

Introduction

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Almost all societies and cultures around the world are profoundly shaped by colonial and postcolonial experiences. Even though these are ubiquitous and interlinked phenomena – and in this sense globally shared – they are always cause and effect of power relations within an asymmetric world order. For far too long, (post-) colonial experiences have been analysed within a binary analytical framework dividing the world into ‘the colonisers’ and ‘the colonised’ or into ‘the West and the rest’.¹ Apart from countless doubts and criticism about its explanatory power, such a simplifying model also hid existing continuities in colonial cultures, structures, and legacies before and after independence. Fortunately, the concepts of coloniality and postcoloniality have come to the fore in different academic contexts.² Furthermore, during the last decades, different understandings of (post-) coloniality have been elaborated in the historiographies of South Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

Without neglecting their internal differences and difficulties, we are confident that the concepts of ‘(post-) coloniality’ can provide us with a better understanding of colonial and postcolonial experiences. Most importantly, coloniality and postcoloniality do not necessarily refer to a bounded time period, a given world region, or a specific system of

- 1 S. Hall, *The West and the rest: Discourse and power*, in: S. Hall/D. Held/D. Hubert/K. Thompson (eds.), *Modernity: An introduction to modern societies*, Malden, MA 1996, pp. 184-228; S. Conrad/S. Randeria, *Einleitung: Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt*, in: idem (eds.), *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2002, pp. 9-49.
- 2 W. Mignolo, *Local Histories / Global Designs*, Princeton, NJ 2000; G. C. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason. Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Cambridge, MA 1999; A. Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* in: *Critical Inquiry*, 20 (1994), pp. 328-356.

power relations. They rather stress the varieties of entanglements within (post-) colonial societies and cultures. Combining the approaches of coloniality and postcoloniality allows not only an analytical separation of colonial power from actual colonial rule but also a concentration on entangled and connected histories. Besides these common features that shape the concepts of (post-) coloniality, these approaches entail different problems in different settings – problems involving both empirical research and the terms themselves.

The aim of this special issue of *Comparativ*, ‘Entangled Histories: Reflecting on Concepts of Coloniality and Postcoloniality’ is therefore to explore these problems and to examine uses and discourses of (post-) coloniality in different settings from a comparative perspective by addressing general questions and then focusing on various case studies in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.

In all these regions, we have to deal with different experiences of colonial regimes, with different phases of colonisation and decolonisation, with various forms of colonial/post-colonial governance, and with diverging processes of subjectivation and identity formation.³ These significant differences between (post-) colonial cultures make it all the more interesting to pay special attention to entanglements and their limits on several levels: we discuss the entangled histories of motherlands and colonies, of colonisers and colonised, in various regions and within different empires. We follow these intertwined histories during the process of decolonisation and beyond when new asymmetries and power relations were developed, and we analyse the influence of coloniality in the novel settings. Furthermore, because our special issue addresses such entangled histories in various regions, we are able to offer a comparative outlook on (post-) colonial processes from a global viewpoint. Eventually, on a meta-level, we refer to the entanglements between different conceptualisations of (post-) coloniality.

It is worth noting that the different experiences of colonisation and decolonisation in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia also provoked different understandings of coloniality and postcoloniality as categories of analysis. Generally, in the 1980s, the emerging postcolonial discourse was strongly connected with South Asian subaltern studies and with research on the British Empire, and it was dominated by Anglo-American and South Asian scholars, although research on Africa and its colonial heritage also began to adopt postcolonial approaches. The concept of governmentality, derived from Foucault’s theories, played an important role in this emerging postcolonial discourse, because it seemed to explain how power relations were reproduced within postcolonial subjects.⁴

3 See, as a few examples of the vast literature, C. Marx, *Geschichte Afrikas. Von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart*, Paderborn 2004; A. A. Boahen (ed.), *General History of Africa, Vol. VII: Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935*, London u. a. 1985; S. Rinke, *Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, München 2010; C. Schmidt-Nowara (ed.), *Interpreting Spanish Colonialism. Empires, Nations, and Legends*, Albuquerque, NM 2005. N. B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Princeton, NJ 2001.

