipolarity in international relations, virtual spaces across continents filled with music and tweets, transregional value chains spanning long distances, disconnection between global hubs and their hinterlands, maritime basins for so-called blue industries, and exploration of outer space for industrial use – this is but a short list of seemingly or really new phenomena that are creating new challenges to the dialectics of global flows and control.

The Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1199: “Processes of Respatialization under the Global Condition”, based at Leipzig University, has chosen this focus for its work. The SFB brings people from many area studies together with scholars from the social sciences, history, and cultural studies. It intends to investigate how different societies in the world and over the past two and half centuries have organized themselves spatially to respond to the emerging and since growing global challenges. In defining globalization, we incorporate the dialectics of de- and reterritorialization affecting non-territorial frames of social interaction. In such an understanding, space and spatial literacy are central to the capacities of individuals as well as collective actors to react to border-crossing flows – both new and old. By space, we do not interpret it as a container within which social interaction just happens. On the contrary, we adopt the insights from the various spatial turns that have affected the participating disciplines – at different times and to different degrees but parallel enough to allow meaningful dialogue – and interpret space as the outcome of the interaction among people and between people and nature. By spatial literacy, we mean the capacity to “read” spatial configurations and to have tools available to make such perceptions visible to others. Cartography is probably the most obvious of such tools, but its history and the history of its critics demonstrate what seems to us to be essential when it comes to spatial literacy: it is not gained once for all, but it has to be appropriated again and again against a changing background. The maps that seemed to provide to our ancestors a realistic visualization of the world as it was look now like an ideological construct to hide more than it shows. Critical cartography or geography as a whole has contributed tremendously to such a deconstructivist approach. When we turn the lessons learned from such interventions into a positive message, then it is exactly the fact that spatial literacy is time specific, and the demand for it has both driven processes of professionalization towards geography at university and high school as well as more recently processes of democratization of knowledge, where technology allows almost everyone to produce his or her own maps on a device that is small enough to fit in our pockets. But spatial literacy is more than having the right map at hand. It is the capacity to orient oneself within the world and to formulate priorities for one’s own organization of relevant spaces. What is faraway or close by are not necessarily functions of physical distance nor are they spaces of belonging, but they all demand a decision of how we define them according to our interest and to our daily practices of spatialization. Cosmopolitans may define proximity in very different ways from how nationalists proceed. Hence, their spatial literacies differ, and the subsequent question arises which literacy becomes the dominant one in which society.

Since entering the global condition starting in the mid-eighteenth century, such questions are of utmost importance because the answers to them inform our perspectives on a world that is made up of expanding connectedness without becoming flat or free of conflict. On the contrary, competing visions of world order invite one to see the world differently and, as a consequence, to put emphasis on the one or the other spatial format. This has to do with the fact that such world orders are first of all spatial orders, consisting of different spatial formats. To insist on them or to adapt them to challenges produced by new flows that make existing spatial configurations more and more porous becomes a need for those who would like to continue profiting from established modes of rule, authority, and dominance. But newcomers as well as those dissatisfied with the old order again and again design alternative worlds, free from old borders or protecting people through newly drawn boundaries. New technologies, for example, produce the appetite for new spatial formats and raise in many of these cases a sense of resistance to such innovation.

The contributions in this volume are organized in four parts, reflecting the challenges of this agenda, which is not relevant to only one discipline or one area of expertise. Geographers, for example, will probably discover novel insights into familiar debates as they hopefully find new inspiration through the eyes of their colleagues from international studies and history. And vice versa, historians will encounter currently circulating arguments, reconfigured and conceptualized in an enriching way through the lens of a spatial perspective. This volume is therefore an effort to reintegrate two trends in the organization of “knowledge about the world” that have parted following a fundamental transformation happening in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century: geographization and historicization. While historicization is acknowledged and increasingly investigated after the initial conceptualization by Reinhart Koselleck, the fundamental connection between globalization and the attention paid to processes of respatialization has, despite attracting a wide spectrum of interesting research directions, not yet led to its coherent rethinking into one concept.

