

# **Cultural Dimensions and Politics under Globalized Conditions: Traditionalist orthodoxies vs. constructivist perspectives**

**Benno Werlen (Jena)**

The so-called cultural turn has challenged the established research perspectives of both the humanities and human geography. One of its legacies is that not only in both areas of research cultural aspects are increasingly viewed as relevant for helping to analyze and explain human practices, but also political discourses are integrating the cultural dimension in a more direct way.

However, under globalized conditions of local actions the cultural dimension of human practices is of growing significance, especially on the level of everyday life, as regards the interrelationship of local/regional traditions and actions across distance. The prospects of success of all kinds of fundamentalist discourses are rapidly increasing related to a decreasing availability of knowledge of different cultural worlds. Acquiring and expanding geographical cultural knowledge is becoming an even more important task than ever before in the constitution of images and representations of the world.

To meet these challenges, it is important to deepen the understanding of the geographical (or spatial) dimension of the construction and reproduction of cultural realities, a process implied in social, economic, and political actions and in the transformation of nature by human actions. But to reach this goal, we need a critical and radical revision of the *traditional* geographical perspectives that are (curiously) drawn upon in *late-modern* cultural research. In my view, it is necessary to overcome the space-centered traditionalist orthodoxy and to take a step forward to an understanding of the constitution of cultural worlds and the formation of sociocultural matrices as also inherently spatial or geographical, whilst acknowledging that this kind of late-modern geography rests on constructivist grounds.

## **1 The two cultural turns**

This paper argues for a distinction between two cultural turns. The first cultural turn at the end of the 19th century can be characterized by spatialization and naturalization of culture, in geography as well as in the humanities. Under current globalized conditions, however, drawing on such space-centered understandings of culture amounts to subscribing to a traditionalist orthodoxy that feeds different types of fundamentalism. The current second cultural turn can be characterized as interpretative constructivism and focuses on subjective actions and interpretations.

This second cultural turn is a first step in the realm of cultural research to come to terms with and adapt their research paradigm to the new ontology of cultural realities. This is of special significance for all forms of cultural geography, which frequently still reproduce the basic principles of the first cultural turn. One of the main challenges for current human geography lies therefore in the investigation of the ways in which the naturalization (and

spatialization) of the symbolic is used in powerful (political) discourses, spurring the reproduction of (problematic) regional and national identities. This paper suggests an action-centered framework for the (critical) analysis of the interrelation of mediated information, spatial representation, and identity formation.

If we want to be able to access this interrelation, we cannot think social and cultural realities in spatial categories. This would lead under current (late-modern) geographical conditions of action – in the extreme case – to an enforcement of fundamentalist discourses. If the spatial representation of the social and cultural world has served us well in the context of traditional life-forms and in the age of the nation-state, it becomes increasingly problematic in the age of late modernity.

The first question to ask in this context is: Why is this so? Is it because spatial representations of cultural and social realities are becoming increasingly problematic these days? The hypothetical answer is: Because the first cultural turn in the humanities has not been adapted to the geographical imagination of the world or only in a highly contradictory way. I will now briefly outline this contradiction and point out some of the most problematic implications.

## **2 Cultural turn I: Spatialization of the Cultural**

As George W. Bush called for a “new Crusade” against the “axis of evil” after September 11th, 2001, one could gain the impression that not only Samuel P. Huntington’s (1996, 17) “Clash of Civilizations”, in which he purports a view of cultures as colliding entities, has become the paradigm of the “new era of world politics”, but also that the traditional geographical “culture-realm” school of thought (cf. Schmitthenner (1951[1938]), E. Huntington (1915)) has achieved a new breakthrough at the political level. More recently, very similar views appear to be promoted by current again by the U.S. President Donald Trump whose vocabulary suggests cultural interpretations of the world that are in line with such views of culture as intimately bound to (or even determined by) space and/or nature. These spatializing and naturalizing perspectives on culture are all coherent with or even expressions of the first cultural turn in geography.