4 See, e.g. J. Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People*, London/Chicago 1985; E. Mbengalack, *La gouvernementalité du sport en Afrique: Le sport et le politique au Cameroun*, Lausanne 1995, see for the US-American context N. Finzsch, *Gouvernementalität, der Moynihan-*

Presumably it was the dominance of the Anglophone context that led to the marginal role of Latin America within postcolonial theory.⁵ However, recent research on the history of Latin America has stressed the persistence of coloniality in the societies of the Latin American states as well as within the concept of Latin America itself.⁶ The early decolonisation at the beginning of the 19th century still left societies heavily imprinted by structures and cultures of coloniality.⁷ Recently, approaches have been taken up to address this deficit.⁸ Here, we try to follow this trend, and we shall combine approaches on coloniality / postcoloniality in Latin American studies with such discussions on Africa and South Asia.

From there, we would like to highlight yet again that neither coloniality nor postcoloniality are necessarily bound to a specific period of (de-)colonisation, even if the term postcolonial was used as such in studies on decolonisation written in the 1960s and 1970s.⁹ Postcolonial analysis can address historical processes during or after the European colonisation starting in the 16th century, but it can also include other periods of time or other regions and universalise the concept of postcoloniality to some degree.¹⁰ When taking the postcolonial approach seriously, one should try to focus on an intertwined, entangled history of Europe and the global South, of colonisers and colonised, thus addressing not a history of isolated entities but rather a history that takes several sides as one complex unit – as various scholars have stressed.¹¹ Postcolonial history should no longer be seen as a history of European influence on the rest of the world or as a history of a serious deficit – of a catching up with European modernisation.¹² In using a postcolonial approach, we try to stress the interactions between the ‘west and the rest’ and to encompass postcolonial formations in their ambivalence and complexity. Furthermore, in a postmodern

Report und die Welfare Queen in Cadillac, in: J. Martschukat, *Geschichte schreiben mit Foucault*, Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 257–283, p. 259.

5 M. do Mar Castro Varela/N. Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie. Eine kritische Einführung*, Bielefeld 2005, p. 26.

6 W. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, Malden, MA 2005.

7 S. Rinke, *Revolutionen in Lateinamerika. Wege in die Unabhängigkeit 1760–1830*, München 2010.

8 M. Morana/E. D. Dussel/C. A. Jáuregui (eds.), *Coloniality at large. Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Durham, NC 2008.

9 B. Ashcroft/G. Griffiths/H. Tiffin, *Post-colonial Studies. The Key Concepts*, London, New York 2005.

10 This happens particularly in research on National Socialism that uses colonialism as a category for analysing German rule in the East, see, e.g., J. Zimmerer, *Kolonialer Genozid? Vom Nutzen und Nachteil einer historischen Kategorie*, in: D. J. Schaller (ed.), *Enteignet – vertrieben – ermordet. Beiträge zur Genozidforschung*, Zürich 2004, pp. 109–128.

11 S. Subrahmanyam, *Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia*, in: V. Lieberman (ed.), *Beyond Binary Histories. Re-imagining Eurasia to c. 1830*, Ann Arbor, MI 1999, pp. 289–316; S. Randeria, *Geteilte Geschichte und verwobene Moderne*, in: J. Rüsen/H. Leitgeb/N. Jegelka (eds.), *Zukunftsentwürfe. Ideen für eine Kultur der Veränderung*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2000, pp. 87–96; S. Conrad/S. Randeria, *Einführung: Geteilte Geschichten* (footnote 1); see also the classification of entangled history by F. Hadler/M. Middell, *Auf dem Weg zu einer transnationalen Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas*, in: *Comparativ*, 20 (2010), pp. 8–29.

12 H. K. Bhabha, *The location of culture*, London 1994, p. 173; in the meantime, concepts of postcoloniality are also used to analyse territorial empires and their dependent/half-dependent territories, see A. L. Stoler/C. McGranahan/P. C. Perdue (eds.), *Imperial Formations*, Santa Fe, NM 2007; R. L. Nelson (ed.), *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East. 1850 through the Present*, New York 2009.

sense, we understand the ‘post’ in postcoloniality as an in-depth analysing of the complex arrangements of colonialism and modernity.

Convincingly, postcolonial theory has developed the concept of ‘hybridity’ for the production of new transcultural forms within contact zones shaped by colonisation, trying to point to the ambivalence and the subversive practices within the postcolonial setting. The concept of ‘mimicry’ also hints at problems of identity in (post-) colonial discourse, because the colonised is seen as a ‘blurred copy’, mimicking the language/behaviour of the coloniser, never being far from parody, and thereby producing a certain threat.¹³ Such concepts are particularly valuable when addressing colonised people in colonial settings or in settings of decolonisation and change. People try to negotiate between the cultures of the colonisers and the colonised, assuming many roles and changing the coloniser’s culture by appropriating it. Often these processes continue beyond the break of decolonisation. The concept of hybridity is equally helpful when looking at continuities between colonial and postcolonial productions of identity, of knowledge, or of culture in general.

