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Multiple Futures – Africa, China, Europe

**Edited by
Ulrich Bröckling, Gregor Dobler, and Nicola Spakowski**



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Multiple Futures? Comparing Approaches to the Future in Africa, China, and Europe: An Introduction

**Ulrich Bröckling / Gregor Dobler /
Nicola Spakowski**

ABSTRACT

Die Zukunft ist ungewiss, und sie ist nicht für alle dieselbe. Das Heft untersucht in vergleichender Perspektive zeitgenössische Zukunftserwartungen, Formen des Zukunftswissens und Strategien des Zukunftsmanagements in Afrika, China und Europa. Während je eigene soziale, politische und ökonomische Gegebenheiten Unterschiede im individuellen und kollektiven Zugang zu Zukunft bedingen, bringt die Verflechtung der Welt gleichzeitig Parallelen und Konvergenzen hervor.

“Up until the mid-20th century, the future appeared as something open, shapeable, latently positive, the past as something to be overcome,” German-American cultural theorist Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht explained in 2014, “Now, it is rather the opposite. We see the future as a threat scenario of climate catastrophe, demographic crisis, and potential new wars, whereas we pay homage to the past in the form of days of remembrance, new editions of the classics, new translations, and rediscoveries.”¹ This negative outlook on the future feeds on familiar old cultural clichés of an allegedly weary Europe, still caught in the grip of its past and lacking the confidence and creative power to shape the future. It also coincides with a diagnosis of our times, according to which the heroic spirit of the modern age has run dry, while the idea of positive progress has been thrown by the wayside, and Western civilization seems virtually obsessed with visions of the “future as catastrophe.”²

1 M. Stallknecht, Die Schönheit ist tot, es lebe die Schönheit. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht setzt den Künsten ein Ende, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18 December 2014.

2 So runs the title of a study by E. Horn on Western imaginations of the future in the age of the atomic bomb,

There are many plausible reasons for this collective feeling of destabilization and vulnerability that are kept alive by continuous disaster reports and dismal predictions and which the sociologist Craig Calhoun has referred to as the “emergency imaginary.”³ The more important question, however, is why this cultural pattern of interpretation has succeeded in becoming so influential in Europe (and particularly in Germany), but not (or at least not to the same extent) in other global regions.⁴ As the following brief remarks on China, Africa, and Europe will demonstrate, approaches to the future vary greatly from a global perspective.

In China, approaches to the future are determined by the systemic particularities and historical legacies of post-colonialism, post-socialism, and authoritarianism. Although China faces challenges that are not so unlike those of other societies – in particular, declining growth and environmental degradation – the ways these challenges are tackled often bear the traces of these particularities and legacies.

China’s colonial experience in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries left a deep and enduring impact on its perceptions of the international order and China’s place therein. Statist concepts of China and worries about the future of the Chinese state in a zero-sum perception of international competition prevail.⁵ Nationalism as compensation for past humiliation can be found in broader sections of society.⁶ Also, issues of identity and notions of difference and particularity are major threads in the social science discourse.⁷ On the one hand, these are responses to a history of Western intrusion and Eurocentrism in contemporary international affairs and global discourse. On the other hand, they are fostered and instrumentalized by the authoritarian party-state, with its emphasis on sovereignty and stability as a matter of national survival. Party-defined systemic particularity (“socialism with Chinese characteristics”) and promises of China’s future power (“China’s rise,” the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” and the “Chinese dream”) are important elements in the Party’s strategy of legitimizing its one-party rule.⁸

climate change, and large-scale technological accidents: *Zukunft als Katastrophe*, Frankfurt/M. 2014. See also A. Assmann, *Ist die Zeit aus den Fugen? Aufstieg und Fall des Zeitregimes der Moderne*, München 2013.

3 C. Calhoun, *A World of Emergencies. Fear, Intervention, and the Limits of Cosmopolitan Order*, in: *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 41 (2004), p. 392.

4 See also A. Kirk, *Eastern Countries Far More Optimistic than Their Western Counterparts*, in: *The Telegraph*, 6 January 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/12084401/Eastern-countries-far-more-optimistic-than-their-Western-partners.html> (accessed 18 January 2016).

5 N. Knight, *Imagining Globalisation: The World and Nation in Chinese Communist Party Ideology*, in: *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33 (2003) 3, pp. 318–337; N. Spakowski, *National Aspirations on a Global Stage – Concepts of World/Global History in Contemporary China*, in: *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009) 3, pp. 475–495.

6 M. Leifer (ed.), *Asian Nationalism*, London 2000; P. Gries, *China’s New Nationalism. Pride, Politics and Diplomacy*, Berkeley 2005; L. Li, *China’s Rising Nationalism and Its Forefront*, in: *China Report* 51 (2015) 4, pp. 311–326.

7 A. Dirlik, *Zhongguohua. Worlulling China: The Case of Sociology and Anthropology in Twentieth-Century China*, in: A. Dirlik, *Culture and History in Post-Revolutionary China. The Perspective of Global Modernity*, Hong Kong 2011, pp. 197–240; N. Spakowski, *Socialist Feminism in Post-Socialist China*, in: *positions* 2016 (in print).

8 K. Denton, *China Dreams and the “Road to Revival”*, in: *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective* 8 (2014), 3, pp. 1–12, <http://origins.osu.edu/article/china-dreams-and-road-revival> (accessed 18 January 2016); J. Mahoney,

The legacy of socialism can be found in various aspects of the discourse on and management of the future. At the level of ideology, the Communist Party still claims to uphold Marxist-Leninist principles and has declared socialism as the ultimate (but very distant) goal of China's development.⁹ China's current economic system is a particular form of capitalism that follows the capitalist logic of production and distribution, but is marked by the legacies of a command economy.¹⁰ These include, first of all, a continued belief in planning and the ability to forecast and control the future. To be sure, the detailed Five Year "Plans" of the pre-reform period have turned into Five Year "Programmes" with the mere function of macro-guidance.¹¹ Nevertheless, the planning state sets the course of China's development.

Indeed, the economy is the main subject of discussions about China's future. Similar to the African case, these discussions are international in nature and are also nourished by Western hopes and anxieties regarding global business cycles and investment opportunities. Visions of an "Asian," "Chinese," or "African century" are fuelled by the potential for so-called "emerging" economies or "late developers" and their expected scope of development and growth in the process of "catching up" with advanced economies.¹² Specialists' worries about China's future economic performance notwithstanding, the very fact that it is "lagging behind" gives China space for future development – either quantitatively as measurable growth, or qualitatively as a system "transition."¹³ Given China's spectacular growth rates since the beginning of its "reform and opening" in 1978, Chinese political elites – and many Western observers – have begun to regard China as a new global power. Chinese and Western talk of "China's rise" and a "China model," or a "Beijing consensus" – i.e. a model of development independent of Western prescriptions that is suitable for imitation by other developing states – have become important elements in the reassessment of current and future global power structures.¹⁴ At the same time, increasing liberalization and the opening of its borders to the world market exposes China to the

Interpreting the Chinese Dream: An Exercise of Political Hermeneutics, in: *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 19 (2014) 1, pp. 15–34.

9 On the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1997, then President Jiang Zemin proclaimed that socialism would be reached within a time span of at least one century, see N. Knight, *Imagining Globalisation*, p. 332.

10 J. Peck and J. Zhang, *A Variety of Capitalism... with Chinese Characteristics?*, in: *Journal of Economic Geography* 13 (2013) 3, pp. 357–396; J. Osburg, *Global Capitalism in Asia: Beyond State and Market in China*, in: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72 (2013) 4, pp. 813–829; C. McNally, *Sino-Capitalism. China's Reemergence and the International Political Economy*, in: *World Politics* 64 (2012) 4, pp. 741–776.

11 S. Heilmann, *Making Plans for Markets: Policy for the Long Term in China*, in: *Harvard Asia Quarterly* 13 (2011) 2, pp. 33–40; S. Heilmann, *From Local Experiments to National Policy: The Origins of China's Distinctive Policy Process*, in: *The China Journal* 59 (2008), pp. 1–30.

12 N. Spakowski, *Asia as Future – The Claims and Rhetorics of an "Asian Century"*, in: M. Frey and N. Spakowski (eds.), *Asianisms, Regionalist Interactions, and Asian Integration*, Singapur 2015, pp. 209–236.

13 See the contribution by Doris Fischer in this issue.

14 For the China Model, Beijing Consensus and related terms, see S. Breslin: *The "China Model" and the Global Crisis. From Friedrich List to a Chinese Mode of Governance?*, in: *International Affairs* 87 (2011) 6, pp. 1323–1343; J. Fewsmith, *Debating "the China Model"*, in: *China Leadership Monitor* 35 (2011), www.hoover.org/publications/china-leadership-monitor/article/93636 (accessed 18 January 2016). For "China's rise", see N. Spakowski, *Asia as Future*.

volatilities of global business cycles, and vice versa. China's economic performance is thus increasingly seen as a decisive factor of global economic prospects, with falling Chinese stock prices sending "shock waves" around the world.¹⁵

In addition to mere prospects of growth, future potential also lies in systemic change. In contrast with discussions in the West, China does not perceive its economic and political system as settled. Terms such as "modernisation" (*xiandaihua*), "reform" (*gaige*), or "transition" (*zhuanxing*), which were slowly introduced in the late 1970s following earlier concepts of "revolution" (*geming*), indicate a constant situation of change, albeit without a clear idea of where this change is leading to. To this day, China remains incomplete in the eyes of its political and intellectual elite. In other words, completeness is a feature of the past and a hope for the future. One can only guess how rapid and open-ended change is affecting the lives and mental health of Chinese citizens.

Another factor to consider is the authoritarian nature of the Chinese state. Given its one-party rule and repressive political system, the discourse and management of the future are dominated by the state and thus centred on its techniques of survival. Generally speaking, the state is caught in a dilemma between liberalizing and opening the country up to the outside world as instruments of economic success and legitimizing the regime and the control of the pluralism and the dissident forces resulting from this very process of liberalization. The logic of how it makes accessible, manages, and instrumentalizes the Internet is just one of the many examples of this dilemma.¹⁶ Today's discourse about China's future is thus marked by the regime's anxieties about its stability as well as concerns of a global nature, such as environmental issues and terrorism, which are often framed as factors of stability or destabilization. As for the political system, the survival of the one-party state depends on its ability to constantly adapt to new challenges and to respond to citizens' concerns without giving way to Western-style democracy. Thus, top-down rule has been replaced by what experts call "consultative" or "deliberative authoritarianism."¹⁷ As for its economic policy, China's situation is no different from that of other countries in that the imperative of growth based on capitalist logic produces negative side effects, such as environmental degradation and extreme social inequality.¹⁸ With its declining growth rates in recent years, China is also now even more in line with the difficulties of Western economies. In contrast with the West, however, these problems are not simply problems as such or systemic problems of capitalism, but rather problems caused by the rule of the Communist Party that impinge on its claims of legitimacy. Finally, the social

15 H. Ersen, Börsencrash in China sendet Schockwellen um die Welt (Stock Market Crash Sends Shock Waves Around the World), Reuters Deutschland, 8 July 2015, <http://de.reuters.com/article/topNews/idDEKCN0PI0YR20150708> (accessed 18 August 2015).

16 See the contribution by Christian Göbel in this issue.

17 J. Teets, Let Many Civil Societies Bloom: The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China, in: China Quarterly 213 (2013), pp. 19–38. B. He and E. Warren, Authoritarian Deliberation: The Deliberative Turn in Chinese Political Development, in: Perspectives on Politics 9 (2011) 2, pp. 269–289. T. Wright, Stable Governance and Regime Type. Contemporary China in Comparative Perspective, in: S. Guo (ed.), State-Society Relations and Governance in China, Lanham 2014, pp. 171–184.

18 See also the contribution by Doris Fischer in this issue.

dynamic unleashed by the country's reforming and opening itself has led to what was formerly a rather conform populace splitting into a variety of interest groups, creating potential for conflict both between groups and between the state and civil society. The concept of "social management" (*shehui guanli*) once again testifies to the state's vision of a manageable future.¹⁹ The state thus places its hope of stability on the middle class, regarding it as an ally and as the norm for consumption-oriented, politically docile, and self-disciplined citizens.²⁰ According to a recent global opinion poll, "China was the most optimistic country surveyed," with the percentage of optimists being "four times the global average of 10 per cent."²¹ However, the source of Chinese citizens' optimism and how this relates to the party state's anxieties concerning stability is a problem that has yet to be studied.

On the African continent, on the other hand, possible futures seem even more divergent and unpredictable. Most great visions of the future stem either from those who make it their business to bring about a specific future for Africa – development experts, donors, and international organizations – or from those whose business relies on selling forecasts – the global media, consultants, or think tanks. Such visions have their own conjectures. While prophets of doom dominated the early 2000s, a new narrative of "Africa rising" gained prominence ten years later, only to be called into question again.²² Such discourses are dominated by external actors and are decoupled from societal discussions within Africa to a greater extent than in Europe and China. While the experts sell visions of Africa's future, people in all regions of Africa think about and work toward their own individual and collective futures.²³

Both, future talk and future making, stand under the conditions of Africa's place in the global order. Most better-off countries in Africa are dominated by commodity exports. The financialization of commodity markets, growing price volatility, and the rhythm of commodity super cycles are strong external conditions that leave little room for independent planning. The largely informal economies in the service and distribution sectors further diminish the ability to plan. On the micro level, the unpredictability that characterizes both the formal and the informal economy often translates into diversified

19 F. Pieke, The Communist Party and Social Management in China, in: China Information 26 (2012) 2, pp. 149-165; J. Liu, From Social Management to Social Governance: Social Conflict Mediation in China, in: Journal of Public Affairs 14 (2014) 2, pp. 93-104; J. Fewsmith, "Social Management" as a Way of Coping With Heightened Social Tensions, China Leadership Monitor 36 (2012), pp. 1-8.

20 L. Tomba, Of Quality, Harmony, and Community: Civilization and the Middle Class in Urban China, in: positions 17 (2009) 3, pp. 591-616; X. Wang, Desperately Seeking Status: Political, Social and Cultural Attributes of China's Rising Middle Class, in: Modern China Studies 20 (2013) 1, pp. 1-44; A. Anagnost, From 'Class' to 'Social Strata': Grasping the Social Totality in Reform-Era China, in: Third World Quarterly 29 (2008), pp. 497-519.

21 A. Kirk, Eastern Countries Far More Optimistic.

22 T. Dietz, Silverlining Africa: From Images of Doom and Gloom to Glimmers of Hope, Leiden 2011; F. Nyamjoh, Africa, the Village Belle: From Crisis to Opportunity, in: Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies 34 (2013) 3, pp. 125-140; see also Amanda Hammar's contribution in this issue.

23 B. Frederiksen, Young Men and Women in Africa: Conflicts, Enterprise and Aspiration, in: Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research 18 (2010), 3, pp. 249-258; A. Mbembe, Les Jeunes et l'Ordre Politique en Afrique Noire, Paris 1985; C. Monga, Anthropologie de la Colère: Société Civile et Démocratie en Afrique Noire, Paris 1995.

household strategies in which security is sought through flexibility rather than planning. This dichotomy between grand visions and navigating everyday insecurity perhaps most clearly characterizes African relations to the future.

The one grand narrative that orders discourses as well as practices is the narrative of development. A huge sector of African economies relies on development thinking and donor money. Its rationale is clear: sometime in the future, African countries will be developed. Until then, they will remain on a path to development, and with well-designed projects, planning, and policies, and with the right priorities (now rebaptized “sustainable development goals”), a brighter future awaits the continent. The future is never about safeguarding achievements; it is always about moving to some other, better place. For more than sixty years now, this narrative has been kept alive and has informed radically opposing policies. Its lack of transformative effects has often been rationalized as a consequence of internal conditions (“bad governance,” “bad infrastructure,” “state failure,” “lack of education,” etc.), thus opening up new doors for outside intervention. The explanations of experts and the measures they propose are never independent of their conceptions of the future in Europe, the US, and (to a growing extent) China, and their relation to African realities is often questionable.

In parallel to these discourses and practices, and often influenced by them, people all over Africa plan their individual and collective futures. Young people in particular must work toward their personal futures under extremely unstable conditions.²⁴ Formal sector jobs are extremely rare and are often only to be gained through personal connections. Capital for individual enterprises is very hard to come by, and the growing income inequality is creating a new upper middle class whose ostentation is only increasing the frustration of those who do not make it. In this climate of competition, the possibility for young people to participate economically, politically, and socially in their societies is often more important to them than the direction these societies are taking. Changing the future means changing one’s own place in it, and while the importance of a dignified life as a full member of one’s society continues to increase (and is often expressed through consumption), the importance of macro politics is on the wane.²⁵

As a rule, however, the future seems to look less bleak to many than this might suggest. People are constantly busy planning for the future, or waiting for it to happen. They devise projects, look for patronage, wait for co-optation by those who have made it, or they find the initiative, energy, and funds necessary to look for greener pastures elsewhere. While global discourses about African futures are still dominated by developmen-

24 A. Honwana, *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change, and Politics in Africa*, Boulder 2012; D. Mains, *Hope is Cut: Youth, Unemployment and the Future in Urban Ethiopia*, Philadelphia 2010; H. Vigh, *Motion Squared: A Second Look at the Concept of Social Navigation*, in: *Anthropological Theory* 9 (2009) 4, pp. 419–438.

25 For more careful analyses, see e.g. E. Cooper, *Students, Arson, and Protest Politics in Kenya: School Fires as Political Action*, in: *African Affairs* 113 (2014) 453, pp. 583–600; T. Förster and L. Köchlin (eds.), *The Politics of Governance. Actors and Articulations in Africa and Beyond*, New York 2015; A. Honwana, *Youth, Waithood and Protest Movements in Africa*, Lugard Lecture 2013. <http://www.internationalafricaninstitute.org/downloads/lugard/Lugard%20Lecture%20%202013.pdf>; D. Resnick and D. Casale, *Young Populations in Young Democracies: Generational Voting Behaviour in Sub-Saharan Africa*, in: *Democratization* 21 (2014) 6, pp. 1172–1194.

tal thinking, young Africans have long entered a phase of post-developmental practice. Thinking about the future and acting to bring it about have diverged as widely as have the worlds of development experts from African peasants or ordinary city dwellers.

Western European societies, in contrast, generally negotiate their relationship with the future predominantly via prevention and self-organization, and it is around these two factors that they orient their semantics and action. They thus replaced the future dispositive of planning that was prevalent up until the early 1970s. The erosion of optimistic expectations for the future and the rise of a pessimistic outlook in Western Europe can be dated fairly precisely. Whereas the first decades after the Second World War were defined by a planning boom in which the future was regarded as the responsibility and product of socio-technocratic management, these self-same planning authorities and programmes became the object of growing criticism in the 1970s, when the feasibility and desirability of future planning via policies met with more and more opposition. The publication of the report “The Limits of Growth” by the Club of Rome²⁶ in 1972 and the 1973 oil crisis are often regarded as the initial triggers of this change, which also occurred within the broader context of a slump in the global economy, the end of the economic post-war boom, the crisis of the Fordist production regime, and a growing awareness of ecological issues. As a result, promises of progress became less plausible, or they were projected onto other parts of the world in the discourse of development. The public became preoccupied with a fear of the future, which was often expressed in apocalyptic scenarios.

The future seemed not only inevitably contingent; it also seemed extremely endangered, especially by threats that “are marked by two principle features: a context of scientific uncertainty on one side, the possibility of serious and irreversible damage on the other.”²⁷

Nuclear power and genetic engineering were prominent examples of this, as were ecological issues, like the forest dieback (*Waldsterben*), anthropogenic climate change, and the threat of nuclear weapons. The Chernobyl nuclear disaster made it ultimately obvious that negative views of the future could be realistic after all. Such dangers cannot be calculated using methods of probabilistic risk assessment. They exceed all limits of what is insurable, and they hold enough catastrophic potential to make their prevention necessary for human survival. The philosopher Hans Jonas coined the term “heuristics of fear” to describe this perspective of the future.²⁸ He argued that what was needed was a new categorical imperative: “Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life”; or expressed negatively: ‘Act so that the effects of your action are not destructive to the future possibility of such life’; [...] or most generally: ‘In your present choices include the future wholeness of Man among the objects of

26 D. Meadows et al., *The Limits of Growth*, Washington 1972; for the genesis and reception of the book, see P. Kupper, “Weltuntergangs-Vision aus dem Computer”. Zur Geschichte der Studie ‘Die Grenzen des Wachstums’ von 1972, in: J. Hohensee and F. Uekötter (eds.), *Wird Cassandra heiser? Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der falschen Öko-Alarme*, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 98–111.

27 F. Ewald, *The Return of the Crafty Genius: An Outline of a Philosophy of Precaution*, in: *Connecticut Insurance Law Journal* 6 (1999) 1, pp. 60–61.

28 H. Jonas, *Responsibility Today: The Ethics of an Endangered Future*, in: *Social Research* 43 (1976) 1, p. 87.

your will.”²⁹ As with the Kantian Imperative, this imperative remained only a normative postulate with no long-term influence on political decisions or on daily practices. Fear of the apocalypse and business as usual turned out to be compatible.

There is a bitter irony in the fact that the ecological ethics of preservation have become a guiding principle of the “war on terror” after 9/11, when they went through a decisive transformation. The call to stop all activities that could threaten the continued existence of human life has become a kind of boundless activism in the name of security. A future outlook fixated on the catastrophe that can happen any moment is what lends generalized and unrestrained security policies plausibility and political legitimation.

The collapse of Soviet-style political regimes in 1989 and the triumph of neo-liberal programmes – starting with Margaret Thatcher’s destruction of the British welfare state in the 1980s – have fundamentally changed the political rationality of Western societies and have initiated an entirely new way of dealing with the future. To key figures of neo-liberal governance, the future now seems like an emergent process that follows its own laws – one that generally cannot be influenced by setting political limits, and if so, then not for the better. Their solution has thus been market-based self-regulation instead. Generalized “competition as a discovery procedure”³⁰ and the mobilization of autonomous, flexible, and innovative “entrepreneurial selves”³¹ have guided their interventions, in which any action is interpreted as an investment in, and thus a wager on, the future. Self-organization via competition has thus acquired a status similar to planning in the 1950s and 1960s. However, competition also requires institutional protection, albeit not to correct the negative effects of the market. Quite the contrary, it is needed to pave the way for the free play of supply and demand by eliminating external interference factors. The focus of this neo-liberal safeguarding of the future has thus not been on deregulation in the sense of *laissez faire*, but on the active – i.e. planned – promotion of competition.

The agenda of radical marketization, which regards unleashing the potential of self-organization as the best of all possible futures, correlates with a social grammar of security that attempts to control catastrophic expectations of the future through pre-emptive strategies. The neo-liberal management of the future – which through its promotion of competition translates the contingency of the future into individual investment decisions, the rationality of which is bound to the economic tribunal of the market – goes hand in hand with policies of securitization³² that are essentially illiberal. The rationality of contemporary governance in Western European societies is thus based on two axioms: first, to be able to achieve the best, competition must not be inhibited; second, if we want to prevent the worst, everything must be permitted.

29 Id., Technology and Responsibility: Reflections on the New Tasks of Ethics, in: Social Research 40 (1973) 1, p. 44.

30 See F. A. Hayek, Competition as a Discovery Procedure, in: *ibid.*, The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek, Vol. XV: Markets and Other Orders, Chicago 2014, pp. 304–313.

31 U. Bröckling, The Entrepreneurial Self. Fabricating a New Type of Subject, London 2016.

32 See B. Buzan, O. Wæver and J. de Wilde, Security. A New Framework for Analysis, London 1998.

Although ideas about the future and practices of future management differ greatly between the global regions of Africa, China, and Europe, it would be misleading to assume that these futures are homogenous and disconnected from the ideas and practices of the other regions. The imperative of growth and accumulation of globalized capitalism and the transnational dangers of a “world risk society”³³ leave no room for methodological regionalism. Multiple futures are entangled futures.

With this in mind, we must focus on research that does not limit itself to juxtaposing and comparing disparate notions of the future and practices of managing the future and that does not ignore the pluralism of futures and/or assume a homogenous world future. What is needed is a multi-perspective analysis of the “entanglements” of notions of the future and future-oriented practices. Such an analysis would have to treat the relationship between multiple futures and one future as an empirical problem. It would have to analyse how regional futures connect with what transregional and/or global dynamics of the future; and it would have to look at what translation processes take place in which direction, and what transformations different complex ideas about the future undergo in the process.

Its primary focus should be on the central role of capitalism as the global political and economic order that integrates markets, produces economic and financial crises of a global scale, installs transnational production chains,³⁴ and is sustained by transnational companies and a transnational capitalist class.³⁵ Globalized capitalism converges mentalities and life styles, as can be seen in the example of the middle class (as *the* fundamental societal group) and its orientation on consumption. Its inevitable logic of growth generates specific expectations for the future. These can be positive hopes of progress, or negative fears of crises, or doom and gloom scenarios. Fundamental themes of contemporary discourses on the future and future technologies – the pressure to innovate born out of international competition, climate change, terrorism, and migration – have a complex global angle, albeit with a specific regional colouring. For example, while Europe is debating the question of whether to open or close its borders and whether this could affect its future cultural identity, migration to the North is relieving the demographic pressure in many African nations, with the money migrants sending home also serving as an important factor for economic development. Very often, attempts in one global region to secure the future create insecurities in other regions. One paradigmatic example of this is the financialization of commodity markets, which is driven by the search for stable and predictable returns on capital, thereby increasing volatility and often destroying predictability at the lower end of value chains.