This first cultural turn emerged in opposition to a philosophical tradition that had been established since Plato and Aristotle, and that was actually nothing else than a “climatic theory”. In other words, since Greek philosophy, the culture and character of peoples have been placed in a direct relationship with climatic zones. Philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1837, 109), for example, remarks that „each nation, each people carries within itself the type of nature [peculiar to its] locality (...), [it] is the son of [its] soil.” The implication of this argument is that culture and space, i.e., culture and nature, are to be treated as congruent.

The first cultural turn was part of the so-called historicism debate, which strove for an emancipation of the humanities from the natural sciences. The core principle of this turn was proposed and postulated in particular by Dilthey (1990[1865]) and Max Weber (1913) and stated that “Verstehen” (which roughly translates to “meaningful understanding” or “putting yourself in the shoes of others to see things from their perspective”) should be the

appropriate methodology for the cultural sciences when seeking to access and analyze subjective meaning. Dilthey and Weber thus sought to establish sociology as an interpretive discipline as opposed to a positivist one.

It is, however, significant that this new approach was not fully and consistently applied to investigations of human expressions or activities – neither in social and cultural anthropology, nor in cultural geography. The early cultural sciences instead objectified cultures as spatially embedded living-spaces, akin to the notion of “ecological niches” in biology. Contained in this understanding are holistic and essentializing representations of culture as they are reified as spatial entities.

### **Three Main Characteristics**

**Firstly:** Most theories of culture are in fact theories of climate and/or biology.

**Secondly:** The study objects of cultural geography are the naturally determined cultural areas (Kulturkreise, Länder)

**Thirdly:** The postulate of the (idiographic) methodology of the humanities (*Verstehen*) is not applied to meaningful actions, but combined with the idea of idiographic cultural areas, that should be understood as unique.

Figure 1: Cultural Turn I: Spatialization of the Cultural

In the *possibilistic* variant of the early approaches in geography and the cultural sciences, (regional) culture is understood as a regional reality and a regionally developed semantic framework for dealing with the problems of existence. In the *geo-deterministic* variant, culture is further understood as an immediate expression of natural conditions and/or as based on some kind of “objective spirit” (“objektiver Geist”) (Schwind 1964, 1). Thus, the corresponding cultural research has to do essentially with the empirical demonstration of the unity of nature, space and culture within (greater or smaller) spatial containers [Behältnissen].

This program is combined in the most contradictory way with the core postulate of the first cultural turn, which leads to an emphasis on the uniqueness of each land, each region, each landscape. In short: vertically speaking, a (natural) determinism is postulated, in the sense that observable cultural forms must be seen as causally dependent on (or determined by) and hence expressions of the natural basis. At the same time, however, in

horizontal terms, the uniqueness of each individual regional culture is postulated, to which the descriptive representation is supposed to be faithful.

Consequently, in this perspective, addressing “identity” and “difference” takes on a spatial figuration. The identity-generating “we” is bound to the “here”, the bordering “other” to the “there”, such that the near constitutes the familiar, the far constitute the foreign.

The second question, then, is this: Under which conditions would the spatial description of societies and cultures be appropriate? The hypothetical answer to this question is: Under conditions where spatially and temporally embedded traditional life-forms prevail.

The most important spatio-temporal characteristics of traditional life forms and regional societies can – in ideal-typical form – by referring to Giddens (1990) be summarized as shown in figure 2:

T I M E	1	Traditions intertwine past, present and future.
	2	Kinship organises and stabilises social relations over time.
	3	Birth, age and sex determine social positions.
S P A C E	4	Face-to-face situations dominate communication.
	5	Small amount of interregional communication.
	6	The local village constitutes the familiar life context.
<i>Traditional life forms are temporally and spatially embedded</i>		

Figure 2: Ideal-typical aspects of traditional life-forms and regional societies

Stability over time or temporal embeddedness is based on the domination of local traditions. Traditions link past, present, and future and are the central frame of reference for action, orientation, and legitimation in daily praxis. They set narrow bounds for individual decisions. Social relations are predominantly ruled by relations of kinship or tribe or forms of social hierarchy that assign individual positions based on place of birth, age, or sex.

In such societies, the technical standards of transportation and communication set relatively narrow spatial limitations, which is why such societies can also be described as spatially ‘embedded’. The predominance of walking and the limited significance of writing restrict social and cultural expressions to the local and regional level. Face-to-face

interaction is almost the only possible situation for communication. Additionally, production processes have to respect natural conditions because of technological development. Economies are, consequently, highly adapted to the prevailing physical conditions.

