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Global history and the spatial turn: from the impact of area studies to the study of critical junctures of globalization

Matthias Middell
University of Leipzig, Global and European Studies Institute, Emil-Fuchs-Strasse 1, D-04105 Leipzig, Germany
E-mail: middell@uni-leipzig.de
Katja Naumann
University of Leipzig, Centre for the History and Culture of East Central Europe (GWZO), Luppenstrasse 1b, D-04177 Leipzig, Germany
E-mail: knaumann@uni-leipzig.de

Abstract

Globalization can be interpreted as a dialectical process of de- and re-territorialization. The challenges to existing borders that limit economic, socio-cultural, and political activities, and the establishment of new borders as the result of such activities, bring about certain consolidated structures of spatiality, while at the same time societies develop regulatory regimes to use these structures for purposes of dominance and integration. Global history in our understanding investigates the historical roots of those global conditions that have led to modern globalization and should therefore focus on the historicity of regimes of territorialization and their permanent renegotiation over time. There is, at present, a massive insecurity about patterns of spatiality and appropriate regulatory mechanisms. This article begins with a sketch of this current uncertainty and of two further characteristics of contemporary globalization. The second part examines discussions in the field of global history with regard to processes of de- and re-territorialization. In the third part, we suggest three categories that can serve both as a research agenda and as a perspective according to which a history of globalization can be constructed and narrated.

Current uncertainty

In February 2005, Louis Michel, then the European Union's commissioner for development policy, replied to a request that he list his priorities for supporting Africa by saying:

> I would massively strengthen the African Union. The organization currently has about 300 employees, while we in the EU have 25,000! … Then I would start up transnational projects. Roads clear across the continent, waterways, electricity. Along with the (international) aid organizations, we have to cooperate with the governments of the poor countries, with the mayors and the civilian groups on the ground … we

> need more government in the underdeveloped countries … that is ultimately the only institution that can provide for an equal opportunity and minimal protection.[1]

Michel's statement is noteworthy not so much for its concrete proposals as for the obvious insecurity about an appropriate framework for action. None of these strategies are, in themselves, objectionable, although in combination they may prove contradictory and ineffective. The insecurity is all the more striking because Michel is by no means alone in his pessimistic view that the slender means available are being stretched too thin, while a comprehensive solution remains unavailable. Confidence in the organization and ordering of different spatial spheres, which is especially indispensable for guiding the allocation of limited resources in international and global politics, seems to have been lost.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, in the face of growing global interrelations, a specific hierarchy of space had begun to assert itself, though slowly and in the face of continuous contestation. In this hierarchy, the national subjugated all other spatial units because it appeared to be the most effective source of sovereignty. During that period, local, regional, continental, and international references of human actions also mattered, but their formative power was substantially limited. That spatial structure now finds itself rapidly dissolving. The national is still prevalent today, but the hierarchical relationship between the different spatial references seems to have been dissolved and its constituent parts are in the process of recombining differently.

An awareness that the nation-state is no longer the most effective frame of reference for social action had already developed by the middle of the twentieth century. It was only in the 1990s, however, that an optimistic view emerged that saw the once-dominant pattern being replaced by an emergent one, usually conceptualized as global governance. Seen from today, this estimation may appear somewhat naive, but this was an early reaction to a radically new and demanding condition. Belief in the primacy of the national as the guiding principle for world order had offered a very strong orientation and had provided a clear framework for social action of every sort. With its dissolution, everyone – especially those who sought to preserve it but also those who tried to adjust to its passing – was confronted with an unfamiliar and contradictory complexity. After the regulatory mechanisms of Cold War politics had been rendered obsolete by the changes of 1989, international organizations and transnational regimes gained greater importance as elements of global governance. But the idea of global governance was soon recognized to be more wishful thinking than a powerful, new reality, and no comparably clear vision of a new spatial order emerged to replace it. Rather, it became increasingly clear that interpreting and managing globalization necessitated a fundamental rethinking of the co-relationships between different spatial levels. Recent examples drawn from international politics suffice to show how inadequate the older conception, dominated by fully sovereign nation-states, has become.

The United Nation's planned reforms for the years 2000–05, which simultaneously reflected the political power structures of the year 1945 while expressing a need for regulation of an increasingly integrating world, collapsed. The concentration of power under the

1 'Es gibt auch Parasiten', Interview with Louis Michel, *Die Zeit*, 3 February 2005, p. 24.

leadership of North America and Europe is caught in a web of conflicting interests.[2] In addition, the informal but powerful meetings of the so-called leading industrial countries find themselves confronted by a growing crisis of legitimacy. This group only half-heartedly integrated its former opponent, Russia, into the G8 summit and was not ready to admit new economic powers (such as China, India, and Brazil). Moreover, it has been unable to find satisfying answers to the critics of globalization, culminating in the protests in Seattle and Geneva. The expansion of the G8 into the G20 in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis was immediately criticized by the global public for being ad hoc and poorly justified. The political classes in many parts of the world are in search of new forms of governance but the obvious difficulties with achieving consensus on how this global governance would look support scepticism. Neither the World Trade Organization, nor the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or the Kyoto Protocol are in a position to offer guidance for the necessary new spatial order.

Furthermore, the international regime is characterized by a tendency towards regional agreements and by different degrees of integration and rights of participation. At the same time, continental–regional integration is underway – from the African Union to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and from Mercosur to the European Union, whose failed referenda in France and the Netherlands were watched by some with *Schadenfreude*, whereas others regard the EU as a role model for integration.[3] To some, the European multilevel democracy suggests a solution to the problem of sovereignty since it constructs a constellation that allows even middle-sized nation-states to survive, albeit with some loss of sovereignty. But doubts abound and success seems far from sure. The 2008 financial crisis has brought a return to international coordination based on nation-state intervention in the realm of economics, a realm that many people had portrayed as beyond any sort of government control. All these examples show that former institutional means and structures have failed as frameworks for managing contemporary problems. We argue that they fail because they are based on the assumption that political sovereignty is to be organized within a hierarchical order of space – hierarchical since the national, regional, and international are conceptualized as clear-cut spheres – and to be allocated on one of these spatial levels. Thus, Louis Michel's proposal that politics must intervene on all possible spatial levels at once seems confirmed, since the inadequacy of focusing on any single level is evident.

Moreover, action in the international arena is no longer restricted to governments. Non-governmental organizations – from the globally to the locally active – have developed into a factor without which the Millennium Goals could not be achieved, nor international negotiations be successful.[4] Alongside this, multinational corporations have reached sizes that

2 Paul Kennedy, *The parliament of man: the past, present, and future of the United Nations*, New York: Random House, 2006; Lawrence S. Finkelstein, 'What is global governance?', *Global Governance*, 1, 3, 1995, pp. 367–72; Paul F. Diehl, ed., *The politics of global governance: international organizations in an interdependent world*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997.