The discourses of future global power relations are also fundamentally relational. Themes like “China’s rise,” “US decline,” or “the West and the rest” refer not only to global en-

33 U. Beck, *World Risk Society*, London 1999.

34 J. Chan, P. Ngai and M. Selden, *The Politics of Global Production: Apple, Foxconn and China’s New Working Class*, in: *New Technology, Work & Employment* 28 (2013) 2, pp. 100–115.

35 J. Harris, *Outward Bound: Transnational Capitalism in China*, in: *Race & Class* 54 (2012) 1, pp. 13–32.

tanglements, but also to debates about the supposed “neo-colonialist” relations between China and Africa. Ultimately, individual strategies for the future are often connected to transnational mobility. Studying abroad, labour migration, and the capital flight³⁶ of private investors are all individual investments in the future to which target countries react by internationalizing their universities (and often raising tuition for foreign students) or by founding campuses abroad, offering residence permits based on qualifications, recruiting qualified workers, or establishing tax havens or citizenship-by-investment models.³⁷ While historians have been writing global history as the history of global “entanglements” for some years now, research of the “entanglement” of notions of the future and future-oriented technologies is still emerging. The following articles on Africa, China and Europe will contribute to laying the foundations for this task.

36 A. MacDonald, P. Vieira and W. Connors, Kapitalflucht. Chinesen schaffen Geld kofferweise nach Kanada, in: Spiegel online, 2 January 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/kapitalflucht-chinesen-bringen-ihr-geld-aus-dem-land-a-875399.html> (accessed 18 January 2016).

37 A. Shachar and R. Hirschl, On Citizenship, States, and Markets, in: *Journal of Political Philosophy* 24 (2014) 2, pp. 231–257.

Multiple Futures or One Future? The Capitalist Growth Imperative

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ABSTRACT

Das zentrale Stichwort, das Zukunftsorientierungen im gegenwärtigen Kapitalismus beschreibt, lautet „Wachstum“. Wirtschaftliches Wachstum ist eine Variable, die die Entwicklungschancen fast aller gesellschaftlichen Subsysteme – von privaten Unternehmen, dem Staat bis hin zu Haushalten und persönlichen Biographien – bestimmt. Im Zuge der Globalisierung des Kapitalismus beschränkt sich der Wachstumsimperativ längst nicht mehr auf westliche Länder, sondern ist zu einem globalen Phänomen geworden. Vorangetrieben wird der Wachstumsprozess durch unternehmerische Innovationen, und durch die Kommunikation von Innovationen in Form technologischer Visionen und „Utopien“, die die für den Markterfolg von Erfindungen nötige gesellschaftliche Resonanz vermitteln.

Der Beitrag skizziert zunächst die Hauptbefunde der bekannten Studie Angus Maddisons über das langfristige historische Profil des Wachstumsprozesses. Im Anschluss daran werden sozio-ökonomische, institutionelle und kulturelle Theorien des Wachstums dargestellt und diskutiert. Die These lautet, dass die in der Soziologie immer noch einflussreichen kulturellen Wachstumstheorien dem heutigen globalen Charakter kapitalistischen Wachstums nicht gerecht werden. Der Wachstumsimperativ kann nicht aus den kulturellen Traditionen des Westens allein abgeleitet und nicht länger als etwas afrikanischen oder asiatischen Ländern durch den Westen „Aufgezwungenes“ interpretiert werden. Um ihn zu erklären, erscheint vielmehr ein globalisierungstheoretischer Ansatz sinnvoll, der das Phänomen entgrenzter Märkte in den Blick rückt.

1. Growth as a Cultural and Moral Phenomenon

If there is a keyword to circumscribe future orientations of capitalist societies, it is “growth.” If the economy is expected to grow, investments will increase and with them profit chances for investors as well as employment and income chances for the working population. With growth, the general prosperity of society and the chance to settle

distributional conflicts peacefully tend to rise. The importance of growth is not confined to the economy. For governments, too, growth is a crucial variable, as it determines tax revenues, and with them the funds required to finance material infrastructures, welfare expenditures, science and education and the entire range of state activities. Almost all social subsystems and most social activities depend directly or indirectly on financial resources, which only a growing economy can provide. In this sense, growth can be called a social “imperative” in capitalist societies, though its effects on social integration are by far not only positive, and despite its destructive repercussions on the natural environment, all these being subjects of mounting anti-growth criticisms.

It is common to distinguish two main factors of economic growth: Population growth and higher productivity. Only growth due to higher productivity is “true” growth, implying a higher income per person. Productivity growth, however, should not be equalized simply with an increasing *physical* output of a given collection of goods per unit of time. What is vital, rather, are *innovations* resulting in a higher *value* of output. Innovations can take many forms: successful promotion of new products, new technologies, new systems of organization and logistics, discovery of new markets. Firms and entrepreneurs compete in developing and promoting innovations at the market, thereby often getting financial and regulatory support by the state. It is impossible to “measure” innovations in a strict sense; therefore, quantitative economic models are not sufficient to analyze the growth process, and need to be supplemented by empirical and qualitative studies.

Such studies have revealed the key relevance of one factor that is of particular interest in the context of multiple futures: technological paradigms and visions. While the term “paradigm” is used to denote the concrete development path of a particular invention¹, other authors² emphasize that new technologies are embedded into broader “stories,” “imaginings” and “visions” about future life worlds; Jens Beckert (forthcoming) speaks of “imagined futures.” In their initial phases, technical inventions often are surrounded by intense concerns about their possible, positive or negative impact on society. In the positive case, they can give rise to utopias about a better and fascinating world to come, such as the Fordist visions of a “mobile” society in the early twentieth century connected with the invention of mass motorization. More current examples are the utopia of a “global community” where people are linked with each other around the globe via the internet, or the dream of eternal juvenility and health surrounding modern biotechnologies. A further contemporary case is the idea of a “green” or “sustainable” economy organized around inventions like wind power or electrical cars. Partly, such visions come from writers, intellectuals, journalists engaging in the public debate, partly they are generated

- 1 G. Dosi, Technological Paradigms and Technological Trajectories, in: Research Policy 11 (1982), pp. 147–162; M. Dierkes, U. Hoffmann and L. Marz, Visions of Technology. Social and Institutional Factors Shaping the Development of New Technologies, Frankfurt/M 1996; R. Garud and P. Karnoe, Path Creation as a Process of Mindful Deviation, in: R. Garud and P. Karnoe (eds.) Path Dependence and Creation, New York 2001, pp. 1–40.
- 2 E.g. C. Freeman and F. Louca, As Time Goes By. From the Industrial Revolutions to the Information Revolution, Oxford 2001; M. Sturken, T. Douglas and S. Ball-Rokeach (eds.) Technological Visions. The Hopes and Fears that Shape New Technologies, Philadelphia 2004.

intentionally by the inventors and investors. Firms and entrepreneurs operating in innovative fields strive to communicate visions about future worlds, in which their projects would have a key function to implement the latter. If potential customers, investors and the public will identify with the vision, this will prepare the ground for further actors to join and make the project a success.

Thus, inventions, collective visions and growth tend to stimulate each other in a feedback-circle, which may take either a positive or a negative direction. In the positive case, the vision will generate an optimistic mood, which helps to organize a critical mass of entrepreneurs, experts, customers and political supporters that is able to realize the potentials of the invention. Ideas that may appear utterly phantasmal at the outset – consider only the idea of the airplane one hundred years ago – may thus become a realistic project due to the self-fulfilling prophecy dynamics of the underlying vision. Usually, particular countries and particular industries in these countries, take the lead in generating such processes. In the twentieth century this had been often the USA, such as in the cited cases of the automobile and the internet. The inventions and the dreams surrounding them, nevertheless, are not confined to national boundaries, but tend to spread transnationally; they are, by their very nature, international and global.

The visions connected with new technologies are not always positive. Inventions can also give rise to intense collective fears and anxieties; consider only fears of nuclear disaster associated with atomic energy, or fears of an erosion of freedom and privacy associated with information technologies. New technologies, therefore, may become self-destroying instead of self-fulfilling prophecies. It is difficult to decide in advance whether the feedback process will develop in a negative or a positive direction. Innovations develop under conditions of uncertainty; therefore, reliable forecasts of their career are impossible to a large degree.

In a capitalist system, visions and utopias tend to emerge not only in the field of technology, but in all spheres of economic activity, including consumption, where the symbolic messages embodied in consumption goods and their anticipated social status value often are more important than their actual use value. Like technological visions, consumption fads can flourish only temporarily. They tend to exhaust themselves in the course of their implementation, thus giving room for the creation of new visions and fads. Capitalist visions, utopias and myths thus are showing an inherently dynamic pattern, as they have to be created continuously anew, while destroying established practices. The cycle of innovative visions is a key factor shaping conceptions of the future in capitalist societies. When branded *new*, new technologies are, as Sturken / Thomas put it, “a kind of Rorschach test for the collective concerns of a particular age.”³

The visions underlying capitalist growth do not only determine collective futures, but also individual ones. As soon as an industry takes the role of a “pioneer” in a particular field of innovation, it becomes attractive not only for customers but also for potential

3 M. Sturken and D. Thomas, Introduction. Technological Visions and the Rhetoric of the New, in: Sturken, Thomas and Ball-Rokeach (eds.) *Technological Visions*, pp. 1–18, 1.

employees. It can open new fields of qualification and new careers, which give orientation to individual life courses. A growing economy stimulates individual learning processes and upward social mobility within and between firms, within and across national borders. Conversely, the quest for social rise due to individual innovative performance is a key factor promoting growth, with the success and the success motive again reinforcing each other in a circular way. Again, the feedback can be positive as well as negative. Since innovation means the destruction of given structures, it always produces winners *and* losers. The rise of new industries and products goes parallel with the decline of old ones, with the consequences of a devaluation of qualifications and marginalization of workforces. To denote this ambivalent character of innovation, Schumpeter coined the well-known term “creative destruction.”

The points made so far may be sufficient to lend preliminary plausibility to the thesis of this paper: In a capitalist society, growth is much more than a mere “economic” phenomenon exhausting itself in rational dispositions over scarce resources. Rather, growth and the innovation imperative underlying it are key factors shaping future orientations in capitalist societies. A growing economy does not only provide income chances, but also “meaning” and “perspectives” to the actors; conversely, a stagnating or declining economy generates “pessimistic” or “depressive” moods. In this sense, growth has a cultural as well as a moral dimension: it is symbolically highly significant and binds society together by giving direction to collective and individual lives. Therefore, economic models and theories *alone* cannot clarify sufficiently where the capitalist quest for growth and innovations comes from; what is required, rather, are qualitative and historical approaches. This is a vast field, which I can consider here only in a very selective and condensed way, concentrating on the question of the common versus multiple character of the future opened by growth.

I start with a broad historical overview, referring to the analysis of Angus Maddison. Then I will turn to the question of the social conditions of growth, distinguishing between socio-economic, institutional and cultural accounts. In the final section I will present a critical assessment of the still influential cultural theories of growth. My point will be that growth today has become a genuinely global phenomenon that cannot be explained satisfactorily from the Western cultural tradition alone. This will lead to the conclusion that, though cultural and religious traditions remain important from the viewpoint of social embeddedness of economic action at local and national level, the forces driving the growth imperative need to be analyzed in a globalization theoretical approach. The future created by growth thus is basically a common, global one, in a positive as well as in a negative sense.

2. A Long Term Perspective

Viewed from a long-term historical perspective, capitalist growth appears as an extremely singular phenomenon. If we take Angus Maddison's studies⁴ as a starting point, stationary reproduction with only small and gradual adaptations (and, of course, interruptions due to war, diseases, natural disasters) was the rule during almost the entire pre-capitalist history. Even the West European economies, which usually are considered as the "seedbed" of capitalism, grew only at a very slow pace (0.15 percent annually) during the period 1500–1820. After 1820, however, a veritable "growth explosion" can be observed, first in Western Europe and the "Western offshoots" of Europe (North America, Australia, New Zealand), then successively in other world regions too. While almost stagnating in earlier times, per-capita growth in the world soared to annual rates of 0.53 (1820–70), 1.30 (1870–1913), 0.91 (1913–50), 2.93 (1950–73) and 1.33 (1973–98) percent.⁵ During the entire period, per capita income on a global level rose by a factor of 8.5.

The growth process developed very unevenly across the world; moreover, it was interrupted by recessions and severe crises. Nevertheless, it is evident that growth became the "normal" mode of economic reproduction after 1820, replacing the traditional stationary pattern. Although the take-off of growth started in the western hemisphere, other world regions caught up in the late nineteenth century, detaching the growth process from its western origins. Due to the wars and economic crises of the first half of the twentieth century, growth declined significantly in this period. By contrast, the period after the Second World War was characterized by an unprecedented global boom. Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, growth rates of the mature industrial economies of Europe, North America and Japan declined again, while the emerging economies – particularly in East Asia – became more dynamic. Today, emerging economies such as China, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and recently even the countries of sub-Saharan Africa are showing much higher rates of economic growth than the mature industrial economies (4–7 percent versus 1–2 percent; see IMF: World Economic Outlook). There is no doubt that capitalist growth today has become a genuinely global phenomenon based on the world-wide interconnection of markets not bound to any particular culture or civilization. At the same time, the unevenness of growth around the world has led to a dramatic increase in the interregional spreads of per capita income, from 3:1 (Western Europe to Africa in 1820) to 14:1 and 19:1 (Western Europe and Western Offshoots to Africa in 1998).⁶

The growth explosion occurred simultaneously with a population explosion, though population growth (5.6 fold during the period 1820–1998) fell behind the growth of per capita income. While the population explosion can explain partly the rise in the absolute levels of income, it cannot account for the rise of per capita income. As stated above,

4 A. Maddison, *The World Economy. A Millennial Perspective*, Paris 2001.

5 Ibid., Table 3–1a, p. 126.

6 Ibid., Table 3–1b.

beyond conventional economic models, empirically and historically based accounts are required here.

3. Socio-economic, Institutional and Cultural Accounts of Growth

Historically based accounts of growth can be divided into three main groups, which I will discuss subsequently: socio-economic (a.), institutional (b.), and cultural approaches (c.).

a.) The socio-economic transformations underlying industrialization and innovation have been analyzed and debated extensively. Nevertheless, a commonly accepted theory of these transformations does not yet exist, as Jürgen Osterhammel states.⁷ The dominant contributions in this field still are coming from classic authors, like Marx, Schumpeter, Weber and Polanyi. What is vital in this view is the process of “disembedding” markets, to quote the well-known expression of Karl Polanyi. Above all, this meant that markets, while playing only a limited role in traditional societies, now became the dominant and most encompassing social system, permeating almost all spheres of social life. While markets were under the strict rule of the mercantilist authorities in the eighteenth century, the liberal governments in the nineteenth century followed and enforced the principle of *laissez-faire*, allowing the markets to regulate themselves according to the signals of prices, costs and profits, and dismantling political privileges and monopolies. Moreover, the nineteenth century brought a significant progress in the globalization of trade and in the removal of local and national trade barriers; transnational markets began to supersede local and national markets.⁸ Markets became generalized also in the social dimension. Due to the land reforms, the liberation of the peasantry and the abolition of guild regulations, local subsistence economies vanished. Increasingly, the rural and urban population became dependent on the labour market as their dominant or sole source of existence. The same process resulted in a generalization of the material scope of markets. Traditionally, market transactions had been confined largely to finished goods and services, with labour marketable mainly in the form of slave trade or day labourers, and land being barred by feudal property rights. Now markets for the “factors” of production – land and other means of production, free labour – developed at a large scale, subsuming the entire sphere of production to the logic of commodification. Finally, even money itself as the medium of markets became included into the market nexus as an object of trade at national and transnational capital and financial markets, thus marking the final step in the self-regulation of markets. The disembedding process, although started in the Western hemisphere, was not a “western” phenomenon, but a genuinely global one spreading around the world since the nineteenth century.

7 J. Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, München 2009, p. 915.

8 J. Kocka, *Geschichte des Kapitalismus*, München 2014.

It is not difficult to show that the conditions created by the disembedding process *alone* are generating a strong determination towards growth, though not explaining it sufficiently. This applies in particular to the extension of the property claim of money to the potentials of free wage labor. The first step towards this extension, which Marx calls “primitive accumulation,” is the expulsion of the rural population from their natural sources of subsistence, forcing people to seek employment in urban and industrial occupations. Primitive accumulation *alone* means a strong impulse towards growth, and it is not only a distant event of the sixteenth century, but is going on up to the present at a world wide scale.⁹ The growth effect of the separation of labor from the means of her realization, however, continues to be efficient on more advanced levels of capitalist development. Money that does not command only just commodities and human services, but also labor, land and other factors of production, is not just “money” but “capital.” As such it is a property title not only on what *has been* produced, but also what *could be produced* via the organized employment of free labor. The development of capitalism meant the rise of a class of entrepreneurs, striving to exploit the chances connected with the latter option. This meant an immense, quantitative as well as qualitative enhancement of the productive potentials of society as well as an unprecedented appreciation of money itself. In its capital form, money is bound to grow and accumulate by itself. Due to the creative capacities of human work, the potentials of free labor are basically undefinable and inexhaustible. The property claim of capital, therefore, can never be redeemed in a definitive way, but only in a continuous process of growth, producing never ending “innovations”. As a means to exploit the creative capacities of labor, capital became the center of a utopia of perhaps the strongest possible kind: private appropriation of anything *mankind* can.¹⁰ It is this basic utopia embodied in the capital form of money, which is the origin of the stream of ever new visions, myths and fads in the fields of technology, organization and consumption which I referred to above.

Moreover, the extension of markets to the sphere of production meant to divide the population into two classes: capital and labor. The polarization of classes created a room of intense competition, with workers struggling for subsistence, and entrepreneurs competing to exploit the creative potentials of labor with the aim of profit.¹¹ The parallel population explosion had the effect of heating up the competitive pressures at the markets. The capitalist growth game, however, was not only a Darwinist struggle for survival, as it appeared during the stages of primitive accumulation. On the later stages, the stick of competition worked in combination with the carrot of new chances for social advancement. These chances offered themselves not only for self-employed entrepreneurs, but also for qualified employees, which were created by the formally open structure of capi-

9 M. Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*, Durham 2000.

10 See also C. Deutschmann, A pragmatist theory of capitalism, in: *Socio-Economic Review* 9 (2011) 1, pp. 83–106.

11 J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, third edition, New York 1950; W. J. Baumol, *The Free Market Innovation Machine*, Princeton 2002.

talist classes. Again, these characteristics of the disembedding process were not confined to the Western seedbed nations of industrial capitalism. They more or less were reproduced in the non-Western countries, which became targets of the capitalist expansion.

b.) The disembedding of markets constitutes a necessary precondition for growth and the innovation race underlying it, however, not a sufficient one. The innovation race may be carried out by violence and illegal means, as is the case in many developing countries. Workers may not be truly “free” due to extreme poverty, or to informally continuing master-servant relationships. The disembedding process can become economically productive only under the paradox condition of a parallel “re-embedding” of markets into institutional orders, political regulations and social infrastructures. This is the point of “institutional” theories of growth becoming influential recently (North, Porter, Sala-i-Martin). For Douglass North the key requirement to enable growth are private property rights and their institutionalization.¹² The economy can grow only under the condition of a strong state being able to define and to enforce private property rights in an impartial way. Xavier Sala-i-Martin¹³ developed a more elaborate model built on three groups of institutional factors relevant for growth, which he called “basic requirements,” “efficiency enhancers” and “innovation and sophistication factors.”¹⁴ “Basic requirements” include elementary material infrastructures, a minimum level of personal and legal security, macro-economic stability, and a basic education of the workforce. The category of “efficiency enhancers” circumscribes conditions like an efficient regulation of markets (including financial markets), ability to adopt and implement new technologies, and an elaborated system of secondary education. “Innovation and sophistication factors” include an advanced research infrastructure on corporate and societal level, and a superior level of human capital and academic education. While crosscutting national, cultural and civilizational differences, Sala-i-Martin’s model aims to describe different degrees of competitiveness and growth potentials at national and company levels. Basically, three degrees are distinguished: Developing (“factor driven”) economies can offer not more than the basic requirements for growth; emerging (“efficiency driven”) economies are rating high in the dimensions of basic requirements and efficiency enhancers; industrial (“innovation driven”) economies show high scores in all three dimensions.

c.) The third type of growth theories are cultural theories describing the impact of social values, cultural and religious traditions on economic action. These theories, which derive themselves largely from the classic studies of Weber and Sombart, have been influential in sociology and economic history. The classic sociological approaches of modernization (Parsons, Lipset, Smelser) sought a cultural explanation of capitalist dynamics by tracing it back to the Christian traditions of the West. Capitalist development was equalized with “modernization”, which was interpreted as a secular process of systemic “differen-

12 D. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge 1990.

13 X. Sala-i-Martin, *Fifteen Years of Growth Economics: What Have We learnt?* Department of Economics Discussion Paper, No. 0102–47, Columbia University, New York 2002.

14 X. Sala-i-Martin, et al., *The Global Competitiveness Index*, in: K. Schwab (ed.) *The Global Competitiveness Report 2010–2011*, Geneva 2010, pp. 3–55.

tiation". Systemic differentiation, in turn, was considered to be based on universalistic social values whose historical roots were located in early Christianity¹⁵; here Parsons partly followed the analyses of Troeltsch and Weber. In this sense, modernity and capitalist development were interpreted as a *cultural invention* of the West with its partly Roman-Greek, partly Judaistic-Christian heritage. More recently, David Landes took a similar position. Emphasizing the link between the institution of private property and the Judaistic-Christian concept of personality, Landes argued that "the very notion of economic development was a western invention".¹⁶

A further key point in the interpretation of capitalist growth as an offspring of Christian culture were the changes of social time horizons and future orientations introduced by Christian teaching. As David Landes, Karl Löwith, Reinhard Koselleck and other authors have argued, the message of the return of Christ opened an entirely new dimension of linear time beyond the conceptions of cyclical, natural time dominating in ancient Greek cosmology. In such a perspective, the orientation of capitalism towards mundane progress could be interpreted as a "secularization" of Christian eschatology. As Koselleck showed, it had been the philosophy of Enlightenment (Lessing, Schiller, Kant) which developed the idea that humans should no longer content themselves to wait for the return of Christ, but take their destination into their own hands.¹⁷ Indeed, the nineteenth century experienced a significant "acceleration" of social life, which was not due to divine action, but to the rise of industrial capitalism. In some sense one could say that the idea of salvation shifted from Heaven to Earth, now taking the form of mundane progress and never ending economic growth.¹⁸ However, though the idea of this-worldly human progress may have been inspired by Christian eschatology, the secular turn of the same eschatology clearly had nothing to do with the Christian legacy and met lasting resistance from the churches. Here, the culturalist position meets her limits: While it may throw some light on the religious origins of the utopia underlying the capitalist growth imperative, it cannot explain the secular turn of the same utopia.

What is common to the cultural theories of growth is their Western or Eurocentric bias, which distinguishes them markedly from the socio-economic and the institutional approaches. Therefore, they are meeting difficulties when being confronted with successful non-Western capitalist economies. The usual reaction of the culturalist school to such difficulties was the search for "functional equivalents" for the Christian and Protestant ethics in the native cultural legacies. A classic example of this literature is Robert Bellahs "Tokugawa Religion,"¹⁹ where Bellah discovered affinities of Japanese Zen-Buddhism

15 T. Parsons, *The System of Modern Societies*, Englewood Cliffs 1971.

16 D. S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, London 1998, p. 32.

17 R. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik*, Frankfurt/M. 2003, pp. 177f.; see also K. Löwith, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen. Die theologischen Voraussetzungen der Geschichtsphilosophie*, Stuttgart 1953.

18 B. Priddat, *Benign order and heaven on earth – Kapitalismus als Religion? Über theologische Ressourcen in der Entwicklung der modernen Ökonomie*, in: P. Seele and G. Pfeiderer (eds.), *Kapitalismus – eine Religion in der Krise I. Grundprobleme von Risiko, Vertrauen und Schuld*, Zürich 2013, pp. 25–135.

19 R. N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan*, Illinois 1957.

and religious movements like the Shingaku-sect with the economic ethics of Protestantism, which – in his view – can explain the success of Japanese capitalism. In a similar vein, the protagonists of the thesis of “Confucian capitalism”²⁰ tried to trace back the economic success of China, Taiwan or Singapore to the influence of Confucian values of thrift, industriousness and piety.²¹ Recently, an analogous debate has developed with regard to “Islamic values” underlying the economic growth of Turkey.²² And, should the economic success of some countries of sub-Saharan Africa continue, I would bet on cultural sociologists to find “functional equivalents” for the Protestant ethic there too.