However, besides continuities and the blurred demarcation lines between the colonial and the postcolonial, the time period after colonisation still signifies a break with old structures of dominance.¹⁴ Do the concepts of (post-)coloniality cover up this shift in power relations by stressing persistence? Can they offer new and convincing interpretations for change and continuity? Or if they go beyond the opposition of the colonial and the postcolonial, are they able to explore new, hybrid forms of governance, knowledge production, and identity formation? The following articles address these questions by exploring how far we can apply concepts of (post-)coloniality to culturally different and complex societies, and how these concepts may help us to compare and understand historical social processes in an entangled world more profoundly. By looking at different (post-) colonial regimes and cultures and at various forms of (post-)colonial governance, we are able to ask whether the historical developments in the different cases are characterized by a persistency of coloniality, by changing forms of coloniality, or by new hybrid formations within (post-)colonial settings, thereby shaping governance as well as cultural productions in a novel way.

To clarify the differences and commonalities between and within various concepts of (post-) coloniality, this issue begins with their contextualisation in the historiography of India, Latin America, and Africa. In their article ‘Reflecting on Concepts of Coloniality/ Postcoloniality in Latin American, South Asian and African Historiography’, Olaf Kaltmeier, Ulrike Lindner, and Binu Mailaparambil compare different phases of colonisation and decolonisation in three areas, discuss different approaches towards the writing of a history of colonialism, and elaborate on the respective concepts of (post-) coloniality. They also refer to the entanglements and the telling partitions between these discourses.

13 Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (footnote 12); Ashcroft/Griffiths/Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies* (footnote 9), pp. 139-140.

14 J. Clifford, *Diasporas*, in: *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994), pp. 302-338, p. 328.

The authors point to the fact that the postcolonial discourse is now being shaped by an international division of intellectual labour, with significant contributions by scholars from India, Africa, and Latin America – an aspect that is often overlooked in the discussion on the historiography of postcolonial theory.

The following articles then go on to perform more detailed analyses based on case studies of three important aspects of (post-) coloniality, namely, colonial/postcolonial governance, (post-) coloniality and knowledge production, as well as (post-) colonial processes of identity formation.

A special emphasis is laid on the comparative discussion of regimes of colonial/postcolonial governance, thus dealing with coloniality as a mode of administration and rule in colonial as well as in postcolonial societies and particularly in the process of decolonisation and its immediate aftermath. Since Edward Said's publication on *Orientalism*, postcolonial thought has been strongly connected with Foucault's approaches, even though Foucault himself hardly addressed colonialism.¹⁵ We can observe this in, for example, highly sophisticated studies applying Foucault's thoughts on sexuality to the analysis of colonial settings¹⁶ or to the colonial production of knowledge.¹⁷ In particular, his concept of governmentality has been very influential in the discussion on colonial administration. Recently, however, much doubt has been cast upon its suitability. Following this trend, the first two articles in our special issue take a critical look at the Foucauldian concept of governmentality and its use in (post-) colonial discourses and spaces. The articles explicitly address the topic from a South Asian and an African perspective – an approach that has not been elaborated so far and allows a new, comparative outlook on the whole problem of colonial governmentality.

In her contribution 'Colonial Governmentality: Critical Notes from the Perspective of South Asian studies', Nira Wickramasinghe examines the need to contextualise and to complete the concept colonial governmentality by adopting a historically attentive approach to relations of power in colonial situations. The author points out how the use of the grid of colonial governmentality/modernity alone neglects other types of analysis and tempts us to essentialise and read colonialism as a monolithic universal project – thereby ignoring the role of the colonised in effectuating changes in the colonial power systems. She argues that there was no one single colonial situation that calls for a unifying colonial modernity, and points out the importance of observing history from the perspective of the colonised.

Michael Pesek also performs a fundamental criticism of the Foucauldian concept of governmentality in his paper 'Foucault Hardly Came to Africa: Some Notes on Colonial and Postcolonial Governmentality'. He stresses the inadequacy of applying the Foucauldian paradigm of governmentality in analysing the colonial and postcolonial African history.

15 E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York 1978.

16 A. L. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire. Foucault's 'History of Sexuality' and the Colonial Order of Things*, Durham, NC, London 1995.