In addition – as many anthropological studies teach us – temporal, spatial, and socio-cultural aspects of everyday praxis are closely bound together. For traditional life forms, it is important not only to carry out certain activities at a certain time, but also in a certain place and sometimes even with a certain spatial orientation. In this way, social regulations and activity patterns are reproduced and enforced by unreflexive spatio-temporal commitments.

The unity of socio-cultural and spatio-temporal dimensions of activities becomes the basis for extremely powerful reification processes. In this way, for example, places of worship are identified with the act of worship. Only in this way is it possible to claim that somebody who puts his or her feet on a certain place also desecrates that place. But this can only appear as a meaningful phrase if there is no distinction made between significance and space. To put it another way: only when the significance is seen as a quality of the place itself and not as a product of the subjects' constitution process, only then is it possible to talk about desecrating places. Exactly on the basis of this process of reification, 'space' and 'time' are enriched, are filled up with specific meanings. Signification appears as a quality of things, deeply rooted in them and embedded in the territory of a given culture.

Consequently, spatial representations of the cultural are possible and meaningful because of the temporal and spatial embeddedness everyday praxis. Or in other words: because everyday praxis under traditional conditions are highly spatially tied or better: tied to the physical-material conditions, it is possible – without extreme alienation – to represent socio-cultural realities as spatial realms.

## **2 Rational containerisation of social realities: the nation state**

The disembedding mechanisms are grounded in the history of modernisation. This mechanisms are the core dimension of the transformation of the space-society-nexus, leading today to the globalisation of our life conditions. Their most significant expression became manifest in the transformation of relations of production and exchange (capitalism), the transformation of technologies of productions and communication (industrialism) and the emergence of powerful apparatus of bureaucracy (bureaucratisation) for the co-ordination and control of human actions over long temporal and spatial distances.

<b>Main dimensions</b>	<b>Transformation of spatial conditions</b>
<b>Capitalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uniform currency</li> <li>- Territorial principal for tokens of exchange</li> <li>- National economies</li> <li>- Protections of national economies by custom and taxes</li> </ul>
<b>Industrialism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Division of labour</li> <li>- Social and regional disparities</li> <li>- Spatial-temporal organisation of production</li> <li>- Communication in absence</li> </ul>
<b>Bureaucracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spatial-temporal co-ordination of actions</li> <li>- Territorial surveillance</li> <li>- Territorial principles in politics and legislation</li> <li>- National (high)language</li> <li>- National organisation of knowledge and information transmission (education, radio and TV-stations etc.)</li> </ul>

Figure 3: Main dimensions of modernity and the transformation of space

The spatial implications of the three main dimensions in the emergence of modern societies are of extraordinary importance. In the sphere of *economics* – beyond Marx’ analysis of capitalism – the tremendous extension of territories with uniform currencies is the fundamental pre-condition for the establishment of national economies. For all economic actions the principal of territoriality is applied to the tokens of exchange (money). Another important aspect in the emergence of the modern economic order is the protection of the own production of national economies by customs and taxes along the national borders.

The practices of territorialization of economy are directly bound up with the formalization and metrication of ‘space’. The emptying out of it’s mythological and religious meanings is the precondition for the interregional unification of metric systems on the basis of international conventions. The national unification of the currency is the precondition not only for the establishing a land market but also for the territorial organization of market economy inside clearly defined borders.

Closely tied up with economic changes are technical innovations and their enabling of a growing division of labor. If Durkheim draw our attention to the social implication of this processes, in social geographical perspective the consequences of the disembedding mechanisms in the field of communication and interregional exchange of commodities and information are even more important. For the first time in human history it became possible to inform a big number of persons simultaneously. This has – of course – very strong cultural and economic implications.