4. Conclusion

How far is the collective future opened by capitalist growth a multiple one? How far is it a common, global one? The answer depends on whether it is possible to establish a hierarchy of explanatory power between the three approaches outlined above. Advocates of cultural approaches will place top priority for explaining capitalist growth on cultural values and, hence, will conclude that the future opened by growth will be a multiple one, segmented along different national or civilizational traditions. Conversely, researchers deeming socio-economic conditions to be most relevant will emphasize the common and global character of growth. They will insist that the incentive structures created by the disembedding of markets are basically independent of local cultural values and tend to reproduce themselves in different cultural and civilizational environments. The same applies also, albeit to a lesser degree, to institutional approaches. Institutions and political systems are not necessarily culture specific; to some degree they can be “copied” and transferred transnationally. Such a transfer actually happened when economically backward nations tried to “copy” legal or administrative systems from advanced nations in order to catch up. The moves of the Japanese Government to “catch up” after the Meiji-restoration and the modernization of Turkey under the regime of Atatürk are classic examples for such a strategy. The architecture of economic institutions, thus, cannot be considered as being determined solely by national conditions, but also depends on global ones.

My point is that a strong case can be made in favor of the latter two “universalist” interpretations of capitalist growth. This does not imply cultural approaches to be irrelevant. Cultural traditions remain a key element of what economic sociologists have called “social embeddedness” of markets. They can motivate individual performance beyond

20 H. Kahn, *World Economic Development: 1979 and Beyond*, Boulder 1979; G. Redding, *The Spirit of Chinese Capitalism*, Berlin and New York 1990.

21 Critically S. Yao, *Confucian Capitalism. Discourse, Practice and the Myth of Chinese Enterprise*, London 2002; M. Pohlmann, *Die Entwicklung des Kapitalismus in Ostasien und die Lehren aus der asiatischen Finanzkrise*, in: *Leviathan*, 32 (2004) 3, pp. 360–381.

22 V. Nasr, *The Rise of Islamic Capitalism*, New York 2009; A. Bugra and O. Savaskan, *New Capitalism in Turkey*, Cheltenham 2014.

the cash nexus, and they can help to constitute relationships of cooperation and trust, without which markets and organizations cannot work smoothly. However, their reach is bound largely to the local, regional, or national level. Moreover, trustful and cooperative economic relationships are not always supportive for growth. On the contrary, trust based networks can easily mutate into constellations of lock-in and corruption, preventing necessary structural changes and being detrimental to the creative *and* destructive dynamics of capitalism. Seeking the origin of the capitalist growth imperative on the level of cultural values *alone* would mean clearly to overtax the explanatory power of cultural approaches. As I noted above, cultural theorists of capitalism have to take recourse to problematic remedies, such as the construction of “functional equivalents” to the Protestant ethic. The shortcomings of those approaches, such as their selectivity, their often crude functionalism, and their short circuited conclusions from ethical doctrines to actual economic practice, have been discussed extensively and do not need further comment here. The debate shows again how right Weber was in emphasizing that capitalism as a mature system does not need motivational support from religious ethics. However, considering even the historical genesis of capitalism, Weber’s well-known analysis remains controversial: Is it really Protestant ethic that has bred the spirit of capitalism? Or, is it much more plausible to see things the other way round, as the critics of Weber, such as Kurt Samuelsson, have argued: that people simply chose the kind of religion that fits to the realities of their life?²³

It seems safe to conclude that the basic forces of global capitalism and capitalist growth cannot be clarified sufficiently by referring to national or civilization specific “values”. The “spirit of capitalism” needs to be considered as a normative order of its own right. Given the historically unprecedented level of global interconnectedness of present day capitalism²⁴, there can be no doubt about the global scale of this order. A genuinely global level of analysis is needed, such as the “globalization” literature suggests.²⁵ It would be misleading to consider global capitalism and growth as a norm-free, merely “technocratic” sphere of sociality, as critical theorists argue in strange harmony with system functionalists.²⁶ Rather, as I tried to show, growth must be conceived as a “moral” phenomenon, based on “inner” orientations, not simply on external “constraints”. Though the growth imperative is rooted partly in cultural and religious legacies at local and national levels, it cannot be understood sufficiently from them. As a global phenomenon, the growth imperative goes back to motives and conditions of their own right. The global social nexus created by capitalism should not be equalized with “solidarity” in a Durkheimian sense,

23 K. Samuelsson, *Religion and Economic Action: The Protestant Ethic, the Rise of Capitalism, and the Abuses of Scholarship*, Toronto 1993.

24 W. I. Robinson, *A Theory of Global Capitalism. Production, Class and State*, Baltimore 2004.

25 For a recent overview: B. Axford, *Theories of Globalization*, Malden MA 2013.

26 Critically T. Schwinn, *Multiple Modernities: Konkurrierende Thesen und offene Fragen. Ein Literaturbericht in konstruktiver Absicht*, in: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 38 (2009) 6, pp. 454–476.

as Richard Münch has suggested.²⁷ Capitalism is integrating society not via the rule of strong collective institutions, but via the “weak” and relational nexus of markets and money, leaving ample room for grossly unequal and unjust relationships. However, as I tried to show, it is just the apparently weak nexus of disembedded markets, which gives rise to the capital form of money and, with it, the utopia of private control over human capacities. To understand the power of this utopia, there is no need to refer to additional cultural or religious motivations. It is the capitalist utopia of absolute wealth, which underlies the growth imperative, shaping the future of the world in a positive as well as in a negative sense. In the positive sense it may become a force to surmount poverty and ignorance and to create a worldwide civil society. On the other hand, the capitalist utopia of absolute wealth may give rise to unprecedented social turbulences, polarizations and environmental disasters at a global scale too.

27 R. Münch, *Das Regime des Freihandels. Entwicklung und Ungleichheit in der Weltgesellschaft*, Frankfurt/M 2011.

Juxtapositions of the Future: Growth-speak and its Shadow Sides in Africa

Amanda Hammar

ABSTRACT

Repräsentationen des afrikanischen Kontinents behandeln ihn zunehmend als „Zukunftskontinent“, der einen klaren wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Aufschwung vor sich habe. Diese Welle des Optimismus folgt einer vorausgegangenen Welle des Afropessimismus. Der Aufsatz fragt, wessen Ideen und Interessen sich in solchen Diskursen niederschlagen, warum sie gerade heute so virulent werden und wessen Interessen sie dienen. Die Wachstumsrhetorik, so wird deutlich, rechtfertigt die gleichen externen Interventionen, Investitionen und Extraktionen wie die vorausgegangenen Wellen der Rhetorik. Kritische afrikanische Stimmen weisen auf die Widersprüche und Sinnentleertheit der neuen Hyperrhetorik hin und bieten damit alternative, komplexere und historisch klarer verankerte Entwürfe der zukünftigen Einbindung des Kontinents in das globale Wirtschaftsgefüge.

1. Introduction

The vocabulary of potentiality and prosperity has come increasingly to dominate many contemporary media, development, business and even scholarly representations of an aggregated “Africa.” It seems that all kinds of people, both off and increasingly on the continent, can’t stop talking about “Africa Rising;” about this being “Africa’s century.” There is talk of African “lions” emerging to rival Asian “tigers;” talk of “a sleeping giant awakening;” talk of Africa being *the* space of “emerging markets” and economic growth, where natural resources, youth, communication technology, remittances and an expanding middle-class are cast as key markers of the continent’s timely (and, implicitly, long-delayed) “integration” into the global economy, as if it had somehow been outside of it

all along. All this fuels talk of Africa's apparently bright future. Indeed there is talk of Africa *being* the future.

This wave of optimism amongst particular pundits raises questions about whose ideas of and interests in Africa and Africa's future are being portrayed through such discourses, why, and why now? What does this largely neoliberal portrait of possibilities in these times reveal, and evoke, with what implications for whom? What or whose realities slip out of sight when associated ideas of "market governance" and the free-flow of global capital(s) in and out of African states are viewed and promoted as the pathways to (everyone's) future? While not able to answer these questions comprehensively here, the present essay considers the juxtaposition of possible and impossible African futures, and tries to reflect on the work that the new *growth-speak* is doing in justifying certain kinds of interventions, investments and extractions related to selectively imagined ends for Africa and Africans. At the same time, it looks at how critical voices especially from within the continent confront the perceived contradictions if not emptiness of some of these hyper-claims of growth and possibility. In so doing, they offer more complex and historically grounded perspectives on the workings of the new (secular) prosperity gospel of and for Africa, as well as alternative visions of its place in the world.

The essay begins by exploring the emergence of the new growth-speak and hyperbole of Africa Rising, to try and understand who is promoting it and why. It pays particular attention to the dominance – and limitations – of GDP as a measure of growth. The following section provides an illustration of the workings of the Africa Rising discourse, as promoted by key multilateral actors featured at an international conference in Maputo in May 2014, entitled "Africa Rising". The next section delves into African counter-narratives to the narrow representations of economic growth and associated visions of the future, while also asking some questions about hope and becoming. A brief conclusion reflects on the future as a field of struggle.

2. The Emergence of the (Narratives of the) "New" Africa

From the focus of film festivals in both African and Western capital cities,¹ to features in magazines such as *The Economist* and *Time*, to the speeches of African presidents, ministers and other senior officials, to strategic plans of development banks such as the African Development Bank,² to the focus of large multilateral-sponsored conferences (one of which shall be discussed later), this "rising" talk is getting louder and louder, albeit coded in different terminologies. But whether presented in metaphorical (rising) terms or more materially oriented, economistic (growth) terms, it's as if the more often it is pronounced and the more assertive the tone used, the more those doing the pronounc-

1 In November 2014, Copenhagen's annual documentary film festival, CPH:DOX, featured close to a dozen films under a special section called 'Africa Rising'.

2 African Development Bank, At the Center of Africa's Transformation. Strategy for 2013–2022, Abidjan 2013.

ing hope or believe – or try to convince others – that it will become “the” story of Africa. This, in spite of Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie’s widely acclaimed warning of “the dangers of a single story.”³

Some fifteen years ago, this was not the dominant popular narrative about Africa. In 2000, *The Economist* famously announced Africa to be “the hopeless continent,” “unable to experience growth and development.”⁴ This portrait was consistent with a certain scholarly literature during the 1990s and well into the 2000s that highlighted conflict, disorder and state failure across the continent.⁵ At the same time, economists focused on Africa’s apparent “slow growth” at best, or “chronic economic failure” at worst,⁶ some even speaking of an “African growth tragedy.”⁷ As a strong critic of such literature and the deeply flawed methods underpinning its research and conclusions, Morten Jerven⁸ has pointed to its misreading of African economic history, “based mainly on observations made during the 1980s and early 1990s, a period when most African economies were experiencing the deepest recession of the twentieth century.”⁹ Similarly, he has argued against the consequent causal explanations provided such as blaming African states for “bad policy” and especially for “too much state intervention”, and against the misrepresentations (through simplification) of Africa’s multiple and uneven economic realities. The wide-scale insistence on neoliberal structural adjustment policies across the continent by key multilateral organisations like the IMF during the 1980s and 90s promoted these as a corrective to the assumed bad policies of African states. This has hardly been the focus of deep self-reflection amongst those economists promoting this approach, despite evidence of its core failures.

Returning for now to the more popular realm, with increasing evidence of recorded economic growth across the continent during the 2000s, by 2011 *The Economist* had begun to rethink its view of Africa’s hopelessness, albeit still in over-simplified terms.¹⁰ In 2013 it published a more nuanced “special report” written by Oliver August, almost equally famous by now, in which it claimed somewhat ingeniously that it would “paint a picture

3 C. Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, Ted Talks, June 2009. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en (accessed 1 February 2016).

4 M. Jerven, *Africa. Why Economists Get It Wrong*, London 2015, p.1.

5 A. Mazrui, *The Blood of Experience: The Failed State and Political Collapse in Africa*, in: *World Policy Journal* 12 (1995) 1, pp. 28–34; J. Herbst, *Responding to State Failure in Africa*, in: *International Security* 21 (1997) 3, pp. 120–144; P. Chabal and J. P. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, Oxford 1999; R. Bates, *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*, Cambridge 2008; D. Branch and N. Cheeseman, *Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya*, in: *African Affairs* 108 (2009) 430, pp. 1–26.

6 P. Collier and J. W. Gunning, *Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?*, in: *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13 (1999) 3, pp. 3–22; P. Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, New York 2007.

7 W. Easterly and R. Levine, *Africa’s Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions*, in: *Quarterly Journal of Economics* CXII (1997), pp.1203–1250.

8 M. Jerven, *Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What to Do About It*, Ithaca NY 2013; M. Jerven, *Africa. Why Economists Get It Wrong*, London 2015.

9 Jerven, *Africa*, p. 8.

10 It published an article on 3 December 2011 titled ‘The Hopeful Continent: Africa Rising’: <http://www.economist.com/node/21541015> (accessed 1 February 2016).

at odds with Western images of Africa”; images it had itself been part of reproducing. While the earlier report in 2011 had drawn largely on conventional economic data to assert Africa’s economic growth trends, the 2013 special report was more diverse in its empirical sources. The author had actually visited some 23 countries on the continent himself. According to August

*War, famine and dictators have become rarer. People still struggle to make ends meet, just as they do in China and India. They don’t always have enough to eat, they may lack education, they despair at daily injustices and some want to emigrate. But most Africans no longer fear a violent or premature end and can hope to see their children do well. That applies across much of the continent...*¹¹

Beyond the more anecdotal basis of many contemporary media claims of improvement on the continent, the aforesaid more conventional, economistic representation of growth has continued to focus on classic indicators, most significantly gross domestic product (GDP). In this vein, we are informed by Africa Economic Outlook 2015, for example, that Africa’s overall GDP has been rising positively over the past decade, and is “expected to strengthen to 4.5% in 2015 and 5% in 2016”. This is despite the dip or “subdued expansion” in 2013 (3.5%) and 2014 (3.9%) due to a slowing down of the world economy after the 2008–09 global economic crisis.¹² At the same time, foreign direct investment (FDI) is said to be rising, projected to reach USD 73.5 billion in 2015.¹³ This increase is apparently “underpinned by increasing greenfield investment from China, India and South Africa” in particular.¹⁴ Remittances from African diaspora residents across the globe are also said to have increased “six-fold since 2000 and are projected to reach USD 64.6 billion in 2015.”¹⁵ Although Egypt and Nigeria are said to receive the bulk of the flows, the pattern is significant for many more countries. The African Development Bank, among others, reports that “between 2000 and 2010, six of the world’s fastest growing economies were in Africa.”¹⁶

The same report also notes that “six of the 10 most unequal countries in the world are African.”¹⁷ This concession to such unevenness across the continent and to ongoing challenges and constraints to growth is not unusual in itself. Most observers would acknowledge that, for example, GDP levels – and growth rates more generally – necessarily vary by country and across regions, depending on a range of inter-linked geographical, his-

11 See The Economist, 2 March 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21572377-african-lives-have-already-greatly-improved-over-past-decade-says-oliver-august> (accessed 1 February 2016).

12 Africa Economic Outlook 2015, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/outlook/forecast/> (accessed 16 December 2015).

13 Ibid.

14 Greenfield investment refers to investment in “new operational facilities from the ground up. In addition to building new facilities, most parent companies also create new long-term jobs in the foreign country by hiring new employees.” Investopedia, <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/greenfield.asp> (accessed 16 December 2015).

15 Africa Economic Outlook, 2015, p. 12.

16 Ibid., p. 11.

17 Ibid., p. 12.

torical, political, social, environmental and other factors. However, as shall be illustrated later, data that might complicate the main GDP paradigm and Africa Rising narrative – such as persistent structural inequalities, chronic political crises, diverse forms of social exclusion and so on – seem to be drowned out by the present brand of Afro-optimism with its celebratory exaggeration of actual growth or growth potential.¹⁸ Irrespective of any contradictory evidence, the same growth figures are repeated uncritically time and again by those intent on (over)emphasising Africa's rise.¹⁹

Indeed, there is almost a religious-like devotion to GDP. Fioramonti²⁰ calls it “the world's most powerful number.” This refers to its far-reaching influence on international and national policies and on private sector investment decisions that affect millions in Africa and elsewhere. But as he notes, “GDP tells us nothing about the health of an economy, let alone its sustainability and the overall impact on human welfare. GDP is simply a measure of market consumption, which has been improperly adopted to assess economic performance.”²¹ Nor does it say anything of the estimated USD 1.4 trillion losses to the continent “in illicit financial outflows and corrupt deals” between 1980 and 2009.²² Nor does it reflect on the non-renewability of many of the key natural resources that have been central to fueling growth in some countries, or the fact that the Human Development Index in many of these countries remains amongst the lowest in the world.²³ Nor does GDP reveal anything about Africa's rising debt levels that have accompanied increased borrowing alongside growth.²⁴

The intention here is not to pose a dichotomy between Africa rising or failing. It is not to stand on either side of the pendulum that swings between the Afro-pessimism of negative stereotypes that has focused on crisis, impoverishment and impossibility, and the Afro-optimism of unbridled potentiality contained in the Africa Rising discourse. Both positions in their simplified versions are limited by reductionism; by their lack of nuance and complexity, and historical thinness. Clearly, the realities of growth and its other sides across Africa are much more layered, multi-dimensional and dynamically evolving than a single story of any shade. The key focus here is less on uncovering or asserting these complex realities *per se* than on exploring the intensification and growing dominance of the Africa Rising discourse in itself. The next section presents a particularly revealing illustration of the workings of this discourse, as promoted by key actors in the international development-and-investment community (the distinction between development and investment having become much harder to identify).

18 I. Taylor, *Africa Rising? BRICS – Diversifying Dependency*, London 2014.

19 Jerven, *Africa*.

20 L. Fioramonti, *Gross Domestic Problem: The Politics Behind the World's Most Powerful Number*, London 2013.

21 L. Fioramonti, *Africa Rising? Think Again*, <https://ke.boell.org/2014/03/04/africa-rising-think-again> (accessed 1 February 2016).

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 P. Adam, 'Africa Debt Rising', in: *Counterpoints* 1 (2015), pp. 1–13.

3. “Africa Rising”: Reframing the Terms of “Helping” Africa”

This section focuses on an international conference entitled ‘Africa Rising’, sponsored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and hosted by the Mozambique government in its capital city Maputo in May 2014. It was a grand event, punctuated with perfectly selected, internationally renowned, keynote speakers whose collective praise for the continent is key to manufacturing the growing trope of prosperous potentiality in Africa. However, as each speaker explicitly or implicitly advised, such potential needs wise and careful management, not least with the supportive expertise, finance and stewardship of their own and other Western organisations. Thus for example, a beamed video of former US President Bill Clinton greeted the audience of high-level African ministers, international diplomats and aid bureaucrats in Maputo with warm appraisal and appreciation of Africa’s “remarkable economic progress” in recent times. This was impressive, he noted; yet the new prosperity needed to be shared broadly. This new spurt of growth, he said, needs to be “inclusive growth,” a view shared by several others including the main keynote speaker, Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the IMF. This new dynamic of economic growth, Clinton continued, presented the continent with “a future of shared opportunities and responsibilities,” a future which his own foundation wished to support. He then generously offered to be part of making sure “that Africa will rise together.” Indeed, he and his foundation promised that “we will help Africa to rise.”

Speaking after Clinton was Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, and now, among other things, chair of the Africa Progress Panel whose impressive collection of leading African and Western political and business figures, promotes sustainable development in Africa. “Africa Rising is a reality” he began, further asserting that “this is an era of enormous opportunities”. Yet while joining the chorus of praise singers of Africa’s progress, he raised key concerns about this new growth-spurge being largely jobless growth. This is of particular concern in a continent whose dominant demographic is that of youth which, while being one of Africa’s acknowledged resources (“the demographic dividend”) is also projected by some as being one of its potential threats, if unemployment continues to rise.²⁵ In a related vein, several scholars working in this field have underscored the phenomenon of “growth without poverty reduction”²⁶ and “growth without economic transformation.”²⁷ Picking up on the fact that positive commodity prices had benefitted the continent in general in recent years, Annan nonetheless pointed to the need to keep track of where these revenues are going.

25 T. Mkandawire, ‘The Terrible Toll of Post-Colonial “Rebel Movements”, in Africa: Toward an Explanation of the Violence Against the Peasantry, in: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 4 (2002) 2, pp. 181–215; for a more critical perspective, see J. Munive, ‘The Army of “Unemployed” Young People, in: *Young* 18, 2010, 3, pp. 321–338.

26 T. Kelsall, *Business, Politics, and the State in Africa: Challenging the Orthodoxies on Growth and Transformation*, London 2013.

27 L. Whitfield, *Growth without Economic Transformation: Economic Impacts of Ghana’s Political Settlement*, DIIS/EPP Working Paper 28 (2011).

The IMF's Christine Lagarde gave the final keynote address. She spoke in similarly congratulatory tones about Sub-Saharan Africa "clearly taking off." Two-thirds of the continent's countries, she noted, have had more than ten years of uninterrupted growth. Some of this had translated into improvements in education and health care, in increased road and electricity coverage, in substantially greater access to mobile technology. Averages of 5-10% growth had been recorded in many countries on the continent. Resource-rich economies like Angola reached 22.6% growth in 2007. "But let's be realistic and let's be frank," she said; "revenues are captured by too few and are not always applied widely." She gave mining-dominated countries as a prime example of this problem. The IMF as much as others clearly sees itself as well-placed to serve its African member states with the kind of advice that will reduce such narrow revenue redistribution, especially in terms of promoting a strong "governance" agenda and offering advice on "sound financial policies." Without any direct reference to the IMF's own poor record on the continent with its flagship structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and 90s, Lagarde reassured her audience that the Fund had conscientiously "listened to the voices" – who these voices belonged to was unclear – and had reformed some of its instruments away from the more rigid policies of the past.

"The future will be yours," Lagarde proffered. Again it was unclear to whom this gesture of reassurance was being offered beyond those in the conference hall. One imagines she may have been speaking to the presumed growing middle-class on the continent,²⁸ whose numbers are expected to have access to, or soon to have access to, the presumed universal signifiers of modernity such as mobile phones, internet cafés and urban malls. Clearly though, this version of "rising Africa" is not likely to reach many millions of Africans who live well below or close to the poverty line. At the same time, though given less air-time, she also noted the risks of such futures being dependent on an over-reliance on natural resource exploitation and especially mineral extraction, and their vulnerability to changes in commodity prices. In addition, with reference to the extraordinary expansion of technology across much of the continent, while this could foster further growth, she acknowledged that it could also deepen exclusions and inequality.

Admittedly, while the narrative of Africa Rising is powerfully reproduced and promoted at the highest levels of diplomacy and development, it is tempered to some extent by the recognition that there is a more complex set of dynamics at play that needs attention. On the one hand, as I have already suggested, depending on the interests at stake, consideration of the problems and risks associated with or existing alongside Africa's growth are largely relegated to the footnotes of the main storyline. At least this is so for the more deeply-rooted questions of structural inequality generated or reinforced by neoliberal policies in themselves, in both their global and domestic articulations. On the other

28 Figures for the apparent rise of the African middle class have themselves come under critical scrutiny (Fioramonti, *Gross Domestic Problem*), particularly when such claims of expansion are based on statistical surveys that define the middle-class in Africa as being those with a per capita daily consumption of between USD 2 and USD 20 in 2005 PPP (purchasing power parity). See M. Mubila, M.-S. Ben Aissa and C. Leyeka Lufumpa, *The Middle of the Pyramid: Dynamics of the Middle Class in Africa*, Market Brief, African Development Bank (2011).

hand, there are many challenges that can be, and are, effectively “rendered technical”²⁹ in ways that make them amenable to technocratic “solutions” such as capacity building and policy advice on “good governance,” economic policy, and so on. Such assistance is provided through various mechanisms by the kinds of organisations given a key platform at the Maputo conference. This kind of offer of external expertise to address “Africa’s problems” – underpinned by a presumption of appropriate stewardship – is in no way new.³⁰ Neither is the possibility of finding allies among local state, political or business elites willing to facilitate this kind of relationship: a pattern at least as old as colonialism. What may be relatively new, however, is the extent of the shift from developmentalism to neoliberalism as the key framework for external intervention, or in any case their increased imbrication. Already in the 1980s and 90s, structural adjustment conditionalities had become the norm in many places on the continent. As noted by Dolan and Roll:³¹ “By the 1990s, the development industry was inextricably entwined with this broader neoliberal project, embedding its core tenets of economic liberalization, privatization, and market discipline in policies and programs for African development.” Increasingly investment and trade, as opposed to aid, have become the dominant mantras of engagement for external development actors, with the local private sector in its various guises – including local business and political elites often associated with ruling parties, but also the poor themselves as “micro-entrepreneurs”³² – as the preferred partner. African states and their official planning and regulatory frameworks, by contrast, are (still) viewed as something to largely circumvent. This latter discourse of mistrust in African states echoes earlier (1980s) anti-statist discourses by the World Bank among others, as well as the more recent “failed state” thinking amongst both scholars and policy makers.³³ Both ideological and material interests continue to fuel the efforts by different agencies to secure the conditions for liberalizing market access on the continent.³⁴ This need has deepened in recent years, as fears of diminishing natural resources and competition over global access has come to the fore.³⁵ There is little overt discussion in public fora such as the Maputo conference of the fact that some of the intensified attention of Western countries to growth in Africa, and efforts at positive positioning of key Western organisations and corporations relative to the continent’s ‘new opportunities,’ comes precisely at a time when such fears are growing. This is exacerbated by the emergence of alternative

29 T. M. Li, *The Will to Improve. Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*, Durham 2007.

30 E. M. Roe, *Except-Africa: Postscript to a Special Section on Development Narratives*, in: *World Development* 23 (1995) 6, pp. 1065–1069; T. M. Li, *The Will to Improve. Governmentality*.