17 A. L. Stoler, *Along the archival grain. Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, Princeton, NJ 2009.

In contrast to Foucault's assumption that governmentality is characterised by the accomplishment of a single or at least a dominant political rationality, his article argues that the history of colonial rule cannot be written as a successive enforcement of European political rationalities. He points out that political development did not proceed along straight lines in either Europe or Africa, and that the European interaction with African realities resulted in the formation of a heterogeneous mix of political rationalities. Therefore, Michael Pesek suggests that different stages of colonial penetration in different places resulted in different political rationalities. He also argues that the maintenance of the sovereignty/territoriality nexus depends on the availability of a certain amount of resources to agents of sovereignty such as the state. Thus, the state in Africa, in its colonial and postcolonial form, failed to dominate or even create a political field.

Second, we focus on flows of knowledge and people, on symmetries/asymmetries in these processes, and we examine these in both colonial and postcolonial settings. This relates to the debate on the 'coloniality of knowledge', and power-knowledge complexes.

The first case study shows how fruitful a combination of a comparative approach and a history of entanglements can be. In her article on "Resisting Modernisation? Two African Responses to the Kariba Dam Scheme in the Central African Federation", Julia Tischler analyses a telling example of state-driven, so-called modernisation experiments in late-colonial Africa: the Kariba hydroelectric dam built on the border between present-day Zambia and Zimbabwe from 1955 to 1960. The article discusses the ambivalence this 'modernisation' paradigm engendered among the local African leadership. By comparing two different reactions to a colonial regime, Julia Tischler escapes clear-cut labels such as 'resistance' or 'collaboration' while simultaneously denying such dichotomous categories as coloniser/colonised and collaboration/resistance. She shows instead, that colonial positions have to be located in reciprocal and dynamic negotiations between all participants involved, thus creating a hybrid space of the 'in-between'.

How a 'hybridisation' of administrative knowledge and techniques served to combine changes and continuities within the system of coloniality can be seen in Felix Brahm's article on "'Techniques éprouvées au cours des siècles": African Students at the Former School for Colonial Administrators in Paris, 1951–1967'. This second case study in the special issue concentrates on how the *Ecole nationale de la France d'outre-mer*, the foremost institute in Paris with a monopoly on training French colonial administrators from the metropole, transformed into an institute for training local bureaucrats for post-colonial African states during the decolonisation period. The author points out that the popularity of this colonial institute among African candidates was mainly due to the fact that postcolonial African states had to be built upon the infrastructures of the former colonial administration, and this, in turn, necessitated a continued transfer of governmental techniques between the colonial and several postcolonial francophone states. The author argues that the changing political atmosphere forced the institute to transform its teaching concept into a hybrid of 'proven' techniques of colonial/metropolitan administration combined with the 'new' techniques for economic and social development that were considered to be crucial for development in postcolonial Africa at that time.

The final article deals with changing identity formations and the sense of belonging in a postcolonial world shaped by the hybrid and transcultural formations of (post-) coloniality. In his article 'Representations of Emancipation: (Post-)Coloniality and the Zapatista Insurgency in Mexico', Stephan Scheuzger attempts to critically analyse the problem of applying postcolonial theory in Latin American historical analysis without paying ample attention to the dynamics of historical interactions and transformations. By focusing on the Zapatista insurgency – a Mayan-dominated guerrilla movement – in postcolonial Mexico, he argues that Walter Mignolo broadly reified the concept of 'colonized subject' and its culture without giving due attention to the complex pattern of historical interactions involved in such identity formations. He argues that attention also has to be paid to the different temporalities of postcolonial experiences. He points out that the idea of coloniality in Mignolo's analysis of *zapatismo* privileges is oriented towards the binary logic of an original mutual translation between a homogeneous and self-contained 'Occidental' ideological system and Amerindian ways of knowing and representing preserved in traditions over the centuries. It fails to engage in a thorough examination of the complex historical conditions that actually led to this liaison and were the result of long-term permanent interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous social and cultural spheres.

Our special issue is based on a workshop held at Bielefeld University in May 2010 at which we succeeded in bringing together several scholars for exciting discussions on the problems of (post-) coloniality. We would like to thank our authors as well as Eva Bischoff, Ute Schneider, Thoralf Klein, and Sebastian Knake for their contributions to the lively discussions at our conference. We also very much appreciate the financial support of the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology that made our workshop possible.