3 May T. Yeung, Nicholas Perdis and William A. Kerr, eds., *Regional trading blocs in the global economy: the EU and ASEAN*, Northampton: Edward Elgar, 1999; Hirotada Kohno, Peter Nijkamp and Jacques Poot, eds., *Regional cohesion and competition in the age of globalization*, Cheltenham, Glos: Edward Elgar, 2000; J. Gillingham, *European Integration, 1950–2003: superstate or new market economy?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

4 Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker, eds., *NGOs, the UN, and global governance*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996.

rival those of some smaller national-political economies. Commodity chains create an interdependence that is less visible but often far more effective than political negotiation at the international level. Immigration, mass tourism, the exploitation chains of organized crime, and general worldwide mobility are likewise creating a new social reality. Global interactions are created and remade daily by a multitude of actors – not just by political elites[5] – in a diversity of spatial frameworks and organizations, and are causing opportunities as well as irritations and anxieties.[6]

Finally, transnational entanglements and global networks are not limited to centres and hubs of worldwide traffic. Some cities, proud of their ability to draw and attract international elites, compete for status as premier 'global cities'. Many others have aligned themselves with broader regional networks, trying, in parallel, to secure their position by entering into confederacies of like-minded parties in other parts of the world.[7] Similar processes are underway in rural areas. Globalization is not confined to a few prominent places and no longer develops along clear-cut borders and within stable structures of centre and periphery. International flows of goods, people, and ideas no longer have fixed places from which they start, or prescribed avenues along which they travel. More and more, around the world, societies and socially diverse groups are directly exposed to the global assemblage and drawn into a human web of exchange and communication.[8]

These three features – the dissolution of a hierarchical spatial order of political sovereignty dominated by the nation-state, the multitude of actors taking part in worldwide interactions, and the plurality of locations that are incorporated in global worldwide entanglements – indicate that globalization is the central problem of the day, and the debate around it has been expanding for at least two decades. This confirms our approach of interpreting globalization as a dialectical process of de- and re-territorialization.

Within academia, the social sciences were the first to recognize globalization as a bundle of related questions that need to be addressed. Historians have also begun, albeit slowly, to see it as a research imperative that cannot be ignored. Presumably, this realization has helped to resolve an initial reservation arising from the two meanings of the term 'globalization': first, as an objective situation; and second, as a multitude of political projects to redetermine what is meant by interdependence and sovereignty. Historians, like scholars from the social sciences and humanities, are by no means free of the difficulties with which the political classes see themselves confronted. Decisions on research topics and categories

5 Since they perceive themselves as guarantors of sovereignty, they strive hard toward a recalibration of clear decision-spaces. For an analysis of such changes visible in political options, see Saskia Sassen, *Territory, authority, rights: from medieval to global assemblages*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

6 Serge Gruzinski, *La pensée métisse*, Paris: Fayard, 1999.

7 Paul Hirst and Graham Thompson, *Globalization in question: the international economy and the possibilities of governance*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997; Manuel Castells, *The rise of the network society: economy, society, and culture*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996; Alfred Chandler, Jr. and Bruce Mazlish, eds., *Leviathans: multinational corporations and the new global history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005; Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in contact: world migrations in the second millennium*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002; Berthold Unfried, Jürgen Mittag, and Marcel van der Linden, eds., *Transnational networks in the 20th century. Ideas and practices, individuals and organizations*, Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 2008.

8 John R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The human web: a bird's-eye view on world history*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2003.

of analysis involve political positioning, and themselves reflect which future political order the one or the other would support or serve.[9] It is recognized that, by means of historicization, history – and global history, in particular – should contribute to a better understanding of contemporary globalization. It can do so by providing categories that explain today's uncertainty of spatial levels for social and political actions and the patterns of spatiality of political sovereignty and that relieve the burden of a spatial hierarchy based on the dominance of the national that resulted in methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism.[10]

Historians have begun to analyse how present processes and the dynamics of their materialization reach back into the past, and have reconstructed the 'global condition' of humankind at particular places and in specific periods.[11] Authors such as Michael Geyer and Charles Bright have made clear that the present is part of a specific epoch of global integration, in which the continuous meshing of trajectories irreversibly dissolves any autonomous entities (societies, cultures, or civilizations); and that globalization involves permanent struggles over identity, sovereignty, and autonomy. They have demonstrated that this integration has not led to a homogenization of the world, as some have expected, nor to a clear-cut dialectic of 'global' versus 'local'. Current globality seems to be characterized by a constantly refreshing integrative dynamic that simultaneously 'fragment[s] the world even as it [becomes] one', renews differences, and creates a 'radically unequal but also radically decentred world'.[12]

Such studies capture much of the outlined aspects of current globalization. Two observations substantiate our plea for a reconsideration of the methodological implications of the historiographical conceptualizations of the world's past, and lead us to suggest three new research categories: portals of globalization, regimes of territorialization, and critical junctures of globalization. First, contemporary spatialization – in which individual and societal actions no longer occur in the hierarchical spatial structure described above – needs a more detailed historicization. Many studies demonstrate that processes of nationalization are deeply linked to transnationalizations, and that globalization provokes localization and regionalization. There is plenty of empirical evidence to suggest that different spatial levels were at play in the past as much as in the present. We know little, however, of how the connections between these spatialities were acted out historically. Three questions must be posed here: How were the mechanisms of delineation (enforcement of control and sovereignty) and efforts to transcend consolidated spatial spheres (flows) intertwined in societies

9 David Christian, 'Scales', in Marnie Hughes-Warrington, ed., *Palgrave advances in world histories*, New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005, pp. 64–89.

10 We should be conscious that the academic disciplines of the human sciences were formed and institutionalized in an epoch when methodological nationalism in academia reflected the predominance of the national in politics. The nation-state was at the top of a hierarchy of spatial references, just as Europe was seen as being at the top of the hierarchy of world regions. It is obvious that Eurocentric positions and the pitfalls of methodological nationalism deserve criticism, but we should not forget that we live in the old building, whose floor plan and interior were produced in a time when the nation and the 'West' were regarded as the best form in which modern globalization could be grappled with.

11 An overview is given by David Blaazer, 'Globalization, markets, and historiographical perspective', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42, 3, 2007, pp. 505–14; Antony G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in world history*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2002; Michael Lang, 'Globalization and its history', *Journal of Modern History*, 78, 2006, pp. 899–931.

12 Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, 'World history in a global age', *American Historical Review*, 100, 4, 1995, here p. 1044.

and in which spatial format did this dialectic manifest itself? How did the places in which control and flows were negotiated change over time? And who were the influential actors on both sides?

The same problematic applies to the most recent past. '1989' is usually presented as a rupture of continuities and, at the same time, linked to a structural crisis and transformation that started in the 1970s. But how do the two go together? Charles Maier has stated that the period from late 1960s to the late 1970s and the events of 1989 are but 'two phases of one epoch of unrest confronting the industrial world – capitalist and communist', and has argued that the twentieth century 'effectively ended between 1973 and 1989'.[13] Yet he, like others, leaves out what caused the unrest and thus shaped the underlying transformation. Of course, the socioeconomic and cultural changes that unfolded in the 1960s are indicated, but the epoch as a whole has not been analysed in its spatiality. Neither do the alteration of patterns of territorialization in the 1960s and 1970s receive detailed attention (for Maier, the period simply marks the beginning of a post-territorial regime); nor is '1989' systematically traced backwards. It is presented as the moment when a new world order began to break through, but it remains un-contextualized in a previous order of space. This perspective fails to take into consideration one fundamental question, namely: what is the nexus of social and political upheavals that condense into a global crisis, on the one hand, and the changes in the system of the relevant spatial references (among others, for the allocation of sovereignty) that signal the advent of a new world order, on the other hand? Clearly, the two are linked; and only an approach that integrates both will provide satisfying insights into the mechanisms of such transformation. In the following, we sketch how this can be overcome.