31 C. Dolan and K. Roll, *Capital’s New Frontier: From “Unusable” Economies to Bottom-of-the-Pyramid Markets in Africa*, in: *African Studies* 56 (2013) 3, p.126.

32 Ibid. p. 123; A. Schwittay, *The Marketization of Poverty*, in: *Current Anthropology* 52 (2011) 3, pp. 571–582.

33 Herbst, *Responding to State Failure in Africa*.

34 S. Bracking, *Structural Adjustment: Why It Wasn’t Necessary and Why It Did work*, in: *Review of African Political Economy* 26 (1999) 80, pp. 207–226; P. D. Little, *Economic and Political Reform in Africa. Anthropological Perspectives*, Bloomington 2014.

35 S. Borras et al., *The Politics of Biofuels, Land and Agrarian Achange: Editors’ Introduction*, in: *Journal of Peasant Studies* 37 (2010) 4, pp. 575–592.

poles of (economic) power such as China, Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa (collectively referred to as BRICS), which are increasingly active in partnering with African states and elites on the continent as investors and traders,³⁶ and in some places also as settlers.³⁷

In addition to the above, a more general argument is being made here that much of what fuels the Africa Rising discourse, at least in the form expressed in the Maputo conference example, is at least partly an expression of neoliberalism. Taking into account Little's³⁸ reminder that the term neoliberalism is often used too promiscuously to be of analytical value, I would nonetheless claim that it is relevant to locate at least some of the logic of the Africa Rising narrative, and intensified growth-speak, within such a frame. This a frame ideologically defined by a project of expanding and universalizing the free-market. But in addition, having gained such dominance in public life, it "has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world."³⁹ Here, however, one might take note of Ong's challenge to Harvey amongst others, concerning the limits of standardized, totalising models of neoliberalism, or what she refers to as "Neoliberalism with a big N."⁴⁰ Even while neoliberalism does indeed pervade the world now in ways that may have been difficult to imagine of any ideology before the electronic age, and even though it tends to, or tries to, dominate how the future itself can be imagined, it is also constantly being challenged, including by astute critics on the African continent, as the next section demonstrates.

4. Alternative African Perspectives on "Africa Rising"

Single stories are fictions and fabrications in themselves, and hegemonic single stories, backed up by entrenched power and wealth – even overly-positive ones that counter and compensate for older, negative ones – are especially dangerous. They mask multiple and contradictory layers of reality, and multiple voices with alternative stories and visions. Importantly then, one needs to pay attention to other critical versions of Africa's changing conditions, especially among those living the reality themselves. In an editorial in May 2013 on the popular (and ironically titled) website, *Africa is a Country*,⁴¹ the editor notes that in several postings by Africans on the site, the discourse of "Africa Rising" has been "debunked". The postings, he says, "make it quite clear that a future in Africa worth striving for is beyond the growth of the GDP, the rise of the ill-defined African

36 Taylor, *Africa Rising?*

37 M. Lee, *Africa's World Trade. Informal Economies and Globalization from Below*, London 2014.

38 Little, *Economic and Political Reform in Africa*.

39 D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, New York 2007, p. 3.

40 A. Ong, *Neoliberalism as a Mobile Technology*, in: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32 (2007) 1, pp. 3–8.

41 Find at: <http://africasacountry.com/> (accessed 1 February 2016).

middle class or the increase in return on investment" (ibid). Kenyan journalist and writer Parselelo Kantai⁴², offers a somewhat harsher critique: the "Africa Rising" discourse, he suggests, is an "insidious little fiction manufactured by global corporate finance."

Among other important critics of the simplified growth-speak about Africa is Johannesburg-based international scholar and public intellectual, Professor Achille Mbembe. Mbembe is also particularly concerned with rethinking "the category of the future" more generally, and Africa's relationship to it. In an interview with a Swiss newspaper in early 2013, Mbembe talked of the historical era of late colonialism and of liberation struggles in Africa, when visions of "the future" for Africans were fueled by "a constant engagement with the forces of the present that foreclosed the possibility of freedom."⁴³ But now, Mbembe noted, economic dogma and "the time of the market" under current capitalist conditions, has fragmented notions of both the present and the future. There is an urgent need, he argues, for "reopening up a space not only for imagination, but also for the politics of the possible."⁴⁴

Mbembe recognized many of the same positive trends in economic growth in Africa that Lagarde and others speak of, such as increased rates of return to investment and a growing middle class. He also acknowledged some of the same risks they note, such as reliance on extractive sectors, vulnerability to volatile commodity prices, continued threats of political instability, and so on. In addition, he spoke of the paradox of growth alongside joblessness, limited public sector investment, and deepening social inequalities. However, Mbembe's approach to the risks and vulnerabilities of Africa's new "growth" context are quite different from those of the IMF and many others of the West. While interested in optimising the potentials of the future for Africans, he nonetheless emphasised the need for Africa *to become its own centre*. This was posed as a necessary counter to Europe's deepening fortress policies of self-containment and isolation, and its intensified antagonism towards Africans coming to Europe, contradicting its rhetorical celebration of, and market-oriented desire to, tap into "Africa on the move". Among other things, Mbembe believes that the work of "becoming its own centre" would require of Africa "to demilitarize its politics as a precondition for the democratization of its economy."⁴⁵ Furthermore, he envisages that the continent would "have to become a vast regional space of circulation which means that it will have to dismantle its own internal boundaries, open itself up to the new forms of migration, internal as well as external". He believes that such practices are beginning to happen to some extent in places like Mozambique and Angola, "where some Portuguese are coming back."⁴⁶

42 Cited in Taylor, *Africa Rising*, p. 3.

43 Th. Blaser, *Africa, Continent of the Future: An Interview with Achille Mbembe*, <http://www.tlaxcala-int.org/article.asp?reference=11071> (accessed 4 January 2016).

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

In responding to a broader question posed to him concerning what the African contribution to a future world might be, one of the key aspects Mbembe emphasized was the notion of multiplicity:

Look at any single thing on the continent, it always comes under the sign of the multiple: the idea of one God is totally foreign to the continent, there have always been many Gods; the forms of marriage; the forms of currencies; the social forms themselves always come under the sign of multiplicity. One of the tragedies of colonialism has been to erase that element of multiplicity which was a resource for social development in pre-colonial Africa and which was replaced by the paradigm of 'the one', the kind of monotheistic paradigm.

For Mbembe – echoing Adichie’s warning of the “danger of the single story” – this opening out towards multiplicity offers valuable new perspectives to others “for the making of the continent, its remaking, but also for the making of the world.”⁴⁷

Such a visionary perspective on African future-making as Mbembe offers is important, but not always easy to sustain. So for example, in the mid-2000s, at a particular moment in Zimbabwe’s escalating political and economic crisis, when its destructive effects were already in evidence, a well-educated young man I’d given a ride to in Harare said to me: “Mugabe has stolen my future.” Besides the personal hardship reflected in this young man’s situation, it reverberated with a wider tragedy: of countless hopeful life-trajectories crudely curtailed through their selective disassembly by the Mugabe regime during the 2000s. This was undertaken in the service of a complex project of historically-driven political restitution and populist resource redistribution on the one hand, and violent party-state territoriality and related opportunistic elite accumulation on the other. The “stolen future” of many citizens defined as disloyal to the regime was that much harder to swallow given the rhetoric of radical, inclusive change for black Zimbabweans that Mugabe and his ruling Zanu PF party had initially used to justify wide-scale land invasions and land redistribution through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, supposedly intended to lead to economic redistribution more generally.

At the same time, this lament of intentional denial by one’s own state of the possibilities of progress, of becoming something more in the future – whether at a national or individual level – evoked reflections that would preoccupy me for years. These included questions concerning what it is that generates and constitutes notions of “the future” at all? What elements are required to establish a sense of temporal unfolding that implicitly holds the promise of more or better? How do particular futures get imagined and expressed? How do various visions of the future, of progress and possibility, gain currency and get recognised and legitimized – indeed become hegemonic – and/or are contested and rejected by counter-hegemonic perspectives?

47 Ibid.

What is fascinating from a philosophical standpoint is the remarkable persistence of a sense of there being something other than or more than what there is in the present – or of one becoming (as an individual, a community, a nation) other or more – despite often extreme conditions of *impossibility* in that very present. This belief in what Bourdieu⁴⁸ has called “the forthcoming,” or having what Gabriel Marcel⁴⁹ calls “the feeling that time is not closed to us,”⁵⁰ approximates to hope, though for some that might be considered a term based more in faith than reality. Within such a framing of openness of and to the future, according to anthropologist Michael Jackson,⁵¹ this is not merely about optimism concerning other or better times. More specifically it frames desires and expectations of some kind of *moreness*, even among those with little empirical reason to hope for more. Building on his long association with Sierra Leone, a country which has seen more than its fair share of “unliveability” (measured by UN criteria), Jackson notes:

Though it is rare to meet people who are completely and permanently satisfied with their lot, it is rarer to meet people who expect nothing of life, abjectly accepting the status quo, never imagining that their situations could or should be socially, spiritually, or materially improved.

Such longings have fuelled change in many times and places.

5. Conclusion: The Future as a Field of Struggle

Africa Rising, in itself, is quite pointedly a narrative – perhaps an elastic narrative – of futurity, of becoming, of *moreness*, of hope. One might even argue that its elasticity allows for different socially positioned and spatially located actors to identify with it, perhaps even to own its meaning and embellish or redefine it in situated ways. However, this does not diminish the work it does in reinforcing a hegemonic global discourse of neoliberalism geared towards the infinite marketization of all spaces, and that closes down conversations of structural and social inequality. At the same time, it implies a certain kind of diminished or lesser past that needs remedial attention in order to “rise,” to reach greater heights, to improve: a familiar trope from an earlier era. Yet while not only being narrated by external actors, there is some necessary skepticism about what this growth hyperbole represents. Whose interests does it reflect and legitimise? What discursive work does it do, and in what ways is it being countered or modified to reflect other positions and realities?

Clearly, “the future” is not a fixed point on the horizon. It is something always there but never quite here. It is a generative notion of ‘what is yet to come,’ or of what might or could be. It is also always a field of struggle, imaginatively, ideologically, discursively,

48 P. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 206–245.

49 G. Marcel, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, New York 1962.

50 Both cited in M. Jackson, *Life Within Limits. Well-being in a World of Want*, Durham 2011.

51 *Ibid.*

materially. One possible way of exploring this field is through juxtaposing discourses, and juxtaposing what we know of different realities: letting the contradictions reveal, in themselves, what the complexities mean for whom.

“Green Growth” or “System Transition”? Competing Discourses of China’s Past Economic Success and Future Perspectives

Doris Fischer

ABSTRACT

Der Wechsel der Partei- und Regierungsführung in China im Winter 2012/13 wurde von der Erwartung begleitet, dass damit auch ein Wechsel in der Wirtschaftspolitik einhergehen würde. Insbesondere hofften viele Ökonomen, dass sich die neue Führungsriege wieder verstärkt ordnungspolitischen Reformen und einer Stärkung der Marktkräfte zuwenden würde, und sprachen entsprechend von einer „zweiten Transformation“. Im Mittelpunkt des Artikels steht die Frage, wie die konkurrierenden wirtschaftspolitischen Denkschulen in der Vergangenheit die Wirtschaftspolitik der Regierung beeinflusst und im Zusammenspiel mit der entsprechenden internationalen Agenda auf die Nachhaltigkeitspolitik der chinesischen Regierung gewirkt haben und welche Schlüsse sich daraus für die Nachhaltigkeitspolitik der neuen Führungsriege ergeben.

1. Introduction

In the winter 2012–13 China experienced the inauguration of a new leadership generation, which was accompanied by hefty debates about economic policies. At the time, liberal economists had high hopes that the new leadership would prepare China for another “system transition” (*zhidu bianqian*) or “system shift” (*zhidu zhuanxing*) (henceforth “system transition”). In advance to the Third Plenary Session of the Chinese Communist Party’s 18th Party Congress, scheduled for the end of 2013, Chinese economists published numerous books and articles to suggest a new agenda for economic system

reforms and policy changes.¹ Their expectations were met when the Plenary Session indeed produced a decision that was to guide economic policies until 2020. The decision document of the Third Plenary emphasized the necessity of a "comprehensive deepening of reform"² and defined a long list of intended market-oriented reform projects, though it did not explicitly employ the concept of a system transition.³

Discussion about the necessity of economic policy change did not emerge only in the wake of the leadership change of 2012–13. On the contrary, the years ahead of the leadership change had seen a proliferation of publications and debates both within and outside China about the "Chinese model," its potential end and need for change.⁴ This discussion comprised two major aspects. First, the roots and causes of China's past economic success and the potential lessons learnt for other developing countries. Secondly, the challenges faced by the incumbent "Chinese model" and appropriate economic policies to change it in order to prepare China for the future.⁵ Thus, even before the leadership change of 2012–13 triggered a debate about a necessary economic system transition, China had been searching for a new growth model.

In this paper, I will argue that a substantial difference exists between the discourses centred on a new growth model and those focused on the system transition and that shifts and contradictions in China's economic policies largely reflect the conflicts between these competing perspectives on China's economy. Although supporters of both discourses ultimately search for the right path to a prosperous and stable society, the proponents of the former did and do so by emphasizing the importance of growth, while the proponents of the latter emphasize the importance of institutional reforms. The "growth model perspective" had (again) been dominant during the later years of the reign of Party Secretary Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. In contrast, the leadership shift to Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang opened a window of opportunity to (again) promote the

- 1 See F. Chi, Qiewu jiang "Zhengfu Zhudao" Dengtong yu "Zhongguo Moshi" (By No Means Is "Leadership of the Government" Equal to "Chinese Model"), in: Zhongguo Dangzheng Ganbu Luntan (Chinese Cadres Tribune) (2013) 6, pp. 16–19; J. Wu, Economics and China's Economic Rise, in: M. Aoki and J. Wu (eds.), The Chinese Economy: A New Transition, New York 2012, pp. 13–31.
- 2 Central Committee, Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform, 16 January 2014, http://www.china.org.cn/china/third_plenary_session/2014-01/16/content_31212602.htm (accessed 10 January 2016).
- 3 The Decision document uses the word "system reform" (*tizhi gaige*) quite often, though, and emphasizes the need for system improvements and change in many contexts. See Central Committee, Decision of the Central Committee.
- 4 The origins of the "Chinese model" debate are often identified in the discussion of the "Beijing Consensus" (as opposed the alleged "Washington Consensus" of the Bretton Woods institutions) which emerged in 2004 as well as in the book on "China's miracle" in 1994 which was co-authored by Lin Yifu, who later became Chief Economist of the World Bank. See X. Li et al., Redefining Beijing Consensus: Ten Economic Principles, in: China Economic Journal 2 (2010) 3, pp. 297–311; Y. Fan and W. Zhang, "Xin Changtai" xia Jingji Zengzhang Dongle Jizhi Zhuanxing Sanzhong Jiexi (Three Arguments for a Transition of the Drivers of Growth under the "New Normal"), in: Jingji Wenti Tansuo (Enquiry into Economic Issues) 15 (2015) 10, pp. 171–175; B. Welsh and A. Chang, Choosing China: Public Perceptions of "China as a Model", in: Journal of Contemporary China 24 (2015) 93, pp. 442–456.
- 5 F. Chi, "Zhengfu Zhudao"; G. Li and H. Qiu, "Zhongguo Moshi" Xiang he Chu qu –Yige Jingjishehuexue Fenxi Moxing (Where is the "China Model" Heading? A Socio-Economic Pattern of Analysis), Shehui Kexue Zhanxian 2013 (8), pp. 39–52.

“institutional perspective.” As such, the dominant discourses among Chinese economists reflect and support core ideas of the respective party and government leadership. Today, supporters of the growth and the institutional interpretation of China’s economic success, have to acknowledge the environmental challenges resulting from it. The environmental problems have over the past decades become so obvious that Chinese political leaders can neither ignore the growing worries of the population nor the increasing costs to society. However, ideas for addressing the sustainability challenges differ between the proponents of a new growth model and those of a system transition. Therefore, this paper asks how these two approaches explain China’s economic success story and how they integrate the dimensions of sustainability, while examining their similarities and differences.

Environmental protection and climate change mitigation issues have become important issues in global governance and geopolitics, realms in which the different Chinese governments want to gain a stronger position.⁶ Therefore, the Chinese understanding of environmental challenges and their interrelation with economic development has been strongly influenced by the international environmental discourse. Linking the development of this global discourse with differing interpretations of China’s economic success story, this paper argues that the former leadership, inspired by the growth model idea, tried to tackle the challenge of the environmental problems by betting on China front-running in a “global green growth race,” while the current leadership still struggles in the attempt to strengthen market forces, international competitiveness, and environmental regulation at the same time.

Previous research has discussed whether China’s success story constitutes a “Chinese model” and extensive literature as well as policy recommendations exist regarding the necessity of further institutional reforms. In addition, China’s environmental problems, as well as policies to tackle these, have gained widespread attention in the literature. However, both in and outside of China, very few attempts have so far been undertaken to link these issues for the purpose of better understanding the interrelation between economic ideas guiding China’s policies and changes thereof on the one hand, and strategies with regard to sustainability and “green” development on the other.⁷ This paper attempts

6 Wang and French argue that even though China seems to claim greater influence in global governance, actual contributions in terms of personnel, finance, and ideas remain very limited. See H. Wang and E. French, China’s Participation in Global Governance from a Comparative Perspective, in: *Asia Policy* 15 (2013), pp. 89–114. Similarly, Conrad showed that China had difficulties to meet the expectations regarding its role in the international arena. Arguably this does not or no longer hold true at least in global climate negotiations. See B. Conrad, China in Copenhagen: Reconciling the “Beijing Climate Revolution” and the “Copenhagen Climate Obstinacy”, in: *The China Quarterly* 210 (2010), pp. 435–455. Ahead of the Paris Climate Conference negotiations in December 2015, the Chinese government made it explicit that China wants to take a more active role in global climate governance. See Y. Qi and W. Tong, China’s “Yes” to New Role in Climate Battle, in: *China Daily*, 4 December 2015.

7 Ho and Wang present a literature review regarding green growth concepts and green growth strategies for China. Interestingly, though, while they give a very concise summary of how the green growth concept emerged and evolved internationally, they ignore the related Chinese discourse; see M. Ho and Z. Wang, Green Growth (for China): A Literature Review, Resources for the Future Discussion Paper 14 (2014) 22, pp. 1–31, <http://www.rff.org/files/sharepoint/WorldImages/Download/RFF-DP-14-22.pdf> (accessed 11 January 2016). Ahead of the up-

to establish this link and to encourage an understanding of China's environment related policies as being embedded in economic discourses and competing interpretations of China's past economic success story and perspectives for the future.

For this purpose, the paper is structured as follows: section 2 introduces the concept of growth accounting as an economic approach to identify drivers of growth and shows how the concept is reflected in central ideas of the "growth model perspective;" section 3 looks into the institutional reform narrative of the "system transition perspective;" section 4 summarizes the process how in the past the global discourse regarding sustainability, environmental protection and "green growth" was integrated into the different perspectives on China's economic success story. The concluding section 5 argues that the current leadership, which is willing to encourage market-oriented reforms, faces major challenges in the attempt to implement environmental and social sustainability-oriented policies without recurring to the logics of the state-led "green growth" agenda and related problems.

2. The "Growth Model" Discourse

China's success of the last decades is a story of exceptional growth. High, for many years even double-digit growth rates stand as the main indicator for China's surge from a developing country to a lower-middle-income country. Economic growth has also been the central political imperative in China over many years, not only, but especially so after the country started its "reform and opening up" policies in late 1978.

Economic theory is to a large part occupied with understanding economic growth and the factors that drive it. As Straubhaar puts it, "[g]rowth is not everything, but without growth there is nothing."⁸ Growth is the basis for feeding a growing (global) population, helps to overcome challenges of redistribution, and provides means for abating conflicts of interests. In addition, according to Straubhaar, in today's globalized world, countries with longer periods of low growth easily enter a downward spiral as they fall – more and more – behind other countries. Unsurprisingly, developing countries are therefore eager to enter and stay on trajectories of high economic growth rates as a means to overcome poverty and "catch up" with advanced economies.

Economic theory employs different ways of conceiving and calculating economic output (often: Gross Domestic Product (GDP)) and its growth. One popular approach to understand growth is growth accounting, which defines an increase of overall output as the sum of additional contributions from the factors labour and capital on the one hand, and increases of a residual called "total factor productivity" (TFP) on the other.

coming leadership Leonard presented different Chinese schools of thought with regard to models, economy, politics and foreign policy, but left out the topics of environment or sustainability. See M. Leonard, *What Does the New China Think?*, in: M. Leonard (ed.), *China 3.0*, European Council on Foreign Relations, London 2012, pp. 9–24.

8 T. Straubhaar *Why Growth Is so Important*, in: *Intereconomics* 38 (2013) 6, pp. 290–291, 290.

Additional input of labour can reflect an increase of the active workforce, for example, due to an earlier baby boom, a higher rate of employment of women, or the employment of formerly redundant rural workers in industry. Additional input of capital can come from increases in foreign or domestic investment, from private or public investors. The residual TFP is assumed to reflect technological progress. As the latter is difficult to measure or to capture directly from national accounts, TFP is usually indirectly inferred by calculating the contributions of labour and capital inputs to growth, and then deducting these from total output growth. In other words, that part of growth that is not explainable by additional labour and capital inputs is defined as growth resulting from technological progress.⁹

Growth accounting is used for assessing and comparing economic development of different economies, especially emerging economies. It became ever more popular with an article by Paul Krugman published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1994 in which he argued that the alleged economic miracle of the new industrializing Asian economies (Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore) was by no means as exceptional as assumed at the time,¹⁰ because their economic growth had been mainly relying on additional labour and capital inputs, but hardly on advances in technological progress. Therefore, as the labour and capital would eventually grow slower, so would economic growth slow in the absence of substantial increases in TFP. As a consequence of Krugman's article, which ended with an outlook on China, a large body of literature has emerged to assess the contribution of labour, capital, and technological progress to China's economic growth, though very often such growth accounting exercises for China face statistical difficulties.¹¹

Regardless of the technical challenges of applying growth accounting to Chinese data, the general logic of growth accounting has been fully embraced by discussion regarding China's growth model. Following the logic of growth accounting, China's economic success of the early reform decades has been attributed to the abundant supply of labour in the first decades and massive investment in later periods. The increase of the workforce in the 1980s, for example, resulted amongst other from an earlier baby boom that had been encouraged by population policies under Mao Zedong. In addition, many people who had been sent to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution returned to the cities. By the end of the decade, a first wave of migrant workers entered the industrial labour market in southern China's coastal areas. Migrant workers from rural areas became the main factor of workforce growth in the industrial sector throughout the 1990s and in the early years of the new century. To a certain extent, private entrepreneurship in the beginning of the 1990s also implied an influx of workforce into (more) productive sectors, as people voluntarily left the inefficient state sector to create their own businesses. Later, the

9 R.J. Barro, Notes on Growth Accounting, NBER Working Paper 6654 (1998), pp. 1–30, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w6654> (accessed 10 January 2016); C.R. Hulten, Total Factor Productivity: A Short Biography, NBER Working Paper 7471 (2000), pp. 1–75, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w7471> (accessed 10 January 2016).

10 P. Krugman, The Myth of Asia's Miracle, in: *Foreign Affairs* 73 (1994) 6, pp. 62–78.

11 See F. Cai and W. Zhao, When Demographic Dividend Disappears: Growth Sustainability in China, in: M. Aoki and J. Wu (eds.), *The Chinese Economy: A New Transition*, New York 2012, pp. 75–90.

dismantling of a majority of state-owned enterprises (SOE) had a mixed net impact in terms of workforce growth. While many former SOE employees eventually found new work in more productive and efficient sectors, others dropped out of the labour market. However, as much as the large, and abundant, and increasing Chinese workforce has been interpreted as one of the factors contributing to past growth, the foreseeable decline of China's working population due to demographic change¹² has been one of the triggers for the debate about a new growth model.