Max Weber's analysis of modern societies draw our attention to the limiting implications of bureaucracy and its danger for economic and political developments. But it is important to see, that bureaucracy is not only the expression of the emergence of state control, but also the implication of the territorial organization of production and consumption. The time-space distancing of interaction partners is asking for more bureaucratic activities of coordination, on the private level as well as on the state level. Bureaucratic activities and bureaucracy have to be seen as the outcome of the new ordering of the spatial-temporal relations in the 'society'-space'-nexus and the territorialization of the political and legal order as well as of education and information system. The emergence of national (high)languages parallels on the cultural level the emergence of a single national currency on the economical level.

A central aspect of the history of modernization are the processes of territorialization and therefore of regionalization on the level of nation-states. The disembedding of traditional life-forms led to the re-embedding through rational territorialization. The religious-mythological embeddedness is replaced by bureaucratic-institutional forms of re-embedding. The history of nation-states is may be the most prominent expression of that process.

To sum up: Territorial binding and spatial compartmentalization of the cultural are under traditional and national relations to a certain degree given; under late-modern conditions, nevertheless, they are not. With this, the pioneering accomplishments of the first cultural-scientific phase not only lose their powers of orientation, they become – if they are brought into play as interpretive templates under altered conditions – orthodox traditionalism.

If one understands fundamentalism, with Giddens (2002, 5) as an attitude that under modern conditions calls for adherence to traditional – not discursively accomplished – standards, it becomes intelligible how orthodox traditionalism can strengthen fundamentalist positions. If the traditionalistic orthodoxy of (spatial) essentialization of culture is combined with the relativization of all standards of value, the additional tendency emerges to absolutization and homogenization of particular cultures.

If the representations of cultural reality undertaken by cultural geography are to be able to avoid the link to traditionalistic orthodoxy, its methodology must be harmonized anew with the altered current conditions of everyday life. How can these conditions be characterized?

### **3 New geographical conditions**

In the age of late modernity these basic principles are transformed, especially on the economic and cultural level. The modern principles of territorialization and regionalization are evaporating as consequence of the growing power of the disembedding mechanisms. One of the striking implications is the globalization of the life-worlds.

In contrast to the traditional and national constellations, late-modern life forms (Giddens 1990) are the basis and expression of the globalization process. Here traditions are not in the center of daily social praxis. Social orientations and social actions need – as a consequence of modernity – discursive justification and legitimization. The dominant life contexts are spatially and temporally 'disembedded'. The disembedding mechanisms are

grounded in the history of modernization. These mechanisms are at the core of the transformation of the space-society-nexus.

T I M E	1	Everyday routines sustain ontological security.
	2	Globally observable cultures, life forms and life styles.
	3	Production and valued work determine social positions.
S P A C E	4	Abstract systems (money, writing and expert systems) enable mediated social relations over enormous distances.
	5	World-wide communication systems.
	6	Global village as anonymous context of experience.
<i>Late-modern life forms are spatially and temporally <u>disembedded</u></i>		

Figure 4: Ideal-type of late-modern life forms and globalised societies

Temporal stability is replaced by constant social transformation. Late modern everyday actions are not dominated by local traditions. It is rather routines that sustain ontological security. For individual decisions, a wide field of possibilities remains open. Globally observable life styles and life forms – very often linked to a specific generation – become much more important. A person's social position is determined by production and valued work and – following the principles of the enlightenment – not by birth or age, nor by sex or race.

The spatial clustering and embeddedness of traditional social life forms is replaced by global interconnections and disembedding mechanisms. The actual and potential reach of actors is stretched to a global dimension. The most important disembedding mechanisms are money, writing and technical artefacts. Means of transportation enable a high level of mobility. Together with individual freedom of movement the new means of transportation are enabling a mix of formerly locally fixed cultures. This multi-cultural mixing, combined with global communication systems, enables a diffusion of information and information storage not dependent on the corporeal presence of the actors. Of course, face-to-face interaction still exists as an important situation of communication, but the most substantial part of communication is mediated.

`Space' and `time' are emptied of fixed signification, or at least separated from them. The signification of things is much more the result of a recombination by the subject, depending on the action to be performed. What a thing signifies is no longer taken as a quality of the thing itself, but is rather attributed to it, and the content of attribution depends in principle

on what the subject is doing or wants to do. Therefore, the 'When' and 'Where' of social activities is something to agree on, a subject of agreement, and does not depend on fixed, pre-given meaning-contents of social activities. The place of traditionally fixed meanings is taken over or replaced by rationally and institutionally determined regulations, open to communicative revision.