Traditions, challenges, and recent tendencies in the exploration of lthe global past

The spatial turn as the foundation of global history

Traditional concepts of spatiality and former understandings of the relationship between space and territory have encountered harsh criticism in recent decades. Scholars from various disciplines have questioned the established understanding of space, as well as the postulation of a postmodern, space-less world, arguing instead for the continuation but changing significance of spatiality. Referred to as the 'spatial turn',[14] this new thinking became widely accepted in the 1990s, though historians (as well as sociologists and political scientists) were among the latecomers to the debate. As early as the 1970s, a discussion had set in among philosophers and geographers who recognized the initial changes in the existing spatial order and saw two fundamental developments contributing to a problematization of space. On the one hand, in view of the fact that the world was becoming more tightly connected

13 Charles S. Maier, 'Two sorts of crisis? The ''long'' 1970s in the West and the East', in Hans Günther Hockerts, ed., *Koordinaten deutscher Geschichte in der Epoche des Ost-West-Konfliktes*, Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004, pp. 60–1.

14 Jörg Döring and Tristan Thielmann, eds., *Spatial Turn: das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2008; Barney Warf and Santa Arias, eds., *The spatial turn: interdisciplinary perspectives*, London: Routledge, 2008.

through new information technology, conflicts over natural resources, and the consolidation of international regulation, divisions of societies into forerunners or latecomers (as formulated by modernization theories) perished. On the other hand, a spatial organization of social exclusion was emerging as a consequence of these new factors. This could be seen in cities that grew rapidly through migration and newcomers from the countryside (segregation, gated communities), or at the level of whole societies (racial distinctions, apartheid). In the context of the debates that began in the 1960s, Michel Foucault observed that

> we are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersections with its own skein.[15]

In spite of scholars holding different notions of what the 'spatial turn' is about, the concept is held together by a core of arguments and observations.[16] It starts from the premise that there is a plurality of competing spatial frameworks at any given time. Patterns of cultural exchange and transnational spaces cannot be contained in one fixed category of space, and the traditional notion of space as a container in which historical change unfolds constricts the view of the intertwined processes of global integration and fragmentation. It does not capture the dialectic of flows (for example, migration, capital, goods, ideas) and the attempts to control them by various forms of territorialization (such as nation-states, regions, cities as portals of globalization, supranational structures, identity politics, transnational networks, and so forth). Secondly, since notions of space, as well as the relevant spatial frameworks, have changed over time, no single spatial entity can be postulated as the dominant one for all periods in the past. The implication that follows from this is that methodological nationalism is not only flawed but also unhistorical. In a nutshell, the 'spatial turn' recognizes the constructed nature of space, acknowledges the simultaneity of various spatial frameworks and the centrality of both the historical actors and historians in defining spatial orders, and refuses methodological nationalism or any form of centrism.

This methodological stance slowly trickled down into historiography. The focus on space questioned the conventional exclusive interest in time and inspired a new interest in world history.[17] One might say that global history has to start with the acceptance of the 'spatial turn', the refusal of Eurocentrism, and the realization that knowledge of the

15 Michel Foucault, 'Of other spaces', *Diacritics*, 16, 1986, p. 22.

16 We refer to a multitude of theories dealing with space, among others the empirical research and conceptual debates of the 'new political geography': John A. Agnew, 'The territorial trap: the geographical assumptions of international relations theory', *Review of International Political Economy*, 1, 1, 1994, pp. 53–80; Arjun Appadurai, 'Sovereignty without territoriality: notes for a postnational geography', in Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúniga, eds., *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 337–49; Gearóid Ó. Tuathail and Simon Dalby, eds., *Rethinking geopolitics*, London: Routledge, 1998; Peter J. Taylor, 'Embedded statism and the social sciences 2: geographies (and metageographies) in globalization', *Environment and Planning A*, 32, 6, 2000, pp. 1105–14; Neil Brenner, 'Beyond state-centrism? Space, territoriality, and geographical scale in globalization studies', *Theory and Society*, 28, 1999, pp. 39–78; Saskia Sassen, 'Spatialities and temporalities of the global: elements for a theorization', *Public Culture* 12, 1, 2000, pp. 215–32.

17 Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Die Wiederkehr des Raumes: Geopolitik, Geohistorie und historische Geographie', *Neue Politische Literatur*, 43, 3, 1998, pp. 374–97.

non-Western regions of the world is fundamental. Research results from area studies have moved into the centre of interest. This has, however, created new difficulties, since it is far from clear how regional studies can be integrated into historiography, or how area studies, as an interdisciplinary and transnational dialogue, can become a basis for research and teaching in the field of world history. In some academic systems, area studies were incorporated into the history profession early on: in the United States, many history departments have chairs for extra-European history. In other academic systems, such as in Germany, area studies remained institutionally and intellectually distant from the mainstream historical sciences. Area studies scholars were isolated in separate enclaves and viewed as experts on backwardness and the exotic 'other', thus irrelevant for accounts of modern society. In countries without experiences as colonial powers, such as Poland or the Czech Republic, area studies remained even more marginal. This has long-lasting implications for the formation of a truly international community for the study of world regions, which is mostly identified with Anglo-Saxon and French research, as well as with scholars from the former British and French colonies. A further obstacle arises from former Eastern Bloc and Western Bloc involvements in independence movements in Africa, Latin America, and Asia during the Cold War. Area studies specialists were often used for political analyses of proxy wars, but their work was only partly connected to the general socio-theoretical debate. These versions of area studies have proven to be far too one-sided and simplistic for current world historical studies.[18]

The central difficulty in integrating area studies and world or global history is to be found in conceptual continuities in the writing of extra-European history, namely the essentialization of the spatial units of analysis. The study of world areas was shaped until the end of the twentieth century by notions of space as a stable, fixed container. This is becoming blurred by the current 'global condition' theorized by the spatial turn.

Segmentation of the world into areas

Partitioning the globe into meaningful units as a structure for the narration of the world's past is as old as historiography itself. The partitions and segmentations that continue to shape today's scholarship are, by and large, products of the eighteenth century. By then, European expansionism and the growth of trade and long-distance travel had accrued a rich storehouse of cross-cultural perceptions and knowledge that required systematization. In response to this, new forms of categorizing and labelling of spatial structures (metageography) emerged, backed by a worldview that was in tune with the era's cosmopolitanism.[19] Accordingly, the world was conceived and conceptualized as a whole and, simultaneously, separated and divided into parts.[20] As loosely and flexibly

18 Matthias Middell, 'Universalgeschichte, Weltgeschichte, Globalgeschichte, Geschichte der Globalisierung – ein Streit um Worte?', in Margarete Grandner, Dietmar Rothermund, and Wolfgang Schwentker, eds., *Globalisierung und Globalgeschichte*, Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2005, pp. 60–82.

19 Harry Liebersohn, *The travelers' world: Europe to the Pacific*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

20 This is evident in the emergence of the noun 'civilization', which soon embraced the idea of a single, coherent, human entity and its plurality in the form of autonomous provinces: see Lucien Febvre, 'Civilisation: évolution d'un mot et d'un groupe d'idées', in *Civilisation: le mot et l'idée*, Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1930, pp. 1–55.