Huge capital investment is seen as another characteristic of China's past growth model. During the 1980s, the early 1990s, and again in the years following China's accession to the WTO in 2001, foreign investment contributed considerably to capital input growth. For a long time, China was the most important destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) among the developing countries and in Asia. The growth rates of FDI somewhat declined later in the new century, although capital investment still contributed heavily to China's economic growth due to increased government spending. This was especially true in the course of the global financial crisis, when the Chinese government initiated a "stimulus package" to defend China's economy against the impact of declining global demand. However, the positive effect of additional investment on GDP growth has been on the decline for years. Therefore, this reduced impact of investment as driver for growth is another major argument for the need to identify a new growth model.¹³

As additional labour and capital investment are unlikely to sufficiently boost further economic growth, the new growth model discourse stresses the need for China to embark on a new growth trajectory based on knowledge and innovation. In other words, the contribution of TFP or technological progress to growth must be increased. This resonates with Krugman's stance that only technological progress can support a lasting economic miracle. Against this background, the High-Tech Development Plan (2006–2020) propagated by the former Chinese leadership,¹⁴ which stresses "indigenous innovation," fit as well into the new growth model narrative as did the "new emerging strategic industries," which were identified in 2009–10 as an additional remedy against the impact of the global financial crisis.¹⁵

The importance attributed to the growth factors labour, capital, and technological progress puts the growth model narrative and related policy initiative in a neoclassical tradition of economic thinking. This approach, as mentioned, is not China-specific. However, a growth accounting-based view is rather blind to institutional factors. It does

12 Ibid.

13 World Bank and Development Research Center of the State Council, *China 2030: Building a Modern, Harmonious, and Creative Society*, Washington 2012.

14 State Council of the People's Republic of China, *Guojia Zhongchangji Kexue he Jishu Fazhan Guihua Gangyao (2006–2020 nian)* (Medium- to Long-Term Plan for the Development of Science and Technology [2006–2020]), February 2006, http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2010-10/18/content_1724848.htm (accessed 10 January 2016).

15 State Council of the People's Republic of China, *Guowuyuan Guanyu Jiakuai Peiyu he Fazhan Zhanlǜxing Xinxing Chanye de Jueding* (Decision of the State Council on the Accelerated Support and Development of Strategic Emerging Industries), 18 October 2010, http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2010-10/18/content_1724848.htm (accessed 10 January 2016).

not, for example, address the role of the state in steering the process of workforce growth (or decline), in encouraging private or public investment, or in designing an innovation system that eventually supports technological progress. Therefore, this perspective is compatible with different understandings of the role of the state in the economy. Proponents of a strong role for the government could uphold the “growth model perspective” by arguing that – in a developing country like China – the state is best prepared to steer the shift from labour-intensive to knowledge-intensive production or from labour and capital to knowledge-driven growth. This “growth model perspective” is not necessarily market-oriented.

3. The “System Transition” Discourse

In contrast to the growth model discourse which focuses on the drivers of growth, the recent debate about a new system transition stresses the need for institutional and market-oriented reforms. This reform discourse is based on institutional economics, which on the one hand stresses the importance of market prices as coordinating mechanism of economic activities and on the other hand underlines the importance of rule of law, property rights, private entrepreneurs, accountability, and budget constraints to guarantee the functioning of markets.

The promoters of a system transition interpret China’s past economic success story primarily as a transition from a planned to a market economy. From this perspective, fluctuations in China’s economic growth rates over the past decades can be interpreted as periods of reform progress and gridlock. According to this view, China’s economic success was triggered by market-oriented reforms in the late 1970s which first rehabilitated private economic activity in rural areas. These reforms were later expanded to the industrial sector. Reform initiatives such as price liberalization, the introduction of free markets, and the contract responsibility system as well as the liberalization of foreign and private firm market access triggered economic growth throughout the 1980s. The reform initiative stalled between 1989 and 1991 as a consequence of suppression of the protest movement of 1989. Only in 1992 did the government again push for market reforms, following a respective call by Deng Xiaoping on his famous trip to South China.¹⁶ Financial reforms, ownership reforms (de facto privatization of many SOEs), the introduction of private real estate and car ownership as well as enhanced protection of private property during the 1990s were further – though originally highly contested – steps on the way from a planned to a market economy. The accession of China to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, initiated by the then-Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, was a decisive milestone in this process and geared to further integrate China into the global economy. The accession to the WTO actually served as a means to push for reforms within China. Proponents of system transition could refer to the requirements of

16 W. Zhang, *Ideology and Economic Reform under Deng Xiaoping, 1978–1993*, Oxon 2010.

the WTO to overcome resistance against market-oriented reforms.¹⁷ In sum, the system perspective argues that China's economic success in the past was not a result of government planning and intervention or state-investment strategies. Rather, it was achieved by liberalizing the economy, reshaping it towards a market economy and harvesting the efficiency gains or "reform dividend" resulting from it (see below).

As a consequence, from the perspective of a system transition, the ten year reign of the Hu Jintao/Wen Jiabao leadership has been interpreted as a lost decade.¹⁸ During this period, the influence of the state on the economy, which theoretically had been tamed by ownership reforms in the late 1990s and the principles of the WTO, again increased. This trend, which has popularly been framed as "the state steps in, the private (sector) steps back (*guojin mintui*)",¹⁹ was even further facilitated by the global financial crisis and a huge stimulus package bundled to fight the crisis, because the crisis was used to justify stronger government intervention and the stimulus package helped to expand the influence of state-backed enterprises.²⁰

It is against this background that the transition discourse re-emerged in 2012-13 as described in the introduction. Many economists (including a large number of Chinese economists) expected or at least hoped that the incoming leadership would curb state intervention into market processes and reduce government support for state-related enterprises as was expressed in numerous conversations in China with the author during that time.²¹ By the time of this writing, while many economists who had hoped for another system transition still insist in its necessity, their mood has become much more pessimistic. In the face of weakening economic growth and perceived slow progress in policy implementation, discussions were abound in 2015 as to whether the new leadership would actually be willing and able to change track and implement another round of substantial reforms.²²

Referring to the above, China's economic success story of the past can be interpreted quite differently, depending on the economic theories favoured. The juxtaposition of a

17 D. Fischer, *Calculated Risk? China and the WTO* (in German), Reports of the Federal Institute for Russian, East European and International Studies, Bonn 2000; P.B. Prime, *China Joins the WTO: How, Why and What Now?*, in: *Business Economics* 27 (2002) 2, pp. 26–32.

18 I. Johnson, *Chinas Lost Decade*, in: *The New York Review of Books China Archive*, 27 September 2012, <http://www.chinafile.com/chinas-lost-decade> (accessed 10 January 2016).

19 J. Wu, Xin "Guo jin Min tui" Fengxian yu Gaige Gongjianzhan (The New Risk of "The State Coming in and Pushing the Private Out" and a Firm Strategy of Reforms), in: S. Hu and S. Wang (eds.), *Zhongguo 2013: Guanjian Wenti* (China 2013: What Matters Most), Beijing 2013, pp. 126–132.

20 D. Fischer, *China's Policies for Overcoming the Crisis: Old Reflexes or Strategy for a New Reform Miracle?*, in: *German Development Institute Briefing Paper* (2009) 7, pp.1–4, https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/BP_7.2009.pdf (accessed 12 January 2016).

21 See B. Naughton, *The Political Consequences of Economic Challenges*, in: *China Leadership Monitor* 39 (2012), <http://www.hoover.org/research/political-consequences-economic-challenges> (accessed 10 January 2016).

22 D. Fischer, *Like an Athlete on Dope – China's Economy in 2015 and its Detoxification*, in: *German Chamber Ticker* (2015) 5, pp.18–19, http://china.ahk.de/fileadmin/ahk_china/GC_Ticker_Landingpage/GC_Ticker_PDF_Versionen/GCT-05_0918_FINAL__2_.pdf (accessed 10 January 2016); B. Naughton, *Reform Agenda in Turmoil: Can Policy-Makers Regain the Initiative?*, in: *China Leadership Monitor* 48 (2015), <http://www.hoover.org/research/reform-agenda-turmoil-can-policy-makers-regain-initiative> (accessed 10 January 2016).

“growth model perspective” and a “system transition perspective” helps to identify different possible explanations for success and different interpretations of looming challenges. Of course, it may be overly simplistic to look into just two alternative narratives of China’s success story. However, as will be shown below, for the purpose of showing that different readings of the economic success story have influenced the respective perspectives on sustainability challenges as well as ideas for addressing these, the juxtaposition of the “growth model” and the “system transition perspective” is quite helpful.

4. A Tale of Two Discourses: Embracing Sustainability Challenges

China’s economic development process of the last four decades coincided with a growing global understanding of sustainability challenges. The origin of the global sustainability discourse dates back to the 1972 Club of Rome flagship publication, “Limits to Growth,” which stressed the rapid exploitation of the earth’s resources as a result of a quickly growing global population.²³ At that time, China had just begun to end its long period of global isolation and was still very much struggling with the ramifications of the Cultural Revolution. Only a few years later, in 1978, a Chinese scientist who had studied the scientific approach of the report, emulated it to model China’s population development, thereby preparing China’s one-child policy.²⁴ Political priority in China at that time was set to balance economic and social development as a fast growing population threatened to inhibit substantial improvements in economic well-being.

In the same vein, when the famous Brundtland report, “Our Common Future,” provided an authoritative definition of sustainability in 1987²⁵ and stressed the triple character of sustainability referring to economic, social, and environmental sustainability, China’s focus remained on balancing social and economic targets. This implied a strong emphasis on economic growth as the decades before Deng Xiaoping’s policies of reform and opening up had been rather weak in this regard. High economic growth was henceforth stressed as a necessary means to improve people’s livelihood and fight poverty; growth rates became a major indicator for economic and administrative performance. Environmental sustainability on the other hand, did not play a major role. Concerns regarding environmental protection were rather neglected in favour of economic growth.

The next big push for global discourse on sustainability came with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the so-called “Earth Summit”) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and was quickly embraced by the Chinese government. The Earth

23 D.H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome’s Project on the Predicament of Mankind*, New York 1972.

24 S. Greenhalgh, *Missile Science, Population Science: The Origins of China’s One-Child Policy*, in: *The China Quarterly* 182 (2005), pp. 253–276.

25 World Commission on Environment and Development, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, 1987, <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf> (accessed 12 January 2016).

Summit subscribed to the triple concept of sustainability and decided for a global, multi-level agenda for action, the so-called "Agenda 21." In China, Deng Xiaoping had just re-enforced²⁶ China's reform policies of reform and opening up with his famous trip to Southern China and the government had soon afterwards officially identified the "socialist market economy" as China's economic target system. In this context, the Chinese government welcomed the global sustainability initiative and prepared a national Agenda 21 throughout 1992 and 1993. The respective "National Agenda 21 – White Paper on China's Population, Environment and Development in the 21st Century" was finally approved by the State Council in March 1994 and later that year, the State Council called on government institutions at all levels, to "consider China's Agenda 21 as an overarching strategic guideline for the formulation of economic and social development plans, and particularly to integrate it into the Five Year Plan (1996-2000), plans for the year 2010, and into day-to-day management."²⁷ In practice, the emphasis was still primarily on balancing economic and social needs, but the agenda included the target to "bring pollution of the environment under control so as to improve the ecosystem and rationally use natural resources."²⁸ Economic policies, influenced by the global agenda, started to target at "efficient growth" in contrast to "extensive growth," thereby reacting to the fact that exaggerated priority for growth in the 1980s had resulted in rather inefficient production structures and wasteful use of resources.

When the global climate negotiation resulted in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto Protocol) of 1997, China did soon sign it in 1998, but it did so as a non-Annex I country, i.e. as a developing country without specific obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.²⁹ The Chinese government saw the responsibility for climate change mitigation to be with the developed nations due to their historic contributions to greenhouse gas emissions.³⁰ In any case, this major event in the global environmental discourse had little impact on national discourse.³¹ This was also related to fact that the Chinese government at that time was far more preoccupied with defending China's economy against the Asian financial crisis, coping with decreases in foreign direct investment and addressing inefficiency and debt problems of the state-owned enterprises than with climate change mitigation. In addition, the closure or privatization of many SOEs as part of institutional reforms to strengthen the economy led

26 After the suppression of the urban protest movement of 1989, which had mainly been triggered by contention regarding economic and social issues, the reforms had been stalled for about two years. It took the personal initiative of Deng Xiaoping, who officially was long retired, to revive the reform process in early 1992.

27 UN, Institutional Aspects of Sustainable Development in China, 1998, <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/china/inst.htm> (accessed 10 January 2016).

28 Ibid.

29 China Daily, China Ratifies Kyoto Protocol, 4 September 2002, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/China/41661.htm> (accessed 11 January 2016).

30 Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change, 2008, pp.1–53, <http://www.ccchina.gov.cn/WebSite/CCChina/UpFile/File419.pdf> (accessed 10 January 2016).

31 A. Hu and Q. Guan, *Zhongguo Yingdui Quanjie Qihou Bianhua* (China Mitigates Climate Change), Beijing 2009.

to an unprecedented level of urban unemployment. In this situation, further economic reforms and the preparation of China's accession to the WTO were arguably of much higher importance than environmental sustainability.

The next major event on the global sustainability agenda, the World Summit on Sustainability in Johannesburg, also called the Earth Summit 2002, was staged just shortly before a leadership shift to Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao in China. It was under their reign that China finally embraced the triple concept of sustainability more actively. Specifically, the concept reverberated in the "scientific outlook on development" propagated by Hu Jintao since 2004, as well as in the later endorsed concept of a "harmonious society." ("A 'harmonious society' advocates an overall, co-ordinated and 'sustainable development' concept, making the interests of different sectors balanced. So long as we follow this 'scientific development' concept, we can get rid of social unrest and the destruction of natural resources that generally occurs in developing nations.")³² As can be inferred from the above quote, Hu originally put emphasis on balancing economic, social and environmental targets.

However, a new turn to the growth model agenda was already taking shape: a flagship publication on China's sustainable development published in 2007 demanded a new theoretical basis for China's sustainability strategy:

it is all too obvious, that China's fast development since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Party Congress [in 1978, D.F.], mainly profited from a reform dividend. [...] Following the increase of China's national power, China is well prepared to derive its future growth impetus from a development dividend (translation and emphasis by the author).³³

Although the author of that publication hardly foresaw the looming global financial crisis, he nevertheless prepared the ground for the Hu/Wen leadership strategy to defend against this crisis. This shift first materialized in the enormous stimulus package of 2009, but soon was matched with industrial policies for traditional pillar industries as well as seven "newly emerging industries." These newly emerging industries (energy saving and environmental protection, new-generation information technology, biotechnology, high-end equipment manufacturing, new energy, new materials and new-energy vehicles)³⁴ mirrored the acceptance of the global environmental sustainability challenges and the need for technological progress as driver of growth. By fostering new high-tech and green industries, the Chinese government hoped to profit from the development divi-

32 China Daily, Harmonious Society, 29 September 2007; see special website for the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party <http://en.people.cn/90002/92169/92211/6274603.html> (accessed 10 January 2016); emphasis added.

33 W. Niu, Zhongguo Kechixu Fazhan Zonglun: Zhongguo Kechixu Fazhan Zonggang, di yi Juan (General Discussion of China's Sustainable Development: The Overview of China's Sustainable Development, Volume 1), Beijing 2007.

34 The US-China Business Council, China's Strategic Emerging Industries: Policy, Implementation, Challenges, and Recommendations, 2013, pp. 1–24, <https://www.uschina.org/sites/default/files/sei-report.pdf> (accessed 10 January 2016).

dend, to prevent environmental costs from lessening growth, and to secure technological progress as basis for future growth.³⁵ Following the growth accounting logic, environmental pollution and its repercussions were addressed as a factor lessening the growth potential, whereas green industry development was welcomed as a means of reducing environmental costs and improving on TFP at the same time.

The Chinese leadership was not alone with this kind of reasoning. In the course of the financial crisis, national governments turned to the development of green technology and industries and "green growth" as a potential way out of the crisis. Against the background of the Fourth Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the Serious Threat of Climate Change and the Copenhagen Climate Summit of 2009, a crisis strategy based on "business as usual" scenarios of growth was hardly convincing. Instead, many countries saw the chance to establish competitiveness in climate-related technologies. As a result, the New York Times wrote in early 2010, "[the] Race Is on to Develop Green, Clean Technology."³⁶ Later, in 2011, Barack Obama famously coined this idea as "the sputnik moment of our time" and used it for explaining huge additional investment in biomedical research, information technology, and clean energy technology as a means to defend against potential competition from and a power shift to China.³⁷ The enthusiasm for green industries and "green growth" continued at least until the Rio+20 Summit of 2012, for which many global organisations prepared publications on the concept of "green growth,"³⁸ which stressed the advantages of low carbon and sustainability-oriented production and consumption. "Green growth" combined the idea of growth with environmental sustainability and opened a perspective for national growth strategies based on competitiveness in the respective industries.

After the Rio+20 Summit, the global discourse soon returned to a more comprehensive sustainability concept as mirrored in the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"³⁹ not least because of widespread criticism that "green growth" ignored the social pillar of sustainability.⁴⁰ In addition, doubts remained as to whether "green growth" would actually support environmental sustainability. Other factors, such as advances in unconventional methods of accessing fossil fuels and falling oil prices also lessened the enthusiasm

35 A. Hu, *China: Innovative Green Development*, Heidelberg 2014.

36 K. Bennhold, *Race Is on to Develop Green, Clean Technology*, in: New York Times, 29 January 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/30/business/global/30davos.html?_r=1 (accessed 11 January 2016).

37 B. Obama, *Remarks by the President in State of Union Address*, The White House, 25 January 2011, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/25/remarks-president-state-union-address> (accessed 10 January 2016).

38 See OECD, *Towards Green Growth*, OECD Publishing, 2011, pp. 1–142, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264111318-en> (accessed 10 January 2016); UN, *World Economic and Social Survey 2011: The Great Green Technological Transformation*, 2011, pp. 1–211, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_current/2011wess.pdf (accessed 12 January 2016); UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication – A Synthesis for Policy Makers*, 2001, pp. 1–42, http://www.unep.org/greenconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/GER_synthesis_en.pdf (accessed 12 January 2016).

39 General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2015, 2015, pp. 1–35, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E (accessed 10 January 2016).

40 Ho and Wang, *Green Growth*.

for “green growth” strategies. While these issues also played a certain role in China, the reduced enthusiasm for the “green growth” agenda rather resulted from the change of leadership, and criticism targeted the growth logic rather than that of green industries. By 2012, the fallout of the huge stimulus package of 2009 became increasingly visible in the form of inefficiencies, excessive production capacities, debt problems, and continuously declining growth rates.⁴¹ Therefore, the incoming leadership of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang explicitly propagated to again reap the “reform dividend” as the best means to actually produce a “development dividend.”⁴² This was not only a clear rebuke of the credo followed during the latter half of the Hu/Wen reign, but also an attack on the growth model logic.⁴³ However, as the system transition discourse had been much less explicit on previous environmental issues, many of the books and suggestions published on necessary institutional reforms in 2012 and 2013 were rather silent with regard to strategies and solutions concerning environmental sustainability.

5. Outlook: Towards Ecological Civilisation?

This paper has linked competing interpretations of China’s past economic success as represented by the “growth model” and the “system transition perspective” with the emergence of Chinese policies regarding sustainability and “green growth.” It has been shown that the “growth model perspective” tends to stress the different input factors that drive growth, and therefore sees environmental pollution mainly as a factor that lessens growth. The “system transition perspective” on the other hand criticizes the “growth model perspective” as ignoring the institutional fabric of the economic system. Merely stressing growth, from this perspective, has led to a state-centred development, debts and inefficiencies, which resulted in low-quality growth.

The paper has further shown the influence of the evolving global sustainability discourse on China. Over time, this influence has contributed to an increased general acknowledgement of social and environmental sustainability in China as the country has become an important player in global sustainability discourses not least, because of China’s prominent success in limiting population growth and reducing poverty on the one hand, and the more than obvious environmental degradation on the other. Even though this influence has increased over time, the general reception to these concepts has varied. Simply put, in those periods of fast system transition progress, the propensity to consider environmental issues was lower (or rather left to the market), whereas in the years prior to the latest leadership change, which were dominated by the growth logic, there was a propensity to turn sustainability issues into a (green) growth contributing factor. This

41 See Y. Deng et al., Monetary and Fiscal Stimuli, Ownership Structure and China’s Housing Market, NBER Working Paper 16871 (2011), pp. 1–62, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16871> (accessed 10 January 2016); World Bank and Development Research Center of the State Council, China 2030.

42 Central Committee, Decision of the Central Committee.

43 Fan and Zhang, “Xin Changtai”.

distinction became all the more obvious when the incoming leadership and its intellectual supporters rather openly criticized the growth model logic pursued by the former leadership.

However, by supporting a much stronger role for markets in the economy, the current leadership faces the challenge to align the market logic with environmental and social sustainability.⁴⁴ China's new leadership has tried to stress quality instead of quantity of growth and development.⁴⁵ It is, however, not very explicit about the means to achieve this goal. In regards to environmental sustainability, the current leadership – according to the decision document of 2013 – wants to rely on market mechanisms.⁴⁶ This fits well into the system transition logic, as it stresses the importance of institutions (both formal and informal), although the document is silent on the issue of market failure. In addition, the second transition to sound market institutions currently faces a lot of difficulties, as can be inferred from the political and economic developments and conflict that plagued China in 2015.⁴⁷ Therefore, it is very possible that the leadership will eventually give in to the growth model logic again. Not because this is necessarily better for the environment and the society, but because it is better prepared to support the political status quo. It is this perspective that arguably has triggered the pessimism among those economists that hoped for substantial reforms in 2012 and 2013.

44 D. Fischer, *The Importance of Being Earnest: The Green Economy and Sustainable Development in China*, Asia Policy Brief, Bertelsmann Stiftung (2012) 2, pp. 1–8, http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/user_upload/Asia_Policy_Brief_2012_02.pdf (accessed 10 January 2016).

45 A. Pandey, *Xi Jinping Embraces China's New Normal: A 6.5 Per Cent Annual Growth Target Through 2020*, in: *International Business Times*, 3 November 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.com/xi-jinping-embraces-chinas-new-normal-65-annual-growth-target-through-2020-2166586> (accessed 11 January 2016).

46 Central Committee, *Decision of the Central Committee*.

47 Fischer, *Like an Athlete on Dope*.

Information Technology and the Future of the Chinese State: How the Internet Shapes State-Society Relations in the Digital Age

Christian Göbel

ABSTRACT

Bis Ende 2015 werden 50 Prozent aller Chinesen über einen Internetzugang verfügen. Die Möglichkeiten für eine größer werdende Anzahl von Chinesen, online zu kommunizieren und zu konsumieren, hat eine Reihe von Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern dazu inspiriert, sich mit Themen wie Zensur, Überwachung und Nutzung von sozialen Medien zu beschäftigen. Ein Großteil dieser Forschung baut auf der Prämisse einer antagonistischen Beziehung zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft auf. Allerdings weiß man bisher nur wenig darüber, welche Auswirkungen die staatlich geförderten und internetbasierten Kommunikationskanäle zwischen Regierungsbeamten und chinesischen Bürgern auf die Transformation der autoritären Einparteiherrschaft in China haben. Der vorliegende Artikel beschäftigt sich mit dieser Frage, indem er Chinas E-Government-Strategie einerseits zu globalen Entwicklungen in Beziehung setzt, andererseits im Kontext der sich verändernden Anreize untersucht, die politische Reformen in China in den vergangenen zwei Jahrzehnten ermöglicht haben. Es wird gezeigt, dass die Bemühungen der chinesischen Einparteieregierung, die Interaktion zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft zu digitalisieren, großes Potenzial dafür birgt, das Wesen des chinesischen Staates zu verändern. Allerdings stellen diese Veränderungen keinen Paradigmenwechsel dahingehend dar, wie China regiert wird. Der wichtigste Aspekt dieser Veränderungen ist, dass sie die Möglichkeit bieten, das oftmals als „Diktatoren-Dilemma“ bezeichnete Problem zu lösen: Menschen in nicht-demokratischen Regierungssystemen haben Angst davor, den Herrschenden gegenüber ihre Meinung auszudrücken, und entziehen so dem Staat eine wichtige Informationsgrundlage. Es wird gezeigt, dass die Entwicklung hochintegrierter E-Government-Plattformen, wie sie sich die Technokraten der Kommunistischen Partei Chinas vorstellen, bestehender institutioneller Logik folgt und dringende Probleme zu lösen vermag. So wird die Chance darauf erhöht, dass diese Plattformen nachhaltig eingeführt werden.

1. Introduction

Few will doubt that the Internet is changing the future of authoritarian regimes, and China in particular. The question of how this change is taking place, and with what effects, is much more controversial. Are social media rendering dictatorships unstable because they induce and facilitate revolutions such as in the Arab Spring? Or are they instead contributing to the stability of authoritarian regimes because they facilitate the emergence of an Orwellian surveillance and propaganda state? Although being diametrically opposed with respect to the assumed effect of the Internet on the stability of authoritarian regimes, these theories share a common premise – that of an antagonistic relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. More specifically, both theories conceptualize the Internet as a weapon in the struggle between political elites and opponents for the future of the regime.