This also may have to do with the inherent Eurocentrism in both these trends – academically institutionalized in the transatlantic West since the late nineteenth century and becoming the dominant lens through which non-Western societies were forced to perceive themselves. This one-way context is addressed in the contributions to this volume either by taking up the challenge from alternative historical and spatial interpretations of the global condition or by bringing into dialogue empirical findings from non-Western, non-European world regions with dominant narratives about how the spatial order of the modern world has emerged. As critics of Eurocentrism have convincingly

demonstrated again and again, the Western experience with both the distinction between *ancien régimes* and modern futures and between traditional and modern forms of respatializing the world when being confronted with the global condition is not necessarily relevant for all parts of the world. But with the emergence of the global condition, these distinctions have become more and more transregionally interrelated given the intensifying dialogue across borders and the growing interdependency of societies bound together by trade, division of labour, migration, communication, etc.

The first section develops the conceptual and theoretical repertoire from a geographer's, a historian's, and a sociologist's perspective, with which to tackle and investigate globalization and its driving dialectics. Bob Jessop does not simply repeat the essence of territory, place, scale, and networks approach he has developed more than a decade ago with colleagues from political geography, but he integrates more recent political affairs challenging any teleology towards supra- or transnational organization of governance and engages with the approach developed by the Leipzig-based SFB around the categories of spatial formats and spatial order. Matthias Middell presents an overview of the ongoing research within the SFB and introduces the central categories of processes of respatialization, spatial formats, and spatial orders in more detail and discusses advantages of bringing a historical and a geographical perspective together. Judith Miggelbrink contributes with idea of assemblages, which can be considered an additional lens through which we can see the effects of collective and individual action in the creation of a spatial configuration that has an impact on all these actors and the, often unintended, consequences of their actions. Against this background, the following sections take up these efforts and apply them to specific historical moments and problems.

The second section addresses the conflictive emergence of territorial spatial formats – particularly empire and nation-state – which are until today the elephants in the room in political and academic debates about the spatiality of globalization. These have long dominated the way we think of how societies have in the past and should in the present be organized to successfully compete in an ever more interconnected world. In a *longue durée* perspective spanning the 1780s to present day and bringing together an impressive range of literature, Frank Schumacher counters established teleological narratives about the transition from empire to nation with a focus on the United States, without engaging in the discussion if the US was an empire or not. Instead, he provides a much more nuanced interpretation of US history in the long term as being driven by the entanglement of imperial and national logics of territorialization. Organized around the pivot of the Civil War, his chapter challenges narratives according to which the US emerged afterwards as a stabilized nation-state.

In contrast, he demonstrates how after this alleged caesura empire and nation remains – though in different ways – deeply intertwined ways of spatializing politics and society in and from the US, ways that were related to questions of gender, race, slavery, migration, and overseas colonialism.

John Breuilly complements this agenda of complicating our understanding of the history of territoriality in an equally long-term perspective from the 1790s until today by disentangling the emergence of territoriality as a more general process from the rise of nation-state territoriality more specifically. Productively and critically engaging with the widely debated arguments of Charles Maier, Breuilly unravels different ways of spatializing state sovereignty, of which territoriality has been a quite influential form of coercive power and yet could be combined with or in competition with non-territorial forms such as economic or ideological power. He, furthermore, emphasizes how territorialization – whose “invention” and earliest institutionalization he historically locates in eighteenth-century Europe, which was afterwards enforced on other world regions through imperial projects – has empirically not been a linear, coherent process but instead characterized and fuelled by reverse movements of deterritorialization. Both authors demonstrate that territorialization in these different variations has concerned not only the “space within” but, out of necessity, also the organization of relations to the “outside”. Being a contradictory process, it has led not to one but to a number of different spatial formats, in which elites, citizens, and colonial subjects found themselves bound up in – for example, overseas colonies, segregated areas in the US South, an “informal empire”, or “nuclear colonialism” – where they imagined, promoted, and resisted different ways of organizing citizenship and identities.