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as these spatial boundaries were framed in the beginning, they also became codified by the emergence of the 'comparative method' (Kulturvergleich).[21] The separation and comparison of cultures as distinct civilizations thus took off as a methodological basis of analysis.[22]

Although the extra-European world became of less concern in Western thinking in the face of nineteenth-century nationalism, the conceptual containment of the world's past in civilizational segments remained an essential framework. It served civilizing missions and colonization efforts[23] and was reinforced by the emerging academic fields of philology, ethnology, anthropology, geography, and religious studies. Furthermore, social Darwinism and racial theory – which were firmly anchored in the practices of high imperialism on one side and the idea of the 'great cultures' on the other – became essential components of academic interest in the late nineteenth century.[24]

Most of the twentieth-century historiography on the world beyond Europe is characterized by a similar delineation of the world and essentialism. The basic eighteenth-century framework was maintained and adapted to contemporary needs; and the establishment of interdisciplinary area studies in the United States during the Cold War reinforced it anew. Although area studies research helped, to some extent, in fostering a global perspective, it was deeply shaped by the geopolitics of the Cold War. Extra-European pasts were conceptualized as containers within which historical transformation evolved only after being induced by diffusions from the West.[25]

With the end of the Cold War, the model came under criticism from a broad range of intellectual movements and institutional forces.[26] Because the geopolitical constellation had changed, the Cold War maps and boundaries had to be redrawn. In addition, the processes of economic globalization were changing lines of demarcation, overcoming borders, and creating new and different areas of interaction. This initiated a re-evaluation of the historical conditions from which the US model of area studies research had emerged,

21 Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Transkulturell vergleichende Geschichtswissenschaft', in *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaates: Studien zur Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001, pp. 11–45.

22 Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen, *The myth of continents: a critique of metageography*, Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1997.

23 Prasenjit Duara, 'The discourse of civilization and decolonization', *Journal of World History* 15, 1, 2004, pp. 1–6; Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen: imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005.

24 For Germany, see Sabine Mangold, *Eine 'weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft': die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2004; Pascale Rabault-Feuerhahn, *L'archive des origines: Sanskrit, philologie, anthropologie dans l'Allemagne du XIXe siecle*, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2008.

25 Arif Dirlik, 'Confounding metaphors, inventions of the world: what is world history for?', in Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs, eds., *Writing world history, 1800–2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 91–133; Jack Goody, *The theft of history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. As always there are exceptions to the rule: Fernand Braudel's idea of the 'économies-mondes' as regional production, accumulation, and consumption regimes; Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system theory, which emphasized the interrelations of centres and peripheries; and Marshall Hodgson's concept of Afro-Eurasia as a hemispheric zone of human interaction.

26 For earlier criticism, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Harmondsworth: Random House Inc., 1985; and Eric Wolf, *Europe and the peoples without history*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.

a model labelled by some as an effort to 'know the enemy' in order to win the Cold War and maintain a hegemonic position in the capitalist world economy.[27]

This brand of scholarship, now more widely seen as an intellectual construct of the Western colonial project, had accepted the western European pattern of socio-historical transformation as the norm, against which the rest of the world appeared as deformed and imperfect variants. Area studies specialists have been accused of exoticizing and offering reductionist and simplistic interpretations. The idea of 'Asia' has been deconstructed as an age-old cartographer's fantasy, which only confirms the binary opposition between an essentialized West and an equally essentialized other. It imposes an artificial unity on highly diverse peoples and regions, distorts their internal structuring, and ignores the unities of historical networks and social relations; it takes borders as boundaries of knowledge; and, finally, it turns political into epistemological boundaries.[28] This critique on the political strings and intellectual shortcomings of the historiographical trapping of the world in fixed world regions and areas, together with an appropriation of the ideas of the spatial turn within historiography, encompassed a reconsideration of the relevant geographical units for research on non-Western history, and brought about a whole range of conceptual innovations, all trying to imagine new geographies and to develop alternative ways of understanding the world's past.

New concepts of area studies and transnationalism: a movement toward convergence

The new spatial conceptualizations have been strengthened in recent years by a broad range of scholarship, the most significant of which focuses on the crossing of boundaries previously seen as stable and separate. In these studies, interaction between societies instead of internal evolution is increasingly seen as the principal dynamic for development and modernity.[29] Along with studies addressing the new analytical criteria, there are emerging areas of research that define regions of the world as zones of political, social, and economic entanglements. They range from studies on Eurasia, the Americas, or the Mediterranean, through investigations of transcontinental routes of trade, migration, and slavery, and reconstructions of transcultural encounters, to works on disease and environmental history.[30]

27 Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The unintended consequences of Cold War area studies', in Noam Chomsky, ed., *The Cold War & the university: toward an intellectual history of the postwar years*, New York: New Press, 1997, pp. 195–231.

28 H. D. Harootunian, 'Postcoloniality's unconsciousness / area studies' desire', in Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, eds., *Learning places: the afterlives of area studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002, p. 151.

29 See the summary on recent debates in the field of transnational history by Michael Geyer: 'The new Consensus', in Matthias Middell, ed., *Transnationale Geschichte als transnationale Praxis*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2009.

30 Angelika Epple and Dorothee Wierling, eds., *Globale Waren*, Essen: Klartextverlag, 2007; Gwyn Campbell, *The structure of slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, London: Routledge, 2004; Adam McKeown, 'Global migration, 1846–1940', *Journal of World History* 15, 2, 2004, pp. 155–89; Richard H. Grove, *Green imperialism: colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600–1868*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Studies also extend to interactions on the world's seas and oceans. Fernand Braudel's well-known works on the Mediterranean have inspired a burgeoning body of work on individual sea basins and oceans.[31] There are studies of the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific, as well as smaller bodies of water such as the Baltic and Black Seas and the Philippine Islands. Oceans and surrounding land regions are understood as fractured and fragmented worlds, intrinsically unstable and contested, characterized by fluctuating spatial borders. Historical change can thus be represented in new ways because basic geographical elements such as distance, scale, and boundary are extraordinarily flexible. This emerging literature offers a whole range of suggestions for studies on border and cross-border spheres of action.[32]

The subcontinental tailoring of geographical space has also been pried apart in the study of world regions. It was common for many years to contrast, for example, a homogeneous Asia with Europe (behind which a rapidly industrializing Great Britain was concealed) in order to prove the structural backwardness of the East. The works of Bin Wong and Kenneth Pomeranz have recently broken open this imbalance. These and other studies, which establish and demonstrate Asia's economic lead over Europe until the middle of the eighteenth century, have also made clear that older narratives about the structural superiority of the West are largely misconceived and inaccurate. The debate contributed to a reconceptualization of spatial units in two ways. First, regions (for example, the Yangtze Delta) have become important, together with structural differences within larger areas for large-scale comparisons. In addition, cross-cultural and long-distance influences – the borrowing and exploitation of resources, as well as the proliferation of knowledge, expertise, and ideas between regions and areas – have entered the picture.[33] Alongside these approaches to interpreting regional connections anew and rediscovering their historical formations, a further stream of research examines transnationalization, and is concerned with consistently relativizing the production, implementation, and function of nation-states in complementary spatial relations. Whether or not this perspective undermines the historical significance of nation-states is no longer a subject of heated debate but is now seen as a matter of contextualization: that is, the correlation