While acknowledging that the Internet can indeed have a decisive impact on the outcome of such a struggle, the present contribution sets out from a different premise: that Internet-based governance can decisively influence whether the relationship between rulers and ruled becomes antagonistic in the first place. The Chinese case illustrates this well. Although ranked as one of the most unfree societies in the world, the Chinese government has speedily embraced the Internet to upgrade its governance apparatus. In seeming contrast to its low democracy score, the United Nations rate China's e-participation offers higher than those of the average European country.

What explains this apparent paradox? This article argues that the confluence of two challenges has benefited the integration of the Internet into China's governance apparatus. The first challenge was that avoiding the Internet would have come at prohibitive economic cost. If economic development was to continue, there was no way past the Internet. The second challenge was China's brittle governance apparatus at the time, which hindered economic development and was deemed unfit to meet the demands of an increasingly assertive population.

Instead of avoiding the Internet, an option chosen by only very few regimes, or yielding to the economic pressure while neglecting to simultaneously use the Internet to "upgrade" the regime, the ruling elites employed the Internet to facilitate both economic growth and better governance. In line with previous reform experience, the improvement of governance in the centre was accompanied by incentives to improve governance in China's cities and counties by means of local policy innovations, resulting in a patchwork of e-government initiatives by local governments.

2. Autocracy, Modernization and the Internet

The Arab spring has rekindled scholarly interest in the forces of political revolutions.¹ Given the prominent role of social media in the Arab Spring, the debate quickly centred on

1 There had been much interest in revolutions in the 1980s and 1990s, some major contributions being J. A. Gold-

the role of the Internet in the survival or demise of authoritarian regimes.² The debate is instructive for the parameters of regime survival after a regime crisis has already formed. However, there is a tendency to substitute this debate for the much larger question of how the Internet affects the operation, legitimacy and survival of authoritarian regimes in general. This would be sensible if crisis was an inherent characteristic of authoritarian regimes, but there is little evidence to suggest that this is indeed the case. It follows that current autocracy research risks committing a major fallacy: to restrict the analysis of the Internet's impact on state-society relations in authoritarian regimes to times of crisis while claiming that the results are applicable to all authoritarian regimes, at all times. More importantly, the debate misses that the Internet is more than just a weapon in the fight between authoritarian rulers and the opposition. As the example of China will show, the Internet has the potential to change the operation of authoritarian regimes in fundamental ways.

The present section dissects the theoretical fallacy that much research on the Internet in authoritarian regimes succumbs to: it implicitly or explicitly subscribes to the main premises of those democratization theories that are informed by modernization theory, which is compelling and supported by much evidence, but which was formulated at a

stone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, Berkeley 1991; Goldstone, *Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation*, in: *World Politics* 32 (1980) 3, pp. 425–453; T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge 1979; C. Tilly, *European Revolutions: 1492–1992 (Making of Europe)*, Hoboken 1996. For an overview of the extensive literature, see Goldstone, *Revolutions: A Very Short Introduction*, New York 2014.

- 2 See for example M. Alexander, *The Internet and Democratization: The Development of Russian Internet Policy*, in: *population* 8 (2004) 6, p. 4; I. Allagui and J. Kuebler, *The Arab Spring and the Role of ICTs*– Editorial Introduction, in: *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): p. 8; L. Anderson, *Demystifying the Arab Spring*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 90 (2011) 3, pp. 2–7; D. Calingaert, *Authoritarianism vs. the Internet*, in: *Policy Review* 160 (2010) 63, pp. 63–75; M. Chowdhury, *The Role of the Internet in Burma's Saffron Revolution*, Berkman Center Research Publication (2008) 2008–8; H. Dabashi, *The Arab Spring: Delayed Defiance and the End of Postcolonialism*, London 2012; N. Eltantawy and J. B. Wiest, *The Arab Spring: Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering Recourse Mobilization Theory*, in: *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): p. 18; P. Ferdinand, *The Internet, Democracy and Democratization*, in: *Democratization* 7 (2000) 1: pp. 1–17; P. N. Howard et al., *Opening Closed Regimes: What was the Role of Social Media during the Arab Spring?* (2011), http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2595096 (accessed 12 October 2015); C. Huang, *Facebook and Twitter Key to Arab Spring Uprisings: Report*, in: *The National* (2011) 6; G. Joffé, *The Arab Spring in North Africa: Origins and Prospects*, in: *The Journal of North African Studies* 16 (2011) 4, pp. 507–532; S. Kalathil and T. C. Boas, *The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba and the Counterrevolution*, in: *First Monday* 6 (2001) 8, <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/876/785> (accessed 12 October 2015); Kalathil and Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*, Washington 2010; H. H. Khondker, *Role of the New Media in the Arab Spring*, in: *Globalizations* 8 (2011) 5, pp. 675–679; G. Lotan et al., *The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions*, in: *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011), p. 31; S. Madon, *The Internet and Socio-Economic Development: Exploring the Interaction*, in: *Information Technology and People* 13 (2000) 2, pp. 85–101; D. Ott and M. Rosser, *The Electronic Republic? The Role of the Internet in Promoting Democracy in Africa*, in: *Democratization* 7 (2000) 1, pp. 137–156; X. Qiang, *The Battle for the Chinese Internet*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 22 (2011) 2, pp. 47–61; B. Rahimi, *Cyberdissent: The Internet in Revolutionary Iran*, in: *Middle East* 7 (2003) 3, p. 102; G. Rodan, *The Internet and Political Control in Singapore*, in: *Political Science Quarterly* 113 (1998) 1, pp. 63–89; E. Stepanova, *The Role of Information Communication Technologies in the "Arab Spring"*, in: *Ponars Eurasia* 15 (2011), pp. 1–6; G. Wolfsfeld, E. Segev and T. Sheaffer, *Social Media and the Arab Spring: Politics Comes First*, in: *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18 (2013) 2, pp. 115–137.

time when the Internet did not yet exist. The modernization-democratization theory holds that state-society relations in authoritarian regimes will inevitably become antagonistic, because such regimes are unfit to aggregate and meet the demands of an increasingly heterogeneous and wealthy population.³

Although much energy has been devoted to modelling and analysing how the Internet affects the resulting struggle for freedom, so far only little energy has been devoted to examining the impact of the Internet on the very premises on which this theory rests. The Chinese case illustrates that the Internet vastly increases the capacity of authoritarian regimes to aggregate and address popular demands. Furthermore, situating China in the global context reveals that while China might be a pioneer in how the government employs the Internet to enhance regime performance, its methods are easily replicable in other (authoritarian) states.

There are two main theoretical positions on the Internet's impact on the persistence of authoritarian regimes. On one end of the spectrum are accounts which claim that social media function as "liberation technology," a term coined by democratization scholar Larry Diamond.⁴ The pessimist position of Evgeny Morozov is representative for the other end of the spectrum. In his contribution, Morozov highlights how authoritarian rulers employ information and communication technology (ICT) to monitor and manipulate their subjects.⁵ The differences of the two positions notwithstanding, they share a common premise: both set out from the assumption of an antagonistic relationship between the population and authoritarian rulers. Optimists provide credible accounts of individuals using social media to oppose authoritarian regimes,⁶ and pessimists show how authoritarian rulers use the Internet to control a population that would oppose the regime if not monitored or indoctrinated.⁷

In doing so, both positions explicitly or implicitly subscribe to the tenets of modernization theory by assuming that in an authoritarian regime, the relationship between rulers and ruled is determined to become antagonistic. Modernization theory, arguably the most influential theory to explain democratization, has so far been remarkably accurate in its predictions.⁸ It holds that democratization becomes more likely the richer and

3 S. M. Lipset, *Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy*, in: *American Political Science Review* 53 (1959) 1, pp. 69–105 is the classic on the subject.

4 L. Diamond, *Liberation Technology*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 21 (2010) 3, pp. 69–83.

5 E. Morozov, *The Net Delusion: How Not to Liberate the World*, London 2011.

6 See for example M. Castells, *Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society*, in: *International Journal of Communication* 1 (2007) 1, pp. 238–266; Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, Hoboken 2013; C. Shirky, *The Political Power of Social Media*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 90 (2011) 1, pp. 28–41; D. Wheeler, *Empowering Publics: Information Technology and Democratization in the Arab World—Lessons from Internet Café's and Beyond*, OII Research Report (2006) 11, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1308527 (accessed 12 October 2015).

7 For a book-length monograph, see S. Kalathil and T. C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*, Washington 2010. See E. G. Rød and N. B. Weidmann, *Empowering Activists or Autocrats? The Internet in Authoritarian Regimes*, in: *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (2015) 3, pp. 338–351 for a recent contribution that empirically tests both positions and finds more evidence for the pessimists' position.

8 R. Inglehart and C. Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*, Cambridge 2005; A. Przeworski and F. Limongi, *Modernization: Theories and Facts*, in: *World Politics* 49

more diversified an autocracy is. It reasons that once peoples' basic needs such as food, clothing, a home and personal safety are met, they begin to embrace non-material values. Not having to struggle for survival, they start to value their personal freedom, the quality of their living environment, and stress the importance of justice and equality. As authoritarian rule is not compatible with these norms, modernization theory predicts that an increasing number of people will strive for democracy.⁹ Naturally, this does not apply to all people in a society – as a general rule, self-fulfilment values are more prominent in people with a high level of education.¹⁰

When modernization theory became popular in the social sciences in the mid-twentieth century, the Internet did not yet exist. Still, modelling its role in the modernization process is fairly straightforward if it is not regarded as a democratizing force in its own right, but an accelerator of the process just outlined. First of all, the Internet makes it easier for people to learn about the conduct of their government and to compare it to other governments.¹¹ Second, grievances and calls for action can quickly and efficiently be communicated to a large audience.¹² Finally, social media can be employed to organize resistance without having to rely on risky personal meetings.¹³

Just as most existing research on the Internet's democratizing effect follows modernization theory, so do the claims that the Internet can stabilize authoritarian rule. Most importantly, they subscribe to the same premise that the relationship between rulers and ruled in an autocracy is bound to turn antagonistic. The claim that the Internet benefits authoritarian rulers is not derived by negating that premise, but by arguing that revolution can be deferred or prevented by manipulating the preference structure of the populace. These theories zoom in on two aspects: targeted censorship as a way to learn about people's grievances while preventing them from engaging in collective action, and changing people's preferences by means of political propaganda.¹⁴ Summarizing the above, most existing theories on the Internet's impact on authoritarian rule comprehend the Internet as a weapon yielded by two sides in a fight for the future of a country, and are concerned with which side is more likely to prevail.¹⁵

In order to better understand how the Internet might prevent such antagonism from forming the processes that are believed to inevitably lead rulers and ruled towards conflict

(1997) 2, pp. 155–183. For a more critical analysis that nevertheless concedes economic growth to be a “necessary, but not sufficient” component of democratization, see Z. F. Arat, *Democracy and Economic Development: Modernization Theory Revisited*, in: *Comparative Politics* 21 (1988) 1, pp. 21–36; D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, New York 2012.

9 Lipset, *Some Social Requisites of Democracy*, pp. 69–105.

10 Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*.

11 D. Wheeler, *Empowering Publics*.

12 H. Buchstein, *Bytes that Bite: The Internet and Deliberative Democracy*, in: *Constellations* 4 (1997) 2, pp. 248–263.

13 Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope*; M. Chowdhury, *The Role of the Internet in Burma's Saffron Revolution*, in: *Berkman Center Research Publication* (2008) 2008–8; Rahimi, *Cyberdissent*, p. 102.

14 Rød and Weidmann, *Empowering Activists or Autocrats*, pp. 338–351.

15 Xiao Qiang even uses the word “battle” in this context (X. Qiang, *The Battle for the Chinese Internet*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 22 (2011) 2, pp. 47–61).

need to be pinpointed. The democratization literature has identified two main dilemmas authoritarian rulers find very difficult to resolve. The “performance dilemma,” formulated by Samuel Huntington in his seminal treatise on the forces behind the “Third Wave” of democratization that began with the “Carnation Revolution” in Portugal in 1974 and spread across Southern Europe, Latin America and Asia.¹⁶ Huntington, who throughout his scholarly career argued that a political system needs to adapt to the level of development and social heterogeneity of a country,¹⁷ convincingly shows in his book that antagonism between rulers and ruled is not an inherent characteristic of authoritarian regimes, but is forming gradually. In a nutshell, he holds that people are not averse to authoritarian rule as long as they see their personal lives improve. However, he also shows that once development stops, or reaches a certain level, people will begin to resent the truncation of civil and political liberties.¹⁸

Another dilemma was posited by Ronald Wintrobe,¹⁹ who focuses his attention not on the effect of modernization and development of popular attitudes, but builds on the fact that authoritarian regimes, as Juan Linz has famously stated, tend to prevent challenges to their rule by demobilizing society and breeding political apathy. According to Wintrobe, however, authoritarian rulers need to know how much support they have in the population, and whom they need to co-opt by distributing economic rents.²⁰ However, people are hesitant to reveal their grievances for fear of repression. Being uninformed of people’s grievances and demands, Wintrobe argues, leads authoritarian rulers to assume the worst – that people are scheming to overthrow or assassinate them. As a consequence, they increase repression, which eventually makes these concerns a self-fulfilling prophecy.²¹

The purpose of this article is not to deny the necessity of studying the Internet’s impact on the outcomes of struggles between rulers and regime opponents, but to argue that more scholarly attention must be devoted to the Internet’s impact on reducing the likelihood of such struggles to appear in the first place. It sets out from the notion that the antagonism between rulers and ruled does not exist by default, and claims that the Internet can aid rulers in preventing such antagonism from forming. The case of China, where the leadership was demonstrably aware of the challenges posed by speedy modernization to one-party rule and reacted accordingly, illustrates that the Internet can serve to enhance regime performance and public participation without, however, causing regime-threatening antagonism to increase.

Before examining the factors responsible for these developments, the next section will illustrate how an increasing number of localities in China use the Internet to enhance regime performance and co-opt potential opponents.

16 S. P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman 1993.

17 Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven 2006.

18 Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

19 R. Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*, Cambridge 1998.

20 See also B. B. De Mesquita and A. Smith, *The Logic of Political Survival*, Cambridge 2005.

21 Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*.

3. Online Participation in an Unfree Country

China is a suitable case to illustrate how the Internet has been employed to overcome the dilemmas discussed above. A brief comparison of two indicators supports this claim: according to all available democracy measures, China is one of the most unfree countries in the world.²² In contrast, China's score in the United Nation's E-Participation Index (0.6471) is higher than the European average (0.5454). The E-Participation Index measures the opportunity to participate online in three dimensions: access to public information, signalling policy preferences, and designing public policies. China is strong in the first two dimensions.²³

3.1. E-Services and E-Monitoring

Since the early 2000s, China's annual budget for e-government has risen 40 percent per year. In 2011 alone, the government invested roughly RMB 951 trillion (EUR 114 trillion) in the computerization of government.²⁴ As a result of these investments, Chinese governments at all levels have enhanced their online visibility: along with the rapid increase in the Internet access rate from 8.5 percent of the population in 2005 to likely more than 50 percent at the end of 2015²⁵ came an equally rapid increase in webpages registered under the Chinese government's "gov.cn" domain. Between 2005 and mid-2012, the number of government webpages rose more than five-fold from 11,052 to 55,207, and the number of official microblogs exploded from less than 1,000 in January 2011 to 258,737 in December 2013. Most are operated by local government departments at the county level and below, and nearly half belong to public security departments and officials.²⁶

Besides establishing an online presence for party and government commissions and ministries at all administrative levels and providing information such as laws, regulations, policies, fiscal data, administrative structures, local industry, development plans, and the biographical data of leading officials, local governments experiment with web-based innovations in providing public services and "managing society."²⁷ On the local level,

22 Freedom House, *Democratic Breakthroughs in the Balance, Freedom in the World 2013*; Polity IV Project, *Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2012*, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm> (accessed 12 October 2015).

23 United Nations, *United Nations E-Government Survey 2014* 2 (2014).

24 H. Hongmei, *Zhongguo Dianzi Zhengwu Shi Nian Huigu Yu Zhanwang* (China's E-Government in the Last 10 Years: Review and Outlook), *Conference Proceedings* (2012), pp. 1–15.

25 China Internet Network Information Center, *Zhongguo Hulanwanglu Fazhan Zhuangkuang Tongji Baogao* (Statistical Report on China's Internet Development) (1998–2003).

26 People's Daily Online Public Opinion Survey Office, *2012 Nian Xinlang Zhengwu Weibo Baogao* (2012 Report on Sina Government Microblogs) (2012); E-Government Research Center, *2013 Nian Zhongguo Zhengwu Weiboke Pinggu Baogao* (Evaluation Report on Government Microblogs in China 2013) (2014).

27 State Council, *Zhonggong Bangongting, Guowuyuan Guanyu Yinfa "2006–2020 Nian Xinxihua Fazhan Celüe" De Tongzhi* (Notification by the General Office of the Chinese Communist Party and the General Office of the State Council Regarding the Distribution of the "Development Strategy for China's Informatization Between 2006 and 2020") (2006).

governments use the Internet in three main forms to improve governance: e-services, e-monitoring, and e-participation.

E-services display certain overlaps with the digitalization of bureaucratic processes discussed above, the main difference being that the latter refers to the digitalization of processes within the government, whereas e-services entail service-related communication between government agencies and citizens. E-services are mainly found in localities that have the financial resources necessary to set up electronic gateways through which citizens can conduct transactions with government agencies.²⁸ Examples include paying taxes, applying for a license, and submitting a tender for a government contract. These solutions are costly because they need to be integrated with other databases and require protection against data theft. They are employed mainly in places where three conditions are met: governments must be able to afford setting up e-services, there must be enough potential users to warrant the investment, and there must be an actual demand. This mainly applies to wealthy cities where government revenue is high, a sizable part of the population has Internet access, and people are busy enough that the time saved in not having to deal with the government in person is appreciated. The main target group for e-services is not ordinary citizens, but corporate users, and e-services are seen as benefiting economic growth.²⁹ With tax matters, business licences, and other interactions with the government conducted virtually, personal contacts between entrepreneurs and governments can be reduced to a necessary minimum. In addition, electronic transactions make corruption harder.

As for e-monitoring, the Bureau of Supervision and other internal accountability organizations now operate platforms that enable them to monitor the transactions between service providers and citizens in real time.³⁰ The software recognizes when a new transaction is being conducted and measures the time needed to complete it. Usually, transactions have to be completed within a pre-specified number of days. In practice, this works as follows: each transaction is marked with a traffic light colour. When it begins, green, yellow when the deadline is near, and red after it has passed. Should a deadline pass before the transaction is completed, the disciplinary authorities will contact the service providers to enquire why the transaction has not yet been completed. Further delays can result in a report to government leaders and eventually to the dismissal of the head of the service unit.³¹ Very often, e-monitoring complements e-services. Together, they are designed to render government services more efficient, with the ultimate aim of cutting costs and at the same time enhancing customer satisfaction.³²

28 C. Göbel and X. Chen, *Accountable Autocrats? E-Government, Empowerment and Control in China*, University of Vienna Working Paper (2014) 12.

29 Ibid.

30 J. Schlaeger, *E-Monitoring in the Public Administration in China: An Exploratory Study*, http://www.researchgate.net/publication/256061504_E-Monitoring_in_the_Public_Administration_in_China_An_Exploratory_Study (accessed 12 October 2015).

31 Göbel and Chen, *Accountable Autocrats*.

32 J. Wu and Z. Li (eds.), *Dianzi Zhengwu Yu Fuwuxing Zhengfu Jianshe* (E-Government and the Establishment of a Service-Oriented Government), Beijing 2011.

3.2. E-Participation

The third form by which Chinese authorities employ the Internet to enhance performance and increase satisfaction is e-participation. China's relatively high score in the E-Participation Index is justified by the fact that citizens can now file online complaints against politicians and service providers in many localities. Often, several complaint platforms coexist. First, the Bureaus of Letters and Visits, China's traditional agency for filing complaints against government misconduct, are establishing an online presence everywhere in China.³³ Second, disciplinary organizations like the local branches of the Disciplinary Commission, the Bureau of Supervision and the Mayor's Office are also setting up online complaint portals.³⁴ In order to ensure citizens that their complaints are being acted on, many of these agencies display both the anonymized complaint and the government's reply online. Such platforms are not isolated phenomena: nearly two thirds of all Chinese cities have at least one website where complaints and replies are displayed publicly.³⁵

This distinguishes them from the online presence of the Bureaux of Letters and Complaints, where visitors can only access their own file. Hence, visitors to these websites can learn how certain complaints have been acted on in the past³⁶ and, if a grievance has indeed been solved, are encouraged to complain themselves.

A digitalized bureaucracy, e-services and e-monitoring mainly serve to enhance performance, which is important in its own right because it lends credibility to the government's promise that things will continue to improve. Arguably, opposition to the government is more likely when development stagnates than when the lives of more and more people improve. This is especially true for those people who might pose a real danger to the regime, i.e. those who are well-informed and capable and willing to engage in political action.³⁷

E-participation not only helps to aggregate the grievances and preferences of people belonging to this group of citizens, but provides them with an opportunity to realize their ambition to participate. Perhaps e-participation holds the greatest promise for authoritarian rulers who wish to co-opt potential regime opponents. E-participation promises mutual gains and will not function if those who participate oppose the regime. It requires a modicum of trust by those who participate, and the government's willingness to respond to complaints. Both sides gain from the relationship established by e-participation, albeit in a different way.

The authorities who operate the platform receive detailed information on the performance of the (local) state, which enables them to identify bottlenecks in service provi-

33 Interview with leading official of the National Bureau of Letters and Complaints, Beijing, July 2014.

34 Göbel and Chen, *Accountable Autocrats*.

35 Author's analysis, December 2015.

36 C. Göbel, *Co-Producing Authoritarian Resilience: Online Participation and Regime Responsiveness in China*, Working Paper (2015) 1.

37 L. Li and K. J. O'Brien, *Protest Leadership in Rural China*, in: *The China Quarterly* 193 (2008), pp. 1–23.

sion. Descriptive statistics of the most frequent words in one platform that holds more than half a million complaints provide a first indication of the range of topics addressed in such portals. The author has downloaded all complaints and conducted a simple count of all words in all complaints.³⁸ Knowing people's grievances is an important precondition for designing measures to improve government performance. People complain about a number of issues, including complaints against dysfunctional welfare systems, noise disturbances, and air pollution, an employer's violation of labour contracts, land grabs, police brutality, petty corruption, or inefficient police work.

Those in the population who are affected by a particular problem also benefit from its resolution. These benefits can apply to a sizable share of the population if grievances are related to issues such as social welfare, but they can also be confined to a small group of people, for example when the government addresses complaints about night-time construction in a certain neighbourhood. They can impact social groups such as workers or peasants, or the citizenry at large.³⁹

E-participation has another important effect, one that only applies to those who file a complaint. As noted above, in many places, the official reply is published along with the original complaint. In localities where this is not the case, complainants will also frequently receive a reply to their submission. This means that where a reply is given, the complainant is in direct communication with the government and will receive an explanation of how the government proposes to address a grievance, and why. In this way, e-participation serves as an instrument of accountability where government officials explain themselves to individual citizens.

In this context, the concept of political efficacy is of some relevance. Efficacy is defined as the ability to produce a desired result, and scholars distinguish between internal and external efficacy. Internal efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of producing actions that have a political impact. In contrast, external efficacy refers to the belief that the government will be responsive to one's inputs.⁴⁰ It is reasonable to assume that there is an inherent tension between these two aspects of efficacy. If an individual believes that she is capable of participating in politics, but at the same time perceives the government as unresponsive, then that person might become alienated from the regime. The ability to co-opt people with a high level of internal efficacy, i.e. those who are most likely to oppose the ruling elites if they become alienated, is likely to be the single most important game-changing aspect of e-participation. In simple terms, e-participation might be able to turn potential opponents into supporters of the regime. Contrariwise, if the grievances of those who participate online are ignored, e-participation can turn potential supporters into opponents of the regime. Hence, it would be unwise to heavily censor or be unresponsive to such submissions.

38 Due to technical reasons, the terms cannot be visualized here. For a more detailed analysis, see Göbel, *Co-Producing Authoritarian Resilience* and the author's website at www.christiangoebel.net.

39 Ibid.

40 S. C. Craig and M. A. Maggiotto, *Measuring Political Efficacy*, in: *Political Methodology* 8 (1982) 3, pp. 85–109.

Having established that the Chinese government employs the Internet not only to enhance the regime's economic performance, but also to increase responsiveness to popular demands and co-opt citizens with high internal efficacy, the analysis now turns to the factors that benefited these developments. In doing so, it will not only examine domestic, but also international factors.

4. The Irresistible Pressure to Go Online

While existing scholarship of the spread of the Internet in China mainly examines domestic factors, this contribution argues that a convincing explanation of the Chinese government's readiness to adopt the Internet must also account for global factors. As the following section will illustrate, the quick proliferation of the Internet in China is by no means unique, but is in line with a global trend. This suggests that non-domestic forces have an important effect on the Internet policy of China and, indeed, most other countries. It will become clear that countries have no choice but to adopt the Internet, and China's domestic Internet policy represents a reaction to this compelling external pressure. Hence, China's Internet policy must be understood not as the embodiment of a vision of far-sighted leaders, but as an answer to a challenge produced by the forces of globalization. Before accounting for the Chinese government's answer to this challenge, the challenge itself requires some explanation. The explanation starts with a seemingly innocuous question: if the Internet is indeed detrimental to authoritarian rule, why do autocrats adopt it nevertheless?