While this section has concentrated on the transatlantic core, the third section moves to seemingly more marginal spaces in the colonial periphery in Africa and their positionality vis-à-vis the metropolises as well as sub-centres in Central Europe and transnational networks connecting European and non-European radicals. Here, the contributions zoom in on cities as portals of globalization, which can both be applied heuristically as spatial formats in their own right as well as be used as a lens through which to observe the *relationality* of spatial formats – such as the empire, the nation-state, or transnational networks. All three contributions in this section consider relationality not only by disentangling the city as a container but also by investigating specific sites, places, and actors in the city, who engage in the reading, imagining, and producing of different spatial formats. To this end, they demonstrate how parts of such cities – not necessarily the city as a whole – are themselves embedded in larger spatial orders, such as the colonial order of Berlin’s Africa, the German Empire, or international communism. The conceptual lens of portals of globalization turns out to be particularly

productive for investigating the relationality of spatial formats and their consolidation into spatial orders.

As a comparative tour de force of different colonial cities in Berlin's Africa that connects them to imperial metropolises in which the colonial city is situated itself, Geert Castryck's chapter demonstrates not only how colonial elites imagined and aimed to implement the colonial city as an imperial project, but also how it was appropriated by inhabitants of these towns, inhabitants that were themselves often mobile and well connected to communities outside of it, thereby becoming established as key actors for making the connections across the empire work. In this way, it becomes possible to integrate the metropole and the colony into one spatial format of the colonial city by accounting for the different positionalities of actors in relation to the spatial order of colonialism. In a similar manner, in order to comprehend the making and relating of spatial formats, the contributions by Holger Weiß and Antje Dietze focus on actors, the distribution of varying resources, and being situated in often unequal ways in a larger spatial order.

Concentrating on the intense decade of the mid-1920s to mid-1930s at a very specific site in Hamburg, Holger Weiß uncovers multiple and competing projects of institutionalizing radical networks addressing questions of social, racial, economic, and political marginalization. On different scales – international, regional, national, and local – and within varying geographies – addressing different parts of Europe, the US, as well as Asia and Africa – actors such as Albert Walter, James W. Ford, or George Padmore pursued their radical emancipatory projects by establishing places and networks that turned 8 Rothesoodstrasse not only into a hub of Moscow-orchestrated international communism but also into the – not necessarily congruent – struggle of internationally mobile workers as well as black activists from the US and Africa. The focus on this particular site of overlapping struggles and resistance movements enables us to discern the relationality of spatial formats as well as the conflictive ways of their production in the context of a spatial order in transition.

In a similar line of argument, Antje Dietze substantiates the centrality of popular culture as a mode through which spatial formats are imagined, negotiated, as well as related to each other. Examining the panorama industry in Leipzig since the early nineteenth century, with a focus on the final decades of the century, she highlights the role of urban actors – businessmen in particular – as mediators between different economic and cultural circulations and transfers. Combining the analysis of business networks of the panorama industry with an investigation of the form and content of the panoramas themselves, she draws our attention to the methodological implications for the investigation of processes of spatialization under the global condition. She positions the panorama



industry as a productive empirical lens through which to investigate the relation-ality of spatial formats – in her case the empire and the nation – and the connected and fragmented geographies of circulation on a regional and transatlantic scale.

The fourth and final section moves further into the present, focussing on moments and sites in which new spatial formats are imagined, institutionalized, and struggled with, when older spatial orders – be it formed by empires or nation-states – become contested and as a result fragile. As Glenda Sluga shows, the spatial imaginary of “international spaces” is not only invoked by scholars and intellectuals but also partially institutionalized politically and economically in frontier zones and in moments of crisis. Here, actors either aim to defend an already introduced spatial format, such as the empire, or to further strengthen, adapt, and stabilize fledgling proposals such as the nation-state, by using internationalization to assert sovereignty.