31 Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditeranéen à l'epoque de Philippe II*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1949; Gheorghe Bratianu, *La Mer Noire, des origines à la conquête ottomane*, Monachii: Societas Academiaca Dacoromana, 1969; K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and civilization in the Indian Ocean: an economic history from the rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

32 Descriptions of the state of research on the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the Pacific have been published in 'Oceans of history', *American Historical Review* 111, 3, 2006, pp. 717–780; Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992; Bernhard Bailyn, *Atlantic history: concept and contours*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005; and Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen, eds., *Seascapes: maritime histories, littoral cultures, and transoceanic exchanges*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

33 R. Bin Wong, *China transformed: historical change and the limits of European experience*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997; Kenneth Pomeranz, *The great divergence: China, Europe, and the making of the modern world economy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000; Andre Gunder Frank, *Reorient: global economy in the Asian age*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998; Kaoru Sugihara and Gareth Austin, eds., *Labour-intensive industrialization in global history*, London: Routledge, forthcoming 2010; Peer Vries, *Via Peking back to Manchester: Britain, the Industrial Revolution, and China*, Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2003; R. Bin Wong, 'Entre monde et nation: les régions braudéliennes en Asie', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 56, 1, 2001, pp. 5–41.

of nationalized societies with alternative spatializations of political, economic, social, and cultural processes.[34]

Transnational history does not deny the importance of the nation-state. On the contrary, it emphasizes its capacity to control and channel border-transcending movements. In this sense, transnational history bridges the national, the sub-national (local, regional), and the global by exploring actors, movements, and forces that cross boundaries and penetrate the fabric of nations. The range of topics and the approaches taken are rich and diverse. Histories of cities, for example, invite study of cross-cultural ties and linkages beyond the borders of the territorial nation-state. They reveal connections, for instance, between metropolises and colonial empires, and networks that span the globe rather than remaining within the hierarchy of the political entity of which they are officially part.[35] Other transnational spaces have been identified and studied by scholars such as Ludger Pries, who works on borders,[36] and Ulrike Freitag, who insists that the spaces created by migrants should be defined as translocal.[37] Important contributions have been made to place the United States in a transnational perspective, and these efforts have stimulated similar undertakings for other countries.[38] Processes of cultural transfer are now the centre of attention and emphasize the continuity of transcultural entanglements even in periods of nationalization and decolonization.[39] Scholars now insist on the transnational quality of the state, and in general view spatial units as mutually constituted. Other subjects of transnational research are international organizations (where the concept of global governance is a significant element) and multinational corporations (which are receiving increasing attention in the field of economic history).[40]

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34 Klaus Kiran Patel, 'Überlegungen zu einer transnationalen Geschichte', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 52, 2004, pp. 626–45.

35 Carolyn Cartier, 'Cosmopolitics and the maritime world city', *Geographical Review*, 89, 2, 1999, pp. 278–89; Malte Fuhrmann and Lars Amenda, eds., 'Hafenstädte: Mobilität, Migration, Globalisierung' = *Comparativ*, 17, 2, 2007; Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a world economy*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2006.

36 Ludger Pries, ed., *New transnational social spaces: international migration and transnational companies in the early twenty-first century*, London: Routledge, 2001.

37 Ulrike Freitag, 'Translokalität als ein Zugang zur Geschichte globaler Verflechtungen', *geschichte. transnational*, 2005, http://geschichte-transnational.clio-online.net/transnat.asp?type=diskussionen&id=879&view=pdf&pn=forum (consulted 1 December 2009).

38 Thomas Bender, *A nation among nations: America's place in world history*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2006; Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational nation: United States history in global perspective since 1789*, Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im deutschen Kaiserreich*, Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2006; Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004.

39 Michael Espagne, Katharina Middell, and Matthias Middell, eds., *Transferts culturels et région: l'exemple de la Saxe*, Lyon: Université Lumière, 1995; Christophe Charle, *La crise des sociétés imperiales: Allemagne, France, Grande-Bretagne, 1900–1940: essai d'histoire comparée*, Paris: Edition du Seuil, 2001.

40 Eckart Conze, Ulrich Lappenküper, and Guido Müller, eds., *Geschichte der internationalen Beziehungen. Erneuerung und Erweiterung einer historischen Disziplin*, Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2004, Akira Iriye, *Global community: the role of international organizations in the making of the contemporary world*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002; Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann, eds., *The mechanics of internationalism: culture, society, and politics from the 1840s to the First World War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Three things are common to studies on transnationalism. First, they are anchored in a critique of methodological nationalism: that is, they thoroughly challenge all approaches that start from the assumption that the nation-state is the natural container for historical development. Secondly, by highlighting the capacity of individuals and social groups, transnational history takes a poststructuralist approach which emphasizes agency, and situates itself close to postcolonial theory with its emphasis on the agency of the silent. Thirdly, they are responses to the controversial debate on the problematic implications of comparison as an approach in historical inquiry. Over the last two decades, it has not only become clear that comparisons construct their objects rather then reflect historical givens but that comparative history itself has supported the construction of the nation by supposing or 'proving' its existence – in the form of national case studies, by arguments on national paths towards modernity, and all manner of debates on 'Sonderwege'. The strength of the comparative approach is that it isolates cases and dimensions of historical processes in order to explain them. But this comes at the price of decontextualization and has, for a long time, led historians to underestimate intercultural connections and interactions. In reaction to this insight, the methodological agenda of transnational history is strongly rooted in the paradigm of cultural transfer, understood as a complementary analysis of those connections that produce the objects of comparison.[41]

Global history could be described as a basin where a variety of research perspectives come together, rather than a field based upon a single and exclusive definition of its objects and methodological tools. It has developed in close conversation with new area and transnational studies because all three perspectives address the general problem of historical spatiality – that is, patterns of territorialization and configurations of spatial reference. They distinguish themselves clearly from conceptualizing space as a container and from oppositions of the national, transnational, and global within a clear-cut hierarchy of spaces. Despite the instability of the vocabulary and the labels that are in use, all can be classified as poststructuralist reactions to the new global conditions that characterize the present. None of the approaches presents itself as exclusive; instead they converge in the following understanding: for the historicization of the globalized world, we need histories that describe the meshing and shifting of different spatial references, narratives in which historical agency is emphasized, and interpretations acknowledging that the changing patterns of spatialization are processes fraught with tension.

Global history as historical thinking about regimes of territorialization, portals of globalization, and critical junctures

The emerging literature calls for greater tension between the traditional body of knowledge not based on the insights of the 'spatial turn' and new directions that explore ways of translating the theoretical and methodological insights of the spatial turn into empirical research.

41 Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1999.

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While studies are emerging that can be drawn upon, there are two dimensions of the general problem of historical spatialities that have not yet received enough attention: the simultaneity of spatial references of social action and their consolidation, and the nexus between global crises and changing patterns of territorialization. We suggest three research categories on which scholars can focus in the investigation of a history of globalization exploring processes of territorialization and territorial regimes, that is the assertion of political sovereignty against a plurality of spatial references by the regulation of flows and interactions. First, in order to understand what has changed between earlier and present forms of globalization in terms of territorialization, an investigation of 'portals of globalization' is necessary: that is, an examination of those places where flows and regulation come together. Secondly, global crises must be described and discussed as transitional phases from one 'regime of territorialization' to another. This leads directly to the concept of 'critical junctures of globalization', a category from which a theoretically coherent and empirically sophisticated programme of research and historical interpretation of globalization can unfold.