4.1. Economic Development and the Internet

The most plausible answer is economic necessity: the Internet has become embedded so deeply into the world economy that the refusal to participate would be tantamount to isolating oneself from international trade, with potentially disastrous consequences for that country's economic development.⁴¹ However, it will be shown that contingency also matters: the case of China illustrates that the confluence of external pressure and internal demand created a window of opportunity. Arguably, the spread of the Internet just at a time when the necessity arose to upgrade China's telecommunication infrastructure promised more benefits than risks. China's leaders made the most out of this opportunity, none the least because they had drawn important lessons from the collapse of the Soviet Union. A simple regression confirms that Internet access and economic development go hand in hand, and that China's Internet penetration rate is by no means exceptional. First of all, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and the percentage of people in a population who have access to the Internet correlate highly: Pearson's correlation coeffi-

41 M. D. Chinn and R. W. Fairlie, *The Determinants of the Global Digital Divide: A Cross-Country Analysis of Computer and Internet Penetration*, in: *Oxford Economic Papers* 59 (2006) 1, pp. 16–44.

cient for the relationship between these values for all countries is 0.849, which is extremely high – a Pearson's r of one would denote a perfect fit between the two values.⁴² Put more succinctly, this means that isolating oneself from the Internet inevitably comes at the cost of a low level of economic development. Without exception, economic strength increases with Internet penetration. While this finding seems trivial – indeed, the apparent triviality might be a reason for the lack of scholarly engagement with the question of why regimes decide to adopt the Internet – it really is not. First, it invites the question of the direction of causality, i.e. if the Internet facilitates growth, if growth facilitates the spread of the Internet, or if the relationship is co-dependent. Second, a closer look at the scatterplot⁴³ reveals that most countries at the high end of the spectrum are the industrialized democracies of Europe and North America, closely followed by the so-called third wave democracies, countries that became democratic after 1970. The association between regime type and Internet penetration (and GDP) vanishes for countries with Internet penetration rates between 30 and 70 percent, but reappears at the lower end of the spectrum. Here, most countries combine authoritarianism, low development and low Internet penetration.

4.2. Contagion and Contingency

Apparently, the relationship between Internet penetration and economic growth is more complex than the scatterplot suggests. One plausible explanation for the fact that we find early developers in the top end of the spectrum, catch-up developers in the middle and least developed countries at the low end is that contingency matters. The literature on technological innovation is instructive here: users of new technologies are classified into lead users, early adopters and routine users.⁴⁴ Lead users are willing to pay a high price for a new product, early adopters follow suit as the market grows and the product becomes more affordable and technically mature. Once a product is standardized, its use becomes routine – the market now includes large segments of the population. In the case of the Internet, adoption at this stage is no longer a choice, but a necessity – the more the number of countries and, indeed, citizens who use the Internet increases, the more compelling it becomes to follow the trend.⁴⁵

For the countries in the calculation above, the observations above translate into the following logic: when the Internet became available for commercial use in 1995, the industrial democracies were the natural early adopters. First, they had the necessary infrastructure to facilitate popular access to the Internet. With broadband and wireless access not

42 Own calculations based on values for the year 2013. The values are taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (<http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>).

43 For technical reasons, the scatterplot cannot be reproduced here, but is available from the author upon request.

44 G. Moore, *Crossing the Chasm: Marketing and Selling Products to Mainstream Customers*, New York 2002.

45 Chinn and Fairlie, *The Determinants of the Global Digital Divide*, pp. 16–44; S. Madon, *The Internet and Socio-Economic Development: Exploring the Interaction*, in: *Information Technology and People* 13 (2000) 2, pp. 85–101.

yet available or restricted to institutional or commercial users, private citizens had to have a telephone connection in order to be able to access the Internet. Most citizens in the industrialized European and North American democracies had a telephone, but the same was not necessarily true for those countries classified by the World Bank as lower middle income and below. Second, the advanced economies were advanced enough to realize the commercial potential of the Internet, which also facilitated its adoption by private users. Not only did the promise of new markets create political pressure to improve the communication infrastructure and make it affordable, but also did new and exciting products convince people to pay for Internet access.⁴⁶ Third, the general level of education was high enough that a popular demand for these advanced technologies could develop.⁴⁷

The lead users and early adopters chose to integrate the Internet into their economies and societies and thereby created a momentum that made its adoption more and more pressing for the catch-up developers. Internet-based technologies slowly became the standard of communication in and between developed countries, and developing countries had to follow suit to avoid being left behind.⁴⁸ However, for many countries in the low middle income range, adopting the Internet was not only a necessity, but also presented great opportunities. China is a good example of a country where the pressure to enhance Internet access coincided with an increasing affordability of these technologies and a stage of development where the adoption of the Internet promised both economic and political returns.

4.3. Technological Leap-Frogging

In 1978, China was still an agrarian country: farming was the main occupation for more than 80 percent of the population. By the mid-2000s, this percentage dropped below the 50-percent mark. At the same time, the contribution of the service sector to China's GDP nearly doubled from 24 to 40 percent.⁴⁹ In what in hindsight seems like a coincidence, China's economy and society became ready for the Internet just when the technologies needed to access the Internet, above all computers and wide bandwidth data transmission, were becoming affordable for private users.⁵⁰ On the one hand, this means that investments in the Internet infrastructure promised windfall profits for tele-

46 B. Rezabakhsh et al., *Consumer Power: A Comparison of the Old Economy and the Internet Economy*, in: *Journal of Consumer Policy* 29 (2006) 1, pp. 3–36.

47 Madon, *The Internet and Socio-Economic Development*, pp. 85–101; T. Thompson, V. Lim and R. Lai, *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Internet Usage*, in: *Omega* 21 (1999) 1, pp. 25–37.

48 C. J. Tolbert and K. Mossberger, *New Inequality Frontier: Broadband Internet Access*, Economic Policy Institute Working Paper (2006) 275.

49 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), *China Statistical Yearbook* (2012).

50 On the impact of broadband on economic development, see Tolbert and Mossberger, *New Inequality Frontier*; C. Z. Qiang, C. M. Rossotto and K. Kimura, *Economic Impacts of Broadband*; C. Z. Qiang, *Broadband Infrastructure Investment in Stimulus Packages: Relevance for Developing Countries*, in: *Info* 12 (2010) 2, pp. 41–56; C. Z. Qiang, C. M. Rossotto and K. Kimura, *Economic Impacts of Broadband*, in: *Information and Communications for Development 2009* (2009), pp. 35–50.

communication companies and other enterprises in the ICT sector.⁵¹ On the other hand, this enabled the government to improve China's communication infrastructure right at the time when the growing industry and service sectors needed it.

The confluence of these two developments, the demand for an improved communication infrastructure and the availability of relatively cheap and fast Internet, allowed China to stop extending the network of telephone lines and instead upgrade to fibre broadband cables right away. "Leap-frogging"⁵² over an old technology enabled China to catch up to the developed countries more quickly. For China, whose development strategy chiefly relied on foreign direct investments and the export of manufactured goods, not adopting the Internet was not an option. Similar to the development of the telecommunication market earlier,⁵³ economic necessity dictated the need to embrace the new technology. Political considerations played a role only in so far they concerned economic issues – arguably, the implications of improved and accelerated communication flows for China's political stability became a concern of the political elites only after these technologies had been adopted.

It is very likely that the situation is similar for the other countries in that income bracket, and that the developments of the last decade will continue into the future. If this is the case, then the Internet penetration rate of the late developers will gradually catch up with that of the early innovators, provided their economy continues to grow. At that time, the differences in Internet penetration between democracies and autocracies will have become moot. In other words, the fact that democracies seem to be more Internet friendly than autocracies is not rooted in the political, but the economic differences between the two regime types, which in turn can be explained by historical development trajectories. To put it more succinctly: nothing suggests that autocracies, important exceptions notwithstanding, are averse to embracing the Internet, and China is no exception.

5. China's Leaders Have Read Huntington

Although journalists and China scholars frequently emphasize how quickly the Internet has spread in China, there is nothing remarkable about China's Internet penetration rate. In terms of the percentage of the population that has access to the Internet, China is very similar to the other countries in its income bracket, no matter if these countries are democratic or not. The fact that GDP per capita and Internet penetration correlate so highly for nearly all countries in the world suggests that China follows a general trend.

51 Rezabakhsh et al., *Consumer Power*, pp. 3–36.

52 E. S. Brezis, P. R. Krugman and D. Tsiddon, *Leapfrogging in International Competition: A Theory of Cycles in National Technological Leadership*, in: *The American Economic Review* 83 (1993) 5, pp. 1211–1219.

53 A. P. Hardy, *The Role of the Telephone in Economic Development*, in: *Telecommunications Policy* 4 (1980) 4, pp. 278–286; E. Harwit, *Spreading Telecommunications to Developing Areas in China: Telephones, the Internet and the Digital Divide*, in: *The China Quarterly* 180 (2004), pp. 1010–1030; Harwit, *China's Telecommunications Revolution*, New York 2008.

Following this trend is less the result of the foresight of China's leaders, but of pure economic necessity. What is particular about the Chinese experience is how deeply Chinese leaders have embedded the Internet into their governance structures. For a country that, for good reasons, scores very low on all democracy indices, it is astonishing that so many localities are setting up websites that allow people to evaluate the quality of public service provision and to criticize local bureaucrats and politicians. Even more astounding is the fact that many of these complaints, along with the official replies, are made publicly available. Why do local governments use the Internet to improve their accountability even without being explicitly ordered by the central government to do so?

This contribution argues that a fortuitous confluence of China's level of development, the structure of its political system, and political learning are responsible for the proactive adoption of the Internet by local governments. The argument goes as follows: as China became more industrialized, urbanized, heterogeneous, and as incomes started to rise, it became increasingly difficult for leaders in the central government to design policies that met the demands of an increasingly heterogeneous society. Invoking scenarios reminiscent of those described by modernization theorists, the central government expressed their fear that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) became increasingly unable to govern China. Instead of ruling by imposing uniform development targets, the central government evolved the responsibility for maintaining social stability to local leaders. By encouraging people to protest against local government misconduct and punishing local officials for the occurrence of protests, they provided incentives for local officials to prevent people from taking to the streets. Since the repression of "legitimate" protests was also sanctioned, local leaders had little choice but to become more responsive to popular demands. Once more, the Internet provided an opportunity to aggregate and process popular grievances, demands and opinions speedily.

5.1. The Challenge of Modernization

In order to better understand why and how local governments are integrating the Internet into their governance structures, the changing parameters of central-local relations in China must be taken into consideration. More specifically, the necessity to redesign the relationship between the central government and local leaders is another factor that coincided with the global spread of the Internet. Once again, the key issue are the pressures emerging from China's level of development, and the potential of Internet-based technologies to ease these pressures. In the previous section, it was outlined how Chinese leaders, just like the politicians in most other countries at a similar stage of development, were forced to improve the basic communication infrastructure to meet the demands of speedy industrialization and social modernization. However, modernization exerted pressures not only on the existing communication infrastructure, but also on the way China was governed.

When China was still underdeveloped, many economic and social challenges could be, and indeed had to be, solved, by means of centralized policy making. With the excep-

tion of those coastal provinces that developed ahead of the rest of China, a basic public infrastructure had to be created. This included the construction or repair of schools, hospitals, government buildings and roads, the implementation of the government's birth control regime, and the enforcement of tax regulations.⁵⁴

With most localities facing similar challenges, the central government's strategy of setting unified development targets and tying the career of local politicians to the fulfilment of these targets was viable. This was especially true where the skills and knowledge needed to devise more context-sensitive solutions were not (yet) available. However, even at a relatively low stage of development, the strategy of setting mandatory achievement targets ran into problems.⁵⁵ Given the fact that most of the funds for this modernization were not provided by the central government but had to be raised by the local governments themselves, and that some localities developed faster than others, China became increasingly heterogeneous.⁵⁶ Income differences between, but also within localities increased, an unprecedented number of people became urban citizens, and a middle-class developed. This situation made it increasingly difficult to devise and implement one-size-fits-all policies.⁵⁷

In fact, China developed just as modernization theory would predict: the central government was increasingly unable to cater to all groups in an increasingly heterogeneous society, and feared that vital groups in society might cease to support the one-party regime. This concern had become acute when two events occurred in quick succession: the anti-regime protests on Tian'anmen Square in 1989, and the collapse of the Soviet Union briefly thereafter. Sources confirm that all administrations have taken this event very seriously and studied it closely.⁵⁸ Zeng Qinghong, who between March 1999 and November 2002 served as the head of the powerful organization department in the Jiang Zemin administration and thereafter became first secretary of the Central Secretariat for the Communist Party of China under CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao, was very outspoken in his concern that the CCP might meet the same fate. At the Fourth Plenum of the Sixteenth Party Congress in September 2004, the CCP's Central Committee passed the "Decision on Enhancing the Party's Ability to Govern."⁵⁹ Zeng justified the Decision by attributing the "overnight collapse [of] the Soviet Union, the 'number one socialist country' [...] with an 88-year history and 15 million [Communist Party] members,"

54 C. Göbel, *The Politics of Rural Reform in China: State Policy and Village Predicament in the Early 2000s*, in: *The China Quarterly* 206 (2011), pp. 421–461.

55 T. P. Bernstein and X. Lü, *Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China*, Cambridge 2003.

56 C. Riskin, R. Zhao and S. Li, *China's Retreat from Equality: Income Distribution and Economic Transition*, Armonk 2001.

57 G. Schubert and T. Heberer, *Continuity and Change in China's "Local State Developmentism"*, in: *Issues and Studies* 51 (2015) 2, p. 1.

58 D. L. Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*, Berkeley 2008.

59 Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, *Zhonggong Zhongyang Guanyu Jiaqiang Dang de Zhi-zheng Nengli Jianshe de Jueding* (Decision by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Strengthening the Party's Governing Capacity) (2004), <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/2004/Sep/668376.htm> (accessed 12 October 2015).

to the fact that “people were dissatisfied with what the officials accomplished while in charge, and they became seriously isolated from the masses of the people.” In effect, Zeng drew on modernization theory when he warned that China faced similar dangers with her entry into “the critical period of the per-capita gross domestic product leaping from USD 1,000 toward USD 3,000.”⁶⁰

5.2. The Policy Innovation Paradigm

The central government’s solution for this quandary was to change the way China was governed. Having identified the low quality of the local cadre force as the main predicament hindering China’s future development, in particular the cadres’ “low level of ideological and theoretical knowledge, weak ability to govern according to law, weak capacity to solve complex contradictions,”⁶¹ measures were first taken to rejuvenate the cadre force, raise its level of education, make the selection process more meritocratic, and require public officials to attend various training courses.⁶² In contrast to the first measures, which were mainly designed to strengthen the governance skills of local cadres, the campaigns that followed the Decision gradually imposed on local leaders a “policy innovation imperative.”⁶³ In contrast to the 1980s, where following the central government’s orders often sufficed for promotion to a higher position, local leaders were now expected to identify, even anticipate, economic and social challenges and devise ways to solve them. Designing and implementing viable policy innovations became a precondition of being evaluated as “excellent” in the annual assessment, which in turn was an important stepping stone for being promoted.

On the one hand, the central government rewarded policy innovations by local officials. On the other hand, however, it implemented measures that increased the pressure on local governments to become more responsive to the demands and grievances of the population. In particular, evidence suggests that the central government has become more discerning with regards to popular protests. While it continues to harshly repress social unrest that challenges the power monopoly of the Chinese Communist Party or the territorial unity of the Chinese state, it has become more lenient towards protests against low government performance, the violation of individual rights (especially regarding labour issues), and power abuse by local officials.⁶⁴ As suppression of protests the central government considers legitimate is discouraged, and the risk that crackdowns on protests

60 Q. Zeng, Jiaqiang Dang de Zhizheng Nengli Jianshe de Ganglingxing Wenxian (Programmatic Article on Strengthening the Party’s Governing Capacity) (2004), http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-10/08/content_2061716.htm (accessed 12 October 2015).

61 Ibid.

62 G. T. Chin, Innovation and Preservation: Remaking China’s National Leadership Training System, in: *The China Quarterly* 205 (2011), pp. 18–39; F. N. Pieke, *The Good Communist: Elite Training and State Building in Today’s China*, Cambridge 2009.

63 C. Göbel and T. Heberer, *The Policy Innovation Imperative: Changing Techniques for Governing China’s Local Governors*, Conference Proceedings (forthcoming).

64 H. C. Steinhardt, From Blind Spot to Media Spotlight: Propaganda Policy, Media Activism and the Emergence of Protest Events in the Chinese Public Sphere, in: *Asian Studies Review* 39 (2015) 1, pp. 119–137; Steinhardt, *State*

are documented and shared via social media is high, officials are pressed to prevent social unrest by being more responsive to people's grievances.⁶⁵

Once more, political pressure is not the only reason for local leaders to employ the Internet for aggregating and addressing popular grievances. It should be recalled that Chinese officials do not represent a unified group, but are situated at different positions in China's "fragmented" polity.⁶⁶ Those who monitor policy implementation are usually not those who are bearing the blame for shortcomings and who are responsible for improving the situation.⁶⁷ In fact, e-participation strengthens the hands of leading politicians and those responsible for operating the petitioning websites, but comes at the detriment of those who are responsible for providing public services. It is therefore not surprising that e-participation websites now enjoy great popularity, as evidenced above. On a more abstract level, e-participation benefits leading officials and government units responsible for discipline and supervision while raising the bar for service providers and bureaucrats.

6. China's Multiple Futures

This article started out with the seemingly innocuous question of why authoritarian regimes adopt the Internet if the Internet is indeed as dangerous for social stability as some accounts suggest. The analysis of China, where leaders embraced the Internet as eagerly as they had embraced other information and communication technologies before, presented some solutions to this puzzle.

First, the analysis of the Chinese case has highlighted the role of contagion and contingency: the adoption of the Internet by the highly developed democracies set in motion a process that made it increasingly difficult for developing nations to resist the Internet. In other words, authoritarian regimes really had no choice but to embrace the Internet or else pay the exorbitant price of a perennial least developed country status. On the other hand, the spread of increasingly affordable ICT presented great opportunities especially for developing countries where the existing, analogue communication infrastructure had become a bottleneck for further development.

The political risks are not as great as often imagined: the Internet does not heighten the danger of a rebellion, but merely accelerates its formation. Arguably, it offers more opportunities for autocrats than for opposition groups. As the Chinese case shows, authoritarian leaders can learn from the demise of other autocracies, and the Internet allows them to co-opt potential regime opponents into the process of making government more

Behavior and the Intensification of Intellectual Criticism in China The Social Stability Debate, in: *Modern China* (2015), pp. 1–37.

65 C. Göbel and L. H. Ong, Social Unrest in China, in: Long Briefing, Europe China Research and Academic Network (2012), http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2173073 (accessed 12 October 2015).

66 A. Mertha, "Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0": Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process, in: *The China Quarterly* 200 (2009), pp. 995–1012.

67 Göbel and Chen, *Accountable Autocrats*.

efficient. In their combination, enhanced performance legitimation and the creation of a democracy surrogate serve to alleviate social challenges to the regime.

The Chinese experience makes it plausible that some of the paradigms of modernization theory no longer hold. This, however, should not be interpreted to mean that the Internet has made authoritarian regimes invincible. Instead, e-government presents them with new challenges that deserve to be studied closely, for example the impact of the “digital divide” on political representation on the Internet and government responsiveness inviting so many demands that the system cannot process them anymore. The representation of minority rights and the explosive mix of improving governance without guaranteeing the rule of law are other potential breaking points that deserve to be studied more closely.

A final lesson concerns two potential misconceptions in the mainstream democratization scholarship. The first follows from the plausible premise that citizens compare their political system to that of other countries. With politics in developed democracies being increasingly perceived as technocratic and powerless against the economic forces that effortlessly cross national borders and wreak havoc on people’s lives, “Western democracy” might be losing its attractiveness. There is a real danger that people, no matter what kind of political regime they are subjected to, will fail to appreciate the opportunities that real democracy offers, and join the ranks of those who feel powerless to alter the courses of their lives.

A second misconception concerns the future of authoritarian regimes, or rather the temptation of unwittingly assuming that the state is tied to the future of the regime. With respect to the Chinese case, this means that the institutional innovations described here will likely survive the regime that initiated it. In other words, when we try to imagine the future of China, we should not get stuck with the question of whether the CCP will or will not survive. More important is what it will leave behind. The worst case would be the dismantling of such structures as described in this contribution, and the suffocation of local initiative by an overbearing central government. The control regime initiated by the Xi Jinping administration makes this scenario a real possibility. The best case would be the transformation of the current regime into one that adopts the rule of law and allows its citizens to not only monitor bureaucrats and low-level politicians, but also hold the decision makers in the central government accountable. This is not bound to happen anytime soon, but nevertheless remains a plausible scenario for a more distant future. The third, and perhaps most realistic scenario involves the rekindling of local initiative after the central government’s grip over local officials loosens. The modernization and improvement of China’s government structures would continue, for the benefit of whoever will rule China in the future.

The Future of States in Africa: Prospects for the Reordering of Space and the Remaking of Bureaucracies

Paul Nugent¹

ABSTRACT

Staaten sind trotz aller Krisen auch in afrikanischen Ländern jene politischen Institutionengefüge, in deren Rahmen Zukunftsvorstellungen verhandelt und zur Grundlage politischer Entscheidungen werden. Der Artikel fasst Diskussionen um afrikanische Staatlichkeit zusammen. Er zeigt an den Beispielen staatlicher Grenzen einerseits, bürokratischen Handelns andererseits auf, welche Beharrlichkeit die Institution des Staates und seine konkreten Formen trotz aller Veränderungen entwickelt haben und wie stark sie Rahmenbedingungen für das Nachdenken über Zukunft und die Verständigung über zukünftige Gesellschaften bilden. Damit zeigt der Artikel auch, wie stark Zukunftsentwürfe von den Mitteln beeinflusst werden, die Gesellschaften sehen, sie durchzusetzen, und von den politischen Institutionen, die Hintergrund ihrer Sozialität bilden.

Although there is a substantial body of literature on tradition in Africa, much of it carries the loaded prefix of ‘neo-’. Even that which purports to be traditional seemingly has its eyes fixed on the modern. This is perhaps most obvious when it comes to “traditional authority,” where the incumbents of chiefly offices these days come with a pedigree of

1 I would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), Princeton, in granting me membership for 2015/16. The article was written while resident at the School of Social Science. I would also like to thank Dr. Isabella Soi, with whom the Uganda research was jointly conducted, for her comments.

foreign degrees, use the latest phones and computers, and drive 4 x 4 vehicles.² In the memorable phrase of John and Jean Comaroff, entrepreneurial traditional leaders seek to “‘empower’ their people by venturing out from their traditional capitals into the realm of venture capital.”³ It is also the case with performative genres such as “traditional” music, and dance that are in practice highly adaptive.⁴ If the traditional looks to the modern, what does the modern look to? One answer lies in ultra-modernist utopias such as the fantasy cities that have begun to jump off the drawing boards and into something approximating real life. But for ordinary people, the answer is probably more prosaic: a life more abundant with sources of gainful employment, chances for international travel and enough time left over for the pursuit of leisure.

There was a time when the state was absolutely integral to the modernist vision. In the first decade-and-a-half after independence, it was possible to envision a world in which states would not merely deliver fundamental public goods such as health and education, but also transform agriculture and industry, mould new urban spaces and forge conscious citizens. The travails of post-colonial Africa have in reality led to state institutions being incapable of delivering on even the basics. And while standards of living had initially improved for most Africans, many countries began to experience negative growth, mounting unemployment (exacerbated by a demographic spurt), a decline in health delivery, and urban decay by the mid-1980s. The HIV/AIDS pandemic that followed in the 1990s also brought with it a sharp decline in life expectancy in the worst-hit countries, thereby reversing one of the key achievements of the early years. The sense that modernity and development could actually be a two-way street, as well as zero-sum in nature, is something that populations have been forced to come to terms with in so many ways.⁵ But the larger message seems to be that Africans have placed their bets on something other than the state: the literatures on Pentecostal Churches, reformist Islam and international migration make it clear that ordinary Africans have remained wedded to the corpus of ideas associated with modernity, but have relied much more on social networks than on formal structures to see them through.⁶

2 This was brought home to the author in 2014 when he first learned about WhatsApp from a chief in Ghana while trying to secure footage of the Agbamevoza cross-border festival. On the changing face of chieftaincy, see L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (eds.), *State Recognition and Democratization in Southern Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, Basingstoke 2007; C-H. Perrot and F-X Fauvelle-Aymar (eds.), *Le Retour des Rois: Les Autorités Traditionnelles et L'Etat en Afrique Contemporaine*, Paris 2003; and J. Ubink, *Traditional Authorities in Africa: Resurgence in an Era of Democratisation*, Leiden 2008.