Under these conditions, contexts of action distinguish themselves not only through non-simultaneity of the simultaneous but also by the absence of the available.

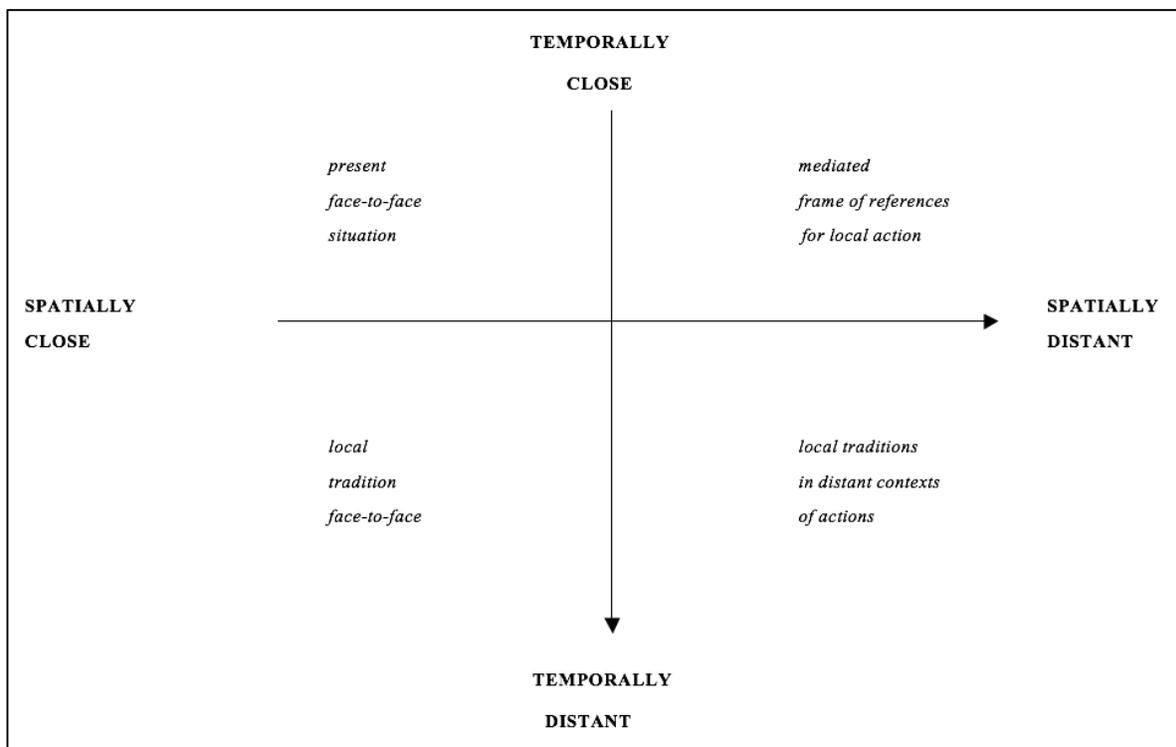


Figure 5: New geographical conditions

As consequence of the dis-embedding or realization of the above-named options, a multiplicity of subjectively co-formed lifestyles takes the place of regionally homogeneous forms of life. Cultural multiplicity becomes the sign of local context.

The manifold nature (heteromorphy) of the options to act primarily entails two possibilities. *On one hand*, it holds an enormous potential for innovation. For the new can only ever stem from calling the locally familiar into question. *On the other hand*, it also contains a quite volatile potential for conflict. In order to “manage” this conflict potential, fundamentalistic discourses are often generated, which can range from regionalistic or nationalistic to trans-national culturalistic proportions in the framework of a clash of civilizations (*Kulturkampf*).

This kind of conflict management amounts to a duplication at the everyday level of the traditionalistic orthodoxy of the traditional cultural geography described above.