Portals of globalization

To avoid a purely structuralist approach, it seems necessary to focus on actors who experience processes of de- and re-territorialization at moments and in sociopolitical arenas where the conflict of new spatial patterns is fought out. Research on ports, cities, international trade, handling of exotica (in a variety of places, from museums to restaurants), and immigrant experience offers an approach to 'portals of globalization'. By such portals, we mean those places that have been centres of world trade or global communication, have served as entrance points for cultural transfer, and where institutions and practices for dealing with global connectedness have been developed. Such places have always been known as sites of transcultural encounter and mutual influence. They are not only places through which economic and military dispersion has taken place and global networks have been created, but also where a whole range of social forms and symbolic cultural constructions (of the 'own' and the 'other', of home and locality) challenge national affiliation in communities of migrants, merchants, and travellers from distant places.[42] This category is useful for two reasons. It allows for analysis of how global connectedness challenges a seemingly stable territorial order by extending it to other spheres, and it invites us to look at the various means by which elites try to channel and therefore control the effects of global connectivity (among others, by the creation of political structures and social control).[43] It examines both the production and products of new spatial orders in the places that play an important role in connecting particular territorialities, and where global entanglements are especially

42 See, as a convincing example that combines local and global aspects, Robin Law, *Ouidah: the social history of a West African slaving port, 1727–1892*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004; Addressing the portal functions in the financial sector, see Youssef Cassis, *Capitals of capital: a history of international financial centres, 1780–2005*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. For an example of the functional shift of those portals of globalization from port cities to capitals of influential empires, see Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: the imperial metropolis*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999; Felix Driver and David Gilbert, eds., *Imperial cities: landscape, display and identity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. For a comparative perspective, see Peter Geoffrey Hall, *Cities in civilization: culture, innovation, and urban order*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998.

43 In this regard, the category helps to enlarge the historical background of concepts such as global cities developed by sociologists: Saskia Sassen, *Global networks, linked cities*, London: Routledge, 2002.

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tangible (and therefore challenging) in the flow of goods, people, and ideas. In addition, the examination of portals offers a perspective on transnational movements and on their control 'from below', and a focus on those actors engaged and with vested interests in various modes of economic, social, and political engagement. Such a perspective frames globality through concrete historical actors. It is taken as given that all spatial constellations are the result of this globality and, as such, are themselves historically transient and variable. Whereas for long periods this functionality remained restricted to a few important places, it seems today that even small towns are becoming centres of the confrontation between the local and the global.

The regime of territoriality and regimes of territorialization

The changing functionality and forms of the portals of globalization require comparative studies of reactions to the global condition. Charles Maier has recently suggested interpreting the large-scale sociopolitical transformations underway since the seventeenth century as the emergence, enforcement, and subsequent collapse of 'territoriality'.[44] He understands this as 'a series of concepts for regulating human politics and economies', that emerged 'because multiple powers contest a finite global space, each seeking ... some zone of monopoly or exclusive control of sovereignty'. As a result, they create 'territory', or a 'space with a border that allows effective control of public or political life'.[45] Effective territories are those units 'where decision space, the writ of effective legislation, shared the same boundaries with identity space, the extended turf that claimed citizen's loyalties'.[46] As bordered and bounded political space, territory is based on two components, 'the frontier at the edge, and the lands within'.[47] Significantly, 'territoriality' is a historical formation that emerged relatively late and has changed at several junctures. The 'era of intense territoriality emerged around the mid-seventeenth century, underwent some decisive modifications in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and then ... started to dissolve a century ago'. The time before and after is marked by two alternative orders, namely, 'two forms of non-exclusive territorial attachment – imperial and post-territorial'. Maier pinpoints three transformative moments: 'the mid-seventeenth century that introduces sovereignty as an attribute belonging to hundreds of state units, and a heightened awareness of frontiers; then the epoch from the 1850s to about 1880 (but above all the 1860s) as a further crucial watershed ... and finally the period ... we have been caught up in since the end of the 1960s'.[48]

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44 Maier published his arguments in three articles, and each represents a refined version: 'Secolo corto o epoca lunga? L'unità storica dell'età industriale e le trasformazioni della territorialità', in Claudio Pavone, ed., *'900: i tempi della storia*, Rome, 1997, pp. 29–56; 'Consigning the twentieth century to history: alternative narratives for the modern era', *American Historical Review*, 105, 3, 2000, pp. 807–31; and 'Transformations of territoriality, 1600–2000', in Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad, and Oliver Janz, eds., *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006, pp. 32–56.

45 Maier, 'Transformations', pp. 33, 34, and 35.

46 Maier, 'Consigning', p. 807.

47 Ibid., p. 816.

48 Maier, 'Transformations', p. 37.

Two main doubts arise out of the research into early modern history. The principle of clearly defined, sovereign states with homogenized internal spatial orders (established by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648) in many ways contradicted the reality of overlapping border zones, unclear property claims, freer cities, and weakly administrated colonial spaces.[49] Maier analyses seventeenth- and eighteenth-century territoriality very much through the lens of a late eighteenth-century nation-state (with France as the point of reference). We would suggest separate investigations of what might be called an imperial regime of territorialization in order to contrast the seventeenth century with the nineteenth century, and an analysis of the transitions from the one regime to the other.[50] The 'early modern' spatial order distinguishes itself from the clear hierarchy of the emerging nation-state in western Europe through an extensive absence of hierarchy between the different patterns of spatialization of social relationships; at the same time, however, it stands in sharp contrast to the late twentieth century, since transnational entanglements were much less extensive than today and the speed of communication much slower. No doubt this spatial order was also characterized by territoriality, since not only governmental taxes but also feudal tributes were required. But there was no clear hierarchy between territorial and non-territorial forms of societal organization, or between different forms of territoriality.

In the long period from the middle of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, a fissure appears. As a result of the British–French rivalry during the last third of the eighteenth century, states experienced a massive increase of power in the form of taxation and mobilization for the wars between 1756 and 1826. The French, the British, the Spanish, and the Portuguese all consolidated territorial power; but, in Europe as a whole, territoriality was bound to a co-existence between regions of unresolved status, and sprang from the tension between imperial and nation-state-based modes of organization.[51] This transition was not confined to Europe. Bolívar, for example, did not prevail in his continental vision against the division of South America into nation-states.[52] However, it does not seem that all parts of the world followed the same pattern in the construction of territoriality. There is thus a need to differentiate between different phases of the construction of modern territoriality, as well as between different 'regimes of territorialization'. The latter, broader term describes the world before and after the established European nation-states of the late nineteenth century, thus opening the view for the historical epoch from the 1960s to the 1970s emphasized by Maier. Here, too, we find no abrupt end of territoriality but rather a mitigation of the hierarchical relationship of the national to other forms of territorial integration within a context of the growing significance of the transnational.[53] If we expand Maier's suggestion and include the idea of successive regimes of

49 New studies on piracy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggest that the assertiveness of the state was not as effective as the image of powerful empires would make one expect.

50 For the persistence of imperial patterns in western and central Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Charle, *La crise*.

51 Hagen Schulze, *Staat und Nation in der europäischen Geschichte*, Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 1994.