A similar dialectic seems to explain the rise of new regionalisms in the Global South, as Ulf Engel demonstrates. Even though regionalization and the establishing of regional organizations are far from new phenomena, dating back to the early nineteenth century, these processes have been appropriated – under conditions of post-colonial state-building and changing forms of territorialization in the second half of the twentieth century in the transatlantic West – by actors in the Global South to legitimize alternative ways of imagining and implementing territorial sovereignty. While these efforts seem to have blossomed after the end of the Cold War, this period saw significant experimentation with new spatial formats as well as the translation and adaptation of the world of empires with logics of national and transnational spatializations, as Steffi Marung, Uwe Müller, and Stephan Troebst argue in their chapter about the bloc. Its emergence as a political and an analytical concept, which has been characterized by massive tensions, has been the result of the efforts of actors within and outside the bloc to reorganize a post-colonial world in Eastern Europe and to develop new ways of connecting to societies in the Global South.

Sarah Ruth Sippel and Michaela Böhme investigate the consequences of new transregional ties between large suppliers of agricultural goods in Australia and the growing appetite of an urban Chinese population for meat and new crops. What appears to some as a self-evident match of supply and demand is for others a dangerous occupation of land by foreigners or an inadequate marketization of natural resources. Imaginations of what land may mean cross the flows of capital and food in a conflictual way and the encounter produces new ideas about the “right” spatialization at times of demographic pressure on food supply, of increasing financialization of agri-food industries and a transformation brought about by the continued digitalization in this business.

Another process that hints at the same direction is analysed by Hannes Warnecke-Berger, who takes a closer look at remittances that come with labour migration and have reached a point where entire former national economies depend largely, or even predominantly, on income resulting from such transfers from abroad. Investigating the effect of these transfers on the macroeconomic development of the countries concerned, he further asks how these connections between migrants and their families or village communities/urban neighbourhoods at home are morally embedded. His main finding is the robust structure of what looks at first like simply an economic transaction through mutual moral dependency, for which he introduces the term *moral economy*, borrowed from historical research of proto-capitalist periods. Both cases presented by Sippel and Böhme as well as by Warnecke-Berger demonstrate that there is no exclusive relationship between economic and cultural dimensions of respatialization.

Overall, this is a first step into a new field. We are far from an all-encompassing typology, and it may be that we never reach it because the processes of respatialization will not end producing new spatial formats and, as a consequence, also new spatial orders. However, we can conclude from the examples given in this volume that two sorts of spatial formats can be encountered: those building on the achievements of a process of territorialization and those making use of border-crossing connections between individual places or sites.

The first sort of spatial formats has its ideal type in the complete nation-state, with the vast majority of economic as well as cultural activities and social relations being organized within the territory of such a state. It becomes evident that this ideal type cannot be found in reality for both historical and systematic reasons. On the one hand, it is a very rare exception if not an impossibility that all social interactions happen (even the majority) on only one territory, given the historical connectedness that dates back to millennia of mobility. Fantasies of ethnic purity or of economic autarky may occur, but they are in conflict with omnipresent effects of entanglements. Wherever territorialization has not reached the point of absolute completion, we can witness asymmetries in power between all kinds of minorities and those claiming to be the ruling majority. Projections of this configuration result in imperialist behaviour towards people in occupied lands and colonies. On the other hand, the creation of nation-states has not happened *ex nihilo* but has been a reaction to global challenges, as argued above. Therefore, it coexists *systematically* with global connections to which it reacts and within which it is embedded.

The other ideal type of spatial formats is probably the value chain, connecting sites of production across the globe. They are often imagined as completely disentangled from their hinterlands and in some cases – for example, with some, but by far not all, special economic zones – powerful actors are able to

ensure this disconnection to a certain degree in order to profit from such deterritorialization. But even in the most exceptional of such cases, family ties persist, dependencies on political stability count, and people drudging in the factories use the infrastructures of territories after work is done.

For the sake of a typology, it makes sense to distinguish between these two ideal types; however, for a historical explanation of changes in the spatial order, it seems more fruitful to look at the interactions between the various spatial formats and their combination for the profit of certain projects of globalization, which are always at the same time projects of respatialization of the world. The described ideal types should not be confused with historical accounts of a single national or regional development, but still they certainly have an extraordinary importance for the imaginations of existing world orders or proclaimed alternatives. They inspire fantasies of how the world should be spatially organized and mobilize enormous societal energies.