#### 4 Cultural turn II: Geographical practices

As a result of the new constellations of the everyday world, a new cultural understanding becomes necessary at the scholarly level, one which does justice to the meaning of the spatial dimension for cultural realities, but does not grasp this dimension as a constitutive power. Spatial relations should be acknowledged instead as a context of action in need of interpretation, [a context] which acquires different meanings according to each course of action

Giving these relations their due, the culture-concept of the second cultural turn distinguishes itself *first* through the assumption that “culture” represents the arena of life-forms.

#### Three Main Characteristics

*Firstly:* "Culture" represents the totality of life-forms to overcome the problems of existence, expressed and differentiated by specific values, rules and schemes of interpretation on which human actions are based.

*Secondly:* Critical reflexivity: all cultural realities are the result of meaningful constitutions.

*Thirdly:* Focus on cultural patterns explanation and cultural differences instead of social differences.

Figure 6: Cultural Turn II: Interpretative Constructivism

The *second* important feature of this “cultural turn” is the tendency to self-reflexivity. “Truths” previously accepted as self-evident are exposed to critical examination. Scientific analyses, too, are seen as social-cultural constructs.

The second cultural turn distinguishes itself *thirdly* through the problematic accentuation of a pattern of argumentation and explanation whereby cultural aspects of difference take the place of social background and socialization. The concept of “culture” is deployed over wide expanses where “society” stood earlier.

Tied to this is a new interpretation of “difference” as a central dimension of the experience of cultural identity. In the dialectically understood relation of identity and difference, no strictly spatial connotations are mobilized. The “we” is no longer primarily coupled to the “here”. It refers rather to the sharing of lifestyle elements. Cultural identity can thus be

grasped as the correspondence or agreement of a subject with accepted cultural values, value-orderings and evaluations in the carrying out of his or her own activities; cultural difference as the deviation from these values.

To sum up, the cultural understanding at the root of the second cultural turn can be characterized – in contrast to the traditionalistic orthodoxy – as *interpretive-constructivist*. But this second cultural turn has – so far – also its short comings with quite important or even dramatic implications

## 5 Action and Power

As Mitchell (2000, 3) shows in his representative critique, the greatest weaknesses of the second cultural turn are in the substantive arbitrariness and the resulting „impressionistic character“ of the research, which is linked to its meager methodological standards and lack of thematic coordination of research programs. More problematic still is the almost complete exclusion of components of power from the study of cultural dimensions of globalized forms of geography-making.

In the perspective of an action-centered cultural geography, I understand “globalization” as the term for a new geographical *modus operandi*, a new mode of determination of the culture-space relation. “Globalization” is thus at the same time a new mode of everyday geography-making. Its special character consists in the possibility to act in real time over great distances. Geographical analyses of globalization have to refer, in this perspective – in that of a constructivist understanding of culture – to the globalizing and globalized practices themselves.

I consider these practices forms of *world-binding* in the field of tensions of dis-embedding and re-embedding. The practice of “world binding” means a practice of “re-embedding” by which the subjects, under globalized conditions, define the connection between themselves and the world. “World-binding” in this sense represents the following: the social control of spatial and temporal horizons in order to control one's own actions and the practices of others. This implies practices of allocative appropriation of material goods; practices of authoritative “appropriation,” or control of subjects over a distance; and the symbolic appropriation of objects and subjects on the basis of the available stock of knowledge.

Human practices in general can, in view of the existing level of research in the humanities, be divided into three main forms at the abstract level (cf. Fig. 6 and 7):

- a. *Symbolization, interpretation and understanding* as core area of the cultural. Here the focus is on relations between information, knowledge and signification.
- b. *Legitimation* in the framework of cultural interpretations of the social and the political. Here the relations between social expectations and political standards of validity occupy the center of attention.

- c. *Exchange* in the context of cultural interpretations of the economic. Here the focus is on the relation between production and consumption.