52 Raymond Th. Buve and John R. Fisher, eds., *Handbuch der Geschichte Lateinamerikas, Band 2: Lateinamerika von 1760 bis 1900*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1992.

53 This is shown convincingly by Ian Tyrrell in *Transnational nation*.

territorialization, then the view opens up for a more actor-based understanding of who was successful in putting the nation into the centre of spatial concepts at a certain time, and who managed best in the less hierarchical conditions that define the regimes of territorialization before and after the period of 1860 to 1970. At the same time, the more nuanced term 'regime of territorialization' helps us to conceptualize differences between Europe and other parts of the world.

This brings us to an investigation of the capacity of individuals and social groups to navigate different spatial references and find their way in a 'jeux d'échelle'.[54] The ability to cope with the peculiarities of a non-hierarchical regime of territorialization becomes a form of cultural capital for transnational elites, as well as for 'ordinary people' managing border-crossing activities.

The crucial relevance of space in all its forms (as geography, social action, identity, political decision, and economic entanglement) has to do with a dialectical condition that is marked, on the one hand, by entanglements and, on the other, by attempts to control and regulate those same entanglements. These can be examined on the economic and financial level in the currents of trade, investment, and the circulation of technological and commercial knowledge by international corporations, transnational cartels, and governments. It is not only a matter of flows but also how these flows lead to efforts of control and profit for individual market participants. With this, the question of adequate space comes into play – a question of economic geography made visible in strategies for expansion into markets that have not yet been entered or for the defence of markets that are already saturated. A similar relation of flow and control is evident in the political realm. Collaboration in international regimes for the regulation of transnational problems is confronted by attempts to find appropriate forms of government to preserve agency, under conditions of global interconnectedness guaranteeing sovereignty.

The interplay exists on the cultural level as well, and is visible in various forms of cultural transfer and in the appropriation of foreign cultural patterns. All these processes centre on the question of orientation in space, the demarcation of a territorial core that must be balanced against entanglements with far-flung places. The history of territorialization calls attention to those spatial constellations that have become especially effective in producing this contradictory balance. The nation-state has indeed proven its capacity to organize power, to preserve sovereignty, to enlarge, and to maximise profit in an entangled world market. The model of the nation-state, instituted in large parts of the world between 1840 and 1880,[55] was so successful that the most influential powers of the era managed to bring large parts of the world under their dominance.[56] But, strikingly enough, they

54 The term is borrowed from Jacques Revel, *Jeux d'échelles: la micro-analyse à l'expérience*, Paris: Gallimard, 1996.

55 See Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, 'For a unified history of the world in the twentieth century', *Radical History Review*, 39, 1987, pp. 69–91; and id. 'Global violence and nationalizing wars in Eurasia and America: the geopolitics of war in the mid-nineteenth century', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38, 4, 1996, pp. 619–57.

56 Michael Adas, *'High' imperialism and the 'new' history*, Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 1993.

achieved this in the form of imperial expansion; while nationalizing their societies at home, they further utilized the instruments of imperialistic politics.[57] The expansion of the principle of sovereign nationalization collided, however, with the attempt of the colonial powers to hold on to their supplementary imperial spaces during the 'Wilsonian moment' of 1918.[58]

Regimes of territorialization thus move certain types of spatial order into the centre of attention and shape beliefs throughout the world about what are efficient modes of organization and models worthy of emulation. But this does not imply that all the world's societies can reorganize themselves justly and unhindered. This inequality and difference helps us to understand why the transition to a new spatial constellation is riddled with conflict and violence.[59]

Global crises and critical junctures of globalization

A world order does not imply one unique structural pattern that is imposed on all peoples of the world. Rather, it refers to the aspirations of intellectuals, politicians, and others to reduce the complexity of global flows and forms of control to a single pattern. World orders always contain a large utopian component; and it is interesting and necessary to analyse those political efforts that attempt to impose their version of order on the world. Economic and political inequalities (as well as cultural differences) reproduce themselves in the course of crises and conflicts. A dominant regime of territorialization is generally the result; but one should not misinterpret this congruity and accord as an overcoming of inequalities and differences. In this regard, any regime of territorialization should be viewed as the result of a process of trial and error in various societies and in various places.

The shift from 'archaic' to 'modern' globalization, as Christopher Bayly calls it, reflects interactions between different parts of the world where the older sociopolitical forms of organization are disputed by new ones. Beginning in the mid eighteenth century, these interactions increased as communication intensified. Michael Geyer and Charles Bright are correct when they date the breakthrough to a new regime of territorialization to the period 1840–1880 and point to the global interconnections that were in place when 'national societies were forced into a rapid and often violent transformation'. A synchronicity of shocks to the political and social order came in the form of violent confrontations over the pace and direction of social and territorial organization, emerging markets, modernization, and technological advancement. Most significant among these

57 For an interesting comparative view, see Charle, *La crise*.

58 Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian moment: self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

59 Maier, 'Consigning', p. 814; idem, 'Transformations', p. 44. Changes included strengthening 'central government institutions at the expense of regional or confederal authority'; requiring that 'internal as well as external military capacity be continually mobilized as a resource for governance'; the cooptation of 'new leaders of finance and industry, science, and professional attainment into a ruling cartel alongside the … the landed elite'; and the development of 'an industrial infrastructure based on the technologies of coal and iron as applied to long-distance transportation of goods and people, and the mass output of industrial products assembled by a factory labor force'.

were the Opium Wars and the Taiping Rebellion in China, the Meiji-Ishin in Japan, the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 in India, the American Civil War of 1861–65, Cuba's war of independence in 1868, Canada's de facto independence in 1867, the European Revolutions of 1848–49, the wars leading to national unification in Italy and Germany, the Austro-Hungarian settlement of 1867, the Crimean War, and the 1861 elimination of serfdom in Russia.[60]

While these dates fit well with Maier's analysis of territoriality as a pattern in modern global history, Christopher Bayly describes a much longer-lasting global crisis and traces similar convergences of crisis, collapse, and reorganization.[61] Viewing the 'Age of Revolution'[62] and the long period of British–French military and economic competition together, he concludes that 'many localised conflicts spun out of control across the world between 1720 and 1820, and especially after 1780'.[63] He frames this as a period of 'world crisis' and suggests that it was shaped by two dynamics – increasing 'uniformity at the global level' and 'the growth of internal complexity in the world's societies which developed within this trend towards outward uniformity'.[64] According to Bayly, the period begins around 1720, when the relatively sustained political stability and economic prosperity that had begun in 1660 came to an end (visible in the decline of the Safavid and Moghul empires in the Middle East and South Asia). Subsequently, the process of 'imperial overstretch', became the conspicuous centre of 'archaic globalization'.[65]

The period that Bayly described as 'world crisis' is, in our perspective, characterized by the breakthrough of new patterns (at least in some regions, though this change did not take place everywhere). The rationalization of spatial structures, which was suggested by cameralism, was accompanied by a further clarification of property claims, which were taken out of the grasp of numerous feudal property holders in favour of indisputable property ownership.[66] The principle of territoriality did not only apply to the sovereignty of states and their relations to each other but also evolved its power from the slow change of social and judicial conditions in agriculture, the largest economic sector by far. The

60 Charles Bright and Michael Geyer, 'Weltgeschichte als Globalgeschichte: Überlegungen zur einer Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts', *Comparativ*, 4, 5 1994, pp. 13–45.