	<b>Type</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Topical Field</b>
<i>Actions</i>	<b>SYMBOLISATION</b>	authoritative <u>significant</u> allocative	Information-Meaning
	<b>LEGITIMATION</b>	allocative authoritative <u>significant</u>	Society-Politics
	<b>EXCHANGE</b>	authoritative <u>allocative</u> <u>significant</u>	Production-Consumption

Figure 7: Action and power

## 6 Regionalism and Nationalism in Late-Modernity

If we start from the premise, that all non-natural geographies are produced and reproduced by human practises, then we can get access to the crucial role of space in the reproduction of authoritative resources and power, i.e. of the political everyday geographies. Power thus can be identified as a dimension of action, referring to the use of material goods as well as to the control over other actors. To have power and control over space signifies to have control over subjects by controlling their bodies. The interrelation between power and space can now be identified as an interrelation between power and body through normative appropriation. All forms of territorialisation and political control are based, this is a hypothesis for subsequent empirical research, on this interrelation.

The interrelation specified above is fundamental for the nationalisation of life worlds in the context of the modern nation state and the prescriptive appropriation of territories of any kind, leading to (national) container societies. In case of any economic action, the principle of territoriality is applied to the tokens of exchange (money). In their turn, these relations are part of the constitution of a new 'society'- 'space'- nexus. It's specific feature lies as well in the rational territorialisation as in the containerisation of the political and legal order through bureaucratic organisation. The containerisation of the cultural spheres is based on the territorialisation of education and information systems. The emergence of national

(high) languages is the cultural parallel to the emergence of a single national currency on the economic level.

A very important component of the making of everyday political geographies are the activities of regionalist and nationalistic movements, aiming for a new political geography – very often nothing else than looking for a new container -, and the different forms of regional and national identities on which they are based. The gaining importance of regional and national identities can be understood as a consequence of the rise of new disembedding mechanisms.

We can start from the premise, that the disembedding mechanisms that extend the field of decision possibilities, lead to considerable insecurities on the personal level. Under this condition, the need for stabilising identities is growing. 'Regionalism' can in these terms be seen as a compensation for the insecurities provoked by globalisation processes. This could be the main reason why 'regionalism' and 'identity' are so closely tied together.

By referring to 'identity' it has to be remembered that 'identity' can only be made topical, or actualised if 'difference' is possible. This is obviously so, because 'identity' refers always to two entities, that in principle could be different, but are not. Consequently, 'identity' is only actualised by growing difference. If we see it in this way, we can understand why in late modernity, where problems of identity have become so prominent, a politics of difference, such as nationalism or regionalism, might take root.

In this sense, contemporary regionalism and nationalism are on the one hand bound up with the emerging dialectics of the global and the local. While this may be an important and necessary intrinsic dilemma of late modern life, it is my concern that if the logic of regionalism and nationalism is applied to all aspects of modern life, it could (and possibly has already) become very destructive. I will briefly point out some of these problematic implications.

The first problematic form of regionalism is certainly the process of social typification which it entails. Here spatial and regional categories are used to produce stereotypes and totalizing qualifications of persons in the form of for example 'Sicilians are criminals', 'Corsicans are cunning' etc. The most crucial point of this is that social or personal characteristics – positive or negative ones – are transmitted to all persons living in a certain area.

The Janus-faced, double-edged character of regionalist discourses is partly grounded in this process. Socially indifferent spatial categories – like biological ones – are used in an ideologically 'loaded' or 'charged' way for social typification. Because they are not social, they can be used in an arbitrary way. What becomes 'racist' or 'sexist' by using biological categories for social typification, becomes 'regionalist' by using spatial categories. All of these forms of typification undermine the subjects' rights in modern societies and are therefore deeply anti-modern.

It is in the context of such socially typifying regionalism, that the political regionalism finds its preferred basis. This is because such regionalist typifications create the best conditions for instituting exclusive measures towards others, while internally the same strategy

consists in the creation of identity. In the form of an excluding identity this strategy can easily be used for political mobilization: both to create the image of an enemy and to strengthen internal solidarity. Internal differences evaporate by emphasizing external differences.

## Conclusion

The essentialization of culture by way of space-centered representations of reality in the style of the traditionalistic orthodoxy will thus probably be one of the central problems of the future, because its basis in the everyday lifeworld is being progressively dissolved. A comparison of traditional geographical research on cultural realms with regionalistic, nationalistic and related fundamentalist patterns of argumentation allows us to recognize a frightening family resemblance. Such repercussions for social-political everyday realities are of explosive relevance. I consider their overcoming to be the central challenge facing scientific human and especially cultural geography.

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