61 Christopher A. Bayly, *The birth of the modern world, 1780–1914: global connections and comparisons*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.

62 Ibid., pp. 90ff.; see also Bailey Stone, *Reinterpreting the French Revolution: a global-historical perspective*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2002. For the discussion of a trans-Atlantic cycle of revolutions, see Matthias Middell, 'Revolutionsgeschichte und Globalgeschichte: transatlantische Interaktionen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Margarete Grandner and Andrea Komlosy, eds., *Vom Weltgeist beseelt: Globalgeschichte 1700–1815*, Vienna: Promedia Verlag, 2004, pp. 135–59.

63 Bayly, *Birth*, p. 7.

64 Ibid., p. 20.

65 Other empires, such as the Qing and the Ottoman, mounted a more effective resistance, and Russia first began its ascent under Peter I. Thus, the 'world crisis' of the long eighteenth century was not the final crisis of all imperial structures. Obviously, it is insufficient to analyse the years between 1720 and 1820 in terms of the gradual emergence of the nation-state on one hand and the gradual decline of empires on the other.

66 Dietmar Willoweit, *Rechtsgrundlagen der Territorialgewalt: Landesobrigkeit, Herrschaftsrechte und Territorium in der Rechtswissenschaft der Neuzeit*, Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1975.

French Revolution, with its radical reordering of space, manifested in the abolition of feudal rights and the establishing of the *departements*, was only a part of a global process toward achieving territoriality – in states that transformed into nation-states early as well as in imperial forms of government. At the end of that period, the pattern of a fully developed nation-state based on people's sovereignty and the principle of a homogenized territory was established. Initially found only in a few places, soon different forms of societal self-organization – each associated with specific capacities of inspiring and channelling participation in global flows, as well as of controlling and limiting these flows – became the central concern in ever more societies and among economic, political, and cultural elites around the world.

The decades from the 1780s to the 1820s can therefore be interpreted as a period of global transition.[67] The revolutions and wars of the period resembled those of a half a century later, but the breakthrough to a new regime of territorialization was not yet as clearly focussed on and limited to the formation of nation-states. The rebellion in Saint-Domingue led by Toussaint L'Ouverture forced Napoleon's turnaround on the question of slavery and led to a declaration of independence and state sovereignty in Haiti. Bolívar's dream of a unified South America was conceived in opposition to currents of European thought, but ultimately failed as a result of successful independence movements against the Spanish. The Portuguese-Brazilian displacement of the capital city from Lisbon to Rio expressed a different order of imperial aspiration and nation-state structure, owed largely to transatlantic communication.

The following phase, between 1840 and 1880, was characterized by the synchronicity of the struggle over a new regime of territorialization, leading to a slow *synchronization*. As in Bayly's conception of a 'world crisis', the idea of a synchronicity of clashes addresses the idea of a breakthrough towards a regime of territorialization: many parts of the world reacted simultaneously to the same challenges both by increasing their contacts and the processes of mutual learning, on the one hand, and by competing over the most efficient forms of political, economic, and cultural order, on the other. While Maier's 'territoriality' is characterized by a clear borderline and by a politically and socioeconomically homogenized territory, it is necessary to note that this bounded space was constantly challenged by different forms of border-transcending structures; otherwise, the argument is weakened by a teleological viewpoint. The precondition for the strict hierarchy of the national, the regional, and the local characteristic of the modern regime of territoriality is precisely the continuation of the other spatial frameworks – driven by a permanent dialectic of 'de-territorialization' and 're-territorialization'.

While in some periods we can observe an emerging synchronization of such moments and an increase in communication between the various arenas but not yet a decision towards one dominant feature of structuring society (and its relationship to others) by (re-)organizing its spatial patterns and references, we can distinguish other periods with an astonishing degree of synchronicity. Here, the comparison between the 1780s–1820s and the 1840s–1880s is illuminating. To understand this process better, we suggest analysing these junctures – critical junctures of globalization – as periods and arenas in which

67 Matthias Middell, Michel Espagne and Edoardo Tortarolo, eds., *The 18th century in a global perspective*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2009.

new spatial relationships are established as a reaction to the effects of globalization.[68] There is an astonishing degree of synchronicity at these junctures – moments when actors coordinate their efforts and when a sort of global order with regard to spatial patterns becomes widely accepted. Not all societies and social groups profit equally from the enforcement of the new spatial order; nevertheless, alternatives are marginalized thereafter.

The concept of critical junctures allows us to understand forms of territorialization and the increasing importance of interconnectedness in conflicts on a global scale, and introduces the aspect of power relations into the narratives of modern global history. Conflicts produce periods of uncertainty, limit political control, and lead to a perforation of existing borders, all of which engender incongruent patterns of spatialization and competitive spatial relations. These conflicts are not simply zones of domestic conflict happening by coincidence from one country to another. They are global in character because they are arenas where the form in which societies participate in world affairs is decided, arenas in which the most effective form to secure strong societal integration domestically and efficient entanglement internationally is fought about. In comparison to the concept of territoriality, the concept of critical junctures includes broader dimensions of space (political, economic, social, imagined, and so forth) and links with debates on recent global trends and new spatializations among geographers and in other disciplines.[69] It does not reduce the spatiality of political sovereignty to bounded territory.

With regard to the transition from one regime of territorialization to another, we have to differentiate between relatively long periods, where the change in world regions was not a simultaneous one, and shorter periods – critical junctures of globalization – when the processes of change evolved at the same time and became synchronous. It is in the latter case that new world orders emerged, that new leitmotivs of the spatial order were regarded as the most effective ones in handling global connectedness. Since such leitmotifs and regimes of territorialization are immediately rationalized (among others, by historical master narratives), consequently the limitations of territorialization, its exclusions, and above all the complex process of its enforcement are barely visible.

To summarize: The uncertainty in the present as to patterns of spatiality and appropriate regulatory mechanisms, sketched at the beginning, nourishes a curiosity for their historicity. In view of that observation, we have argued for an approach to global history that focuses on modern globalization by examining historical structures of spatiality and their permanent renegotiation over time. We are not suggesting, however, that traditional categories for conceptualizing the human past should be abandoned. On the contrary, we believe that a deeper understanding of how regimes of territorialization

68 See similar arguments made by Saskia Sassen in *Globalization and its discontents: essays on the new mobility of people and money*, New York: New Press, 1998.

69 Benno Werlen, *Sozialgeographie alltäglicher Regionalisierungen*, 3 vols., Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995–2007.

channel perceptions of the world will clarify research categories – and will make visible their temporal and social conditionality. From this, a stimulating debate can begin over which categories will continue and which will expire in a global age.

Matthias Middell, University of Leipzig, heads the Global and European Studies Institute, the Graduate Centre of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Centre for Area Studies, and an MA programme on global studies (organized with Vienna, Wroclaw, and the LSE). He researches social and political transformations since the late eighteenth century, and the history and methodology of historiography. He edits the journals Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte, and geschichte.transnational.

Katja Naumann, research fellow at the Centre for the History and Culture of East Central Europe, University of Leipzig, coordinates a handbook on the region in a transnational historical perspective, and the headquarters of the European Network in Universal and Global History, and teaches globalization from c.1800. She is finishing a dissertation on world history research and teaching in the USA, 1918–68.

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