3 J.L. and J. Comaroff, *Ethnicity Inc.*, Chicago 2009, p. 7.

4 F. de Jong, *Masquerades of Modernity: Power and Secrecy in Casamance, Senegal*, Edinburgh 2007.

5 P. Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*, Charlottesville 1997; J. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*, Berkeley 1999; C. Piot, *Nostalgia for the Future: West After the Cold War*, Chicago 2010; and M. Burchardt, *Faith in the Time of AIDS: Religion, Biopolitics and Modernity in South Africa*, New York 2015.

6 See, for example, J. McGaffey and R. Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Congo-Paris: Transnational Traders on the Margins of the Law*, Oxford 2000; P. Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*, Chicago 2002; M. Janson, *Islam, Youth and Modernity in the Gambia: The Tablighi Jama'at*, Cambridge 2013; P. Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*, London 2015.

So where does that leave the state itself? This article attempts an answer to what is after all a rather important question. Elsewhere I address the concept of the state in more detail.⁷ Here I merely wish to clarify that my understanding of the state incorporates three dimensions. Most fundamentally, “the state” is a kind of shorthand for an *ensemble of institutions* that ostensibly act in the name of the body politic, however that may be constituted. But there is also something less tangible at work here, namely the *idea of the state* – which sums up the expectations of what it means to belong to be a sovereign authority.⁸ Finally, it is essential to insist on the *materiality of the state*, which is embodied in the physical existence of offices, uniforms, flags and in the much less visible revenue flows. It has been noted that studying states poses a particular challenge because the ensemble in question is also the author of its own self-image. There are certain things that states claim to do, one of which is projecting sovereignty to the outermost margins. That is one reason why the symbols of statehood, such as flags and coats of arms, and the rituals and routines associated with statehood (most notably form-filling and document-stamping), are so highly visible at border crossings.⁹ But it is an open question whether states are really so concerned with broadcasting their authority in the manner that Jeffrey Herbst assumes to be the case.¹⁰ Peering behind the curtain, as it were, and investigating what is actually going on, may help to strip away some of the mystique surrounding “the state”. It also gives us some insight into where important changes are most likely to occur in the future.

One can tackle the state from a variety of vantage points. Here I only take two, but they are arguably the most important of all. If there are elements that are quintessentially “statish”, these are territoriality and routine administration. Hence, I deal firstly with the boundaries of the state, whose long-term future is very much in question. Secondly, I address African bureaucracies and how they are (or are not) being reconfigured in the context of larger changes in global governance. The discussion draws on all three of the dimensions identified above.

1. The Map of Africa’s Future and The Future of Africa’s Map

After independence, Africa’s rulers were keen to consolidate the institutions they had inherited rather than putting everything up for grabs. This was famously encapsulated in the 1964 Cairo Resolution of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which declared “that all member States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on the

7 P. Nugent, *Boundaries, Communities and State-Making in the Senegambia and the Trans-Volta: The Centrality of the Margins c. 1750 to the Present*, chapter 1, Cambridge, forthcoming.

8 P. Abrams, *Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State* (1977), in: *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1 (10) 1977, pp. 58–89; T.B. Hansen and F. Stepputat, *Introduction: State of Imagination*, in: T. B. Hansen and F. Stepputat (eds.), *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, Durham 2001.

9 R. Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control: Performance and Politics on the Disputed Borders of Ladakh, India*, Durham NC 2004.

10 J. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton 2000.

achievement of their independence.”¹¹ This is what is often referred to as the principle of the intangibility of African boundaries. In a dissenting legal judgement, an eminent Somali international jurist, Justice Yusuf, maintains that the matter has been misunderstood.¹² His argument is partly that the principle of *uti possidetis* was not mentioned in the Resolution and was not really applicable because it was a legal principle fashioned for the internal administrative borders of Spanish South America when these were transformed into international borders. He also claims that the real intent of Africa’s leaders was to establish a temporary holding pattern before revisiting the issue, rather than to render the inherited borders immovable and immutable. The first point is moot for the great federations of French West and Equatorial Africa and for Central Africa, depending on what one construes as an “internal” border and when one is talking about. But regardless of whether Africa’s rulers merely intended to create a breathing space, inertia set in remarkably quickly. Even a self-proclaimed Pan-Africanist like Kwame Nkrumah was explicitly wedded to the maintenance of the borders that he so often criticized as a European imposition.

From the mid-1960s onwards, it seemed very unlikely that the borders would be altered through a process of active consent. The space for divided populations to petition for a redrawing of the borders was highly circumscribed. The Accra Declaration of the First Conference of Independent African States in 1958 referred to the “right of the African people to independence and self-determination.”¹³ But it was not referring to the Bakongo, Lozi or Ewe, but rather to Algeria and other colonial entities that were still under colonial rule. In effect, the OAU was set up to defend the rights of states rather than of peoples, while the states themselves became jealous guardians of their colonial inheritance. There were numerous secessionist rumblings in the early years of independence, of course, but most of the movements were snuffed out with a greater or lesser amount of repression. Re-uniting populations through an adjustment to the borders was the most difficult to achieve, not only because Africa’s rulers were so protective of the status quo, but also because of the practical difficulties associated with mobilizing populations across borders. In principle it was rather easier to resolve border questions by establishing larger political entities. But while there were some efforts to revive the spirit of the former federations, this tended to be debated in terms of loose economic unions rather than amalgamations. Although many questioned their viability, the rulers of Africa’s many micro-states, such as the Gambia or Rwanda, were especially reluctant to surrender their sovereignty.

11 For the text of this resolution (AHG Res. 16.1), see http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ASSEMBLY_EN_17_21_JULY_1964_ASSEMBLY_HEADS_STATE_GOVERNMENT_FIRST_ORDINARY_SESSION.pdf (accessed 15 October 2015).

12 „Separate opinion of Judge Yusuf“, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/149/17312.pdf> (accessed 15 October 2015).

13 Accra Declaration of the First Conference of Independent African States, 15–22 April 1958, in: J. Langley, *Ideologies of Liberation in Black Africa, 1856–1970*, London 1970.

That leaves the possibility of a change to the borders through a resort to arms. There were some noteworthy challenges to the cosy consensus in the 1960s and 1970s. The Somali authorities had never accepted the legitimacy of the Cairo Resolution, and staked claims to Somali populations in both Kenya and Uganda. Defeat in the war with Ethiopia in 1977–78 effectively put an end to that quest, even if the “Somali question” remains a thorn in the side of both the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments to this day. Likewise, Idi Amin revived some older challenges to the legitimacy of Uganda’s borders with its neighbours, some of which were reflected in the demands of border populations themselves.¹⁴ Amin’s resort to arms culminated in an ignominious defeat at the hands of Tanzania, and effectively put an end to Ugandan irredentist claims for good. Armed secessionist movements did not fare much better. The Katangan bid from separation from the Congo, which followed hard on the heels of independence, was eventually quashed by the United Nations. The Biafrans won some sympathy for their cause, with Julius Nyerere famously backing the right to secede in this case. But most African leaders were reluctant to create a precedent that might rebound upon them in the future. In a nutshell, Africa’s territorial dispensation seemed to have been achieved a considerable measure of fixity within two decades of independence. Tellingly, this was reflected in the lack of alternative imaginaries that challenged those constructed by the states themselves. Hence while it was possible to argue for the deep historicity of a Bakongo kingdom, it was not so easy to imagine what a Bakongo state, reuniting populations in the two Congos and Angola, would actually look like.

But in more recent times there are signs that the tectonic plates may be shifting. With a vocaliety that has not been seen since the early 1960s, a range of political actors are questioning whether the existing territorial dispensation is really optimal, and are tabling possible alternatives. This has been two decades in gestation and has unfolded rather incrementally. The civil wars that beset Ethiopia under the Dergue are instructive. The Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), which eventually came to power after the flight of Mengistu, was wedded to the existing borders of Ethiopia, although it was willing to be flexible over the future of Eritrea. Its avowedly socialist vision was one that hitched modernism to socialism in a familiar manner – even if its adherence to the “Albanian road to socialism” was one of its quirkier attributes. The Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) demanded the right to break away from Ethiopia, but this was justified not as an act of secession, but as the final act of decolonization given that the former Italian colony had been absorbed into Ethiopia after the war. When Eritrea voted for independence, its alternative imaginaries were already worked out. Interestingly these harked back to a common history of Italian colonialism rather than positing a common culture binding Christians and Muslims. The Sudanese case is also instructive in that for long

14 In Uganda, there remained some dissatisfaction at the movement of the Uganda border from the Nzoia to the Lwakhakha Rivers. In 1959, a formal submission from the Bagisu District Lukhobo specifically asserted that the people had never been consulted and demanded a reversion to the former boundary, thereby reuniting the Babukusu of Kenya with the Bagisu of Uganda. They received short shrift at the time. Uganda National Archives, Entebbe, President’s Office (Confidential) Box 95, Const 6/5 „Eastern Province- Bugishu” (1959).

periods of time the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) claimed to be fighting for more equitable terms within a greater Sudan, rather than separation from it. Part of the reason is that the southern Sudanese did not have their own idea of 'the state'. Even after the breakaway, both the idea and the materiality of the South Sudanese state remains very much under construction. When Somalia imploded in the early 1990s, and two de facto states emerged in the shape of the Republic of Somaliland and Puntland, the potential implications were much more profound. But while the Republic of Somaliland asserted its right to secession, returning to the borders of the former British colony in the Eritrean fashion, it has never received international recognition.¹⁵ On the contrary, the fiction of the existence of a Somali state, which is in reality confined to parts of Mogadishu, continues to be upheld in the face of all the evidence to the contrary.

But there are signs that the challenges to existing state boundaries are starting to multiply and to present more radical alternatives. The Islamic State (ISIS) does not merely challenge the physical existence of Syria, but seeks to carve out a new kind of polity cutting across the borders that were established in the Middle East after the First World War. The ideal of a Muslim Caliphate, governed in conformity with the Islamic principles, can certainly draw on an imaginary that is rooted in centuries of history. Brooking no compromises with religious minorities who were created in the process of drawing the border,¹⁶ ISIS nevertheless claims to be blind to race and ethnicity.¹⁷ It has also extended its hand to other Islamist insurgent organizations on condition that they accept the authority of the new state, however rhetorical this might be in practice. There is no doubt that ISIS has set up a model for would-be radical Islamists in Africa, for whom belonging to a global movement holds definite attractions. The fascinating aspect of this putative return to the roots – which is reflected in Boko Haram's origins in the explicit rejection of "Western" education – is that it is also hyper-modern: the Koran and the sword rub shoulders with the Kalashnikov and the savvy use of social media.

The Islamist challenge to established states is reflected in the emergence of a series of linked insurgencies. These have all drawn on ideas of a global jihad, while struggling and mostly failing to present a credible vision of an alternative territorial dispensation. While Tuareg rebels in northern Mali and Niger have veered between demanding a better deal and fighting for outright secession, Islamists have played with the idea of a pan-Islamic community. At one level, this is thought of as straddling the international borders between Algeria and its southern neighbours. But operationally, the movements have tended to internalize the borders to a surprising degree, not least because the existence of the borders has proved useful to Algerian Islamists within AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) who have funded their own insurgency in large part through smuggling – which clearly depends on border logics. Initially, the Tuareg and Islamist tendencies

15 M. Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, London 2008.

16 B.T. White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria*, Edinburgh 2011.

17 P. Colburn, *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution*, London, 2015, p. 11.

were closely related, and indeed there was some movement of fighters between the two. AQIM had for some years maintained rear bases in northern Mali, and lent support to two Malian groups, Ansar Dine and the Movement for Tawid and Jihad (MUJAO). In 2012, a renewed Tuareg rebellion led by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) initially entailed close military co-operation. But after the collapse of the latter's resistance, and a military coup in Bamako, Ansar Dine and MUJAO turned on their former Tuareg allies and notionally set out to create an Islamic state.¹⁸ Stephen Harmon notes that while Ansar Dine and the MNLA shared the aspiration for the secession of a northern state, namely Azawad, the former fought to create an Islamic state; MUJAO, on the other hand, hoped to take over the whole of Mali and to declare an Islamic state.¹⁹ Dissolving the borders was not apparently on the agenda, even if the links to Algeria remained of paramount importance. While Al-Qaeda was the initial inspiration, the template created by ISIS has created a precedent that Salafist groups in Mali can freely draw upon. But with the French intervention of 2013, Islamic state creation remains a project for the future in Mali.

In the Lake Chad Basin, the emergence of Boko Haram follows a somewhat similar dynamic. The latter has undergone successive mutations, but its primary support base lies amongst Kanuri populations straddling the borders of Nigeria, Cameroun and Niger.²⁰ At its height – and nobody knows what tense to use here – Boko Haram controlled a large chunk of north-eastern Nigeria and threatened to spill over into the other states. Its strategy has been to deploy hit-and-run tactics and to engage in abductions and bombings rather than to create anything like an alternative state. Although what Boko Haram is opposed to is pretty evident – namely the political elite in general and the religious establishment of Northern Nigeria in particular – the scale of its political ambitions is not so clear. Whereas Boko Haram initially looked to Al-Qaeda, it is surely significant that it formally endorsed ISIS in 2014 and declared allegiance to the Islamic State in March 2015.²¹ It also declared its own Caliphate, which notionally represented a kind of province of the greater Islamic State. But this was a rhetorical gesture and the territory that was claimed has since been recaptured. At the present time, Boko Haram is capable of creating mayhem across the north-east, but it does not look like fashioning a state any time soon. Much as Boko Haram seems to be a mainly Kanuri phenomenon, al-Shabaab appeals mostly – but by no means exclusively – to Somalis.²² And like Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab has formally shifted its allegiance from al-Qaeda to ISIS. The difference is that

18 S.A. Harmon, *Terror and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012-2013*, Farnham, Burlington 2014, pp. 175-179.

19 Harmon, *Terror*, p. 197.

20 V. Comolli, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency*, London 2015, pp. 85-91.

21 S. Almukhtar, „How Boko Haram courted and joined the Islamic state“, *New York Times* 10 June 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/11/world/africa/boko-haram-isis-propaganda-video-nigeria.html?r=0>. Comolli, *Boko Haram*, p. 97.

22 S.J. Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012*, London 2013. For non-Somali recruitment, see A. Botha, *Political Socialisation and Terrorist Radicalisation Among Individuals Who Joined al-Shabaab in Kenya*, in: *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37 (2014) 11, pp. 895-919.

it comes out of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) which was in the process of building something approximating to a state before the Ethiopian intervention in 2006/7. In fact, it might be said that the ICU represented the best bet for peace, especially in view of the failure of the official state in Somalia. It is reasonable to predict that if ISIS succeeds in entrenching itself, it will give encouragement to like-minded movements in Africa. But while the ISIS imaginary can certainly be exported, materializing the state requires the creation of revenue streams and a basic fabric of administration. This has not looked like happening in the Western Sudan/Sahara, the Chad Basin or Somalia. But given the state of flux, it would be unwise to bet on this pattern holding in the long-run. But it is reasonable to draw one important conclusion: namely that the secular state is no longer the only show in town. This is clear even from the support for Shari'a law in Northern Nigeria amongst Muslim leaders who show no sympathy at all for Boko Haram. At the same time, secessionism has crept back onto the front-burner. If the breakaway of Eritrea did not create a precedent – a claim that is certainly debatable – the secession of South Sudan has most definitely done so. The defenders of that new state might argue that the south had always been administered separately from the north during the period of the Condominium. But a similar argument might be made for the north and south of Nigeria. In fact, the Sudanese instance points to something rather prevalent, namely that colonial states were almost never uniform entities. They were routinely divided into distinct administrative units that were governed according to divergent principles. The moment of decolonization was so fraught precisely because incoming elites wished to establish a uniformity of administrative practice that had not hitherto existed. A case in point would be Uganda where the kingdoms, most notably Buganda, enjoyed an internal autonomy that was denied to other parts of Uganda. Similarly, the Lozi kingdom was recognized as a separate Barotseland Protectorate within the context of the Central African Federation.²³ Many of the emergent secessionist movements have emerged comparatively recently, but are staking their claims based on much older precedents. Their alternative imaginaries, therefore, invoke agreements and understandings that go back to the period before the time of independence. In the case of the Lozi secessionist movement, its grievances have been articulated by the royal establishment.²⁴ The attempt to invoke borders that pre-date colonialism has been much more problematic. This is exemplified by a map which extends the notional borders of 'historic Loziland well into Namibia and Angola. In the case of the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), there is a similar sense of grievance based on the enforced incorporation of the coastal strip, which formerly came under the Sultan of Zanzibar, into an independent Kenya.²⁵ The Sultan-

23 On the Lozi case, see G.L. Caplan, Barotseland: the Secessionist Challenge to Zambia, in: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 6 (1968) 3, pp. 343-360.

24 At the time of writing, it was reported that the Litunga (or king) had been bribed into reversing his position on secession. <http://www.zambiawatchdog.com/litunga-accused-of-receiving-k42b-from-pf-to-organise-another-council-to-reverse-secession/>

25 J. Willis and G. Gona, Pwani C Kenya? Memory, Documents and Secessionist Politics in Coastal Kenya, in: *African Affairs* 112 (2013) 446.

ate ceased to exist after the Revolution of 1964, and there seems to be no desire on the part of the MRC to be reunited with Zanzibar, even if a shared Muslim identity remains important. The formal demand is for separation from Kenya.

Although many of these secessionist movements are backward-looking, they also draw on a very modern discourse about minority rights and are alert to international precedents. If Scotland had voted for separation from the United Kingdom in 2014, and if Catalonia eventually secures a referendum that is recognized by Madrid, there is no doubt that this would have knock-on effects in Africa. At the current time, however, there are no secessionist movements that are poised on the brink of a breakthrough: in some cases, such as Cabinda within Angola, the odds are overwhelmingly stacked in favour of the central state, while in others the movements have been handicapped by internal divisions, as has been the case in Anglophone Cameroun, the Casamance and Barotseland.²⁶ Many of the movements have singularly failed to flesh out a convincing vision of what an alternative future would look like, even in the most general terms. Finally, as Pierre Engelbert has plausibly argued, secession is often a strategic bargaining position – or a pitch for recognition – rather than the desired outcome.²⁷ In Cameroun, for example, Anglophone elites have proved to be eminently susceptible to co-optation. But then it only takes a couple of successes before alternatives become thinkable. At the current time, Zanzibar looks like the most likely candidate for becoming a separate state. Like Scotland, it already enjoys considerable autonomy under the existing constitutional provisions. There is little doubt that it would be viable as a state, given that it existed before the decision to merge with Tanganyika in 1964. Moreover, because it is a very special case in the Tanzanian context, Zanzibar would not necessarily open a can of worms, as difficult as it would be for the mainland elite to accept the divorce. If the Nigerian government really lost control of large parts of the north, that might also provide the opportunity for the oil-producing states to break away. However, as things stand, it does not seem that there will be any major redrawing of the map of Africa in the immediate future. There are too many vested interests embedded in the existing arrangements and there is too much inertia at the international level. But the case of the Congo demonstrates that where the central state is weak, a variegated kind of sovereignty can emerge without forcing a change to the international boundaries: that is some regions under governmental control, others that fall under rebel movements and still others where hybridized forms of authority emerge.²⁸ In Africa's largest states, one might expect to see more of the same in this respect.

26 J.-C. Marut, *Le Conflit de Casamance: Ce qui Disent les Armes*, Paris 2010.

27 P. Engelbert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty and Sorrow*, Boulder 2009.

28 T. Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid Identity in the Eastern Congo: Power to the Margins*, Cambridge 2015, pp. 38–42.

2. The State of African Bureaucracy

If the redrawing of territorial boundaries provides the most tangible evidence for the ways in which African states are (or are not) being re-made, the restructuring of bureaucracies goes to the heart of what the state is all about. African bureaucracies have taken a battering over the past quarter-century. Although the list of formal functions has often remained the same – for example, the provision of primary-level education to the entire school-age population – the capacity to deliver has weakened over time. The demand for public goods has typically increased at the same time as the underpinning resources have been in decline. This has contributed to what some regard as the informalization of public functions. Education is a prime example because the low salaries of teachers – once considered as belonging to a rather prestigious profession – has spawned forms of moonlighting that have become the norm in countries such as Tanzania. During school hours, teachers cover a fraction of the curriculum, but provide additional classes in return for money after hours. This blurs the line between work time and leisure time and between governmental spaces (classrooms) and private spaces (homes).²⁹ Similarly, many academics in African Universities have multiple jobs that they use to augment their income – work which is done on government time. It is often the case that the authorities openly accept such arrangements because the alternative is the loss of key personnel altogether. In addition to salaries, there are many logistical challenges that make it difficult for bureaucrats to go about their jobs. In Ghana, for example, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is mandated to educate the population on their rights as citizens. This includes voter registration and sensitization over the importance of turning out to vote. In practice, NCCE officials routinely don't have serviceable vehicles. In the experience of this author, NCCE personnel relish the chance to get out of the office and to perform the jobs they are paid to do, but a basic lack of resources gets in the way.³⁰ During the peak years of Structural Adjustment, civil service reform was supposed to reduce the payroll, to rationalize the pay bands and to improve pay incentives overall. The idea was that the state could be run more smoothly on less money. But the underlying agenda was also highly ideological and, as Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan assert, was not rooted in an empirically-grounded assessment of how institutions actually functioned.³¹ Indeed, the World Bank's own data contradicted the claim that African bureaucracies were bloated. One study from the end of the 1990s came up with three significant findings: that Africa had fewer public servants than any other developing region, that the numbers had fallen under the adjustment regime and that the countries that were the most economically successful (Mauritius and Botswana) had

29 I am grateful to Dr Steve Kerr for this particular insight.

30 These comments are based on direct observation and discussions with NCCE officials in the Volta Region secretariat in Ho.

31 T. Bierschenk and J-P. Olivier de Sardan, *Studying the Dynamics of African Bureaucracies: An Introduction to States at Work*, in T. Bierschenk and J-P. Olivier de Sardan (eds.), *States at Work: Dynamics of African Bureaucracies*, Leiden 2007, p. 45.

actually expanded their public sectors employment to nearly four times the sub-Saharan average.³² The point can be exemplified with specific reference to policing where data is freely available. Ghana had a population of 25 million in 2012 and currently employs some 23,000 Police officers, thereby yielding a figure of 92 officers per 100,000 people.³³ Kenya had an estimated population of 46.8 million in 2012 and only 35,000 police officers.³⁴ That amounts to some 74.8 officers per 100,000 Kenyans. By comparison, Denmark employed 13,500 police for a population of 5.5 million, amounting to 245.5 per 100,000 inhabitants.³⁵ The same pattern would hold for Australia or Great Britain. Hence, in assessing the size of the bureaucracy, Goldsmith is surely justified when he concludes that “explanations for Africa’s much lower than average economic growth have to be sought elsewhere.”³⁶ It would also seem to follow that a reinvigorated role for the state might be rather important for Africa’s future escape from the impasse in which it still finds itself – despite the rhetoric of “Africa Rising.”

At the current time, the reconceptualization of the state is taking place in several domains, but in what follows I will single out three that are of particular importance. The first is with respect to the rural areas where, it has been argued, a process of de-agrarianization is under way. That is, it is claimed that the rural areas are not just losing population (in relative and absolute terms) to the city, but have long since ceased to produce enough food to feed the wider population – whilst themselves becoming dependent on urban and overseas remittances.³⁷ This is clearly related to more profound patterns of internal and international migration, but it also reflects the weaknesses of the agricultural economies that have not responded to adjustment reforms as predicted. The notion that the state should be directly engaged in production has long since been ruled out of court. Even the important agricultural extension roles played by government institutions, including the provision of key inputs such as fertilizer, seems unlikely to return despite the gravity of the food deficit in many countries. The emphasis has tended to fall on three other options: agri-business, land reform and improved land management practices. Under the first of these, the state has essentially allocated substantial tracts of land to external investors, including many from China, who have tended to plant non-food crops intended for overseas consumption.³⁸ This is an enclave strategy that essentially bypasses the peasant economy. With a rather different start and end point, land reform is ostensibly about the empowerment of farming populations through a more equitable distribution of land. This has remained a particularly emotive issue in those countries in

32 A.A. Goldsmith, *Africa’s Overgrown State Reconsidered: Bureaucracy and Economic Growth*, in: *World Politics* 51 (1999) 4, pp. 520-546.

33 <http://www.interpol.int/Member-countries/Africa/Ghana> (accessed 15 October 2015). On the police, see A. Hills, *Policing Africa and the Limits of Liberalization*, Boulder 2000.

34 <http://www.interpol.int/Member-countries/Africa/Kenya> (accessed 15 October 2015).

35 <http://www.interpol.int/Member-countries/Europe/Denmark> (accessed 15 October 2015).

36 Goldsmith, *Africa’s Overgrown State*, p. 530.

37 D. Bryceson and V. Jamal, *Farewell to Farms: De-Agrarianisation and Employment in Africa*, London 1997.

38 L. Cotula, *The Great African Land Grab? Agricultural Investments and the Global Food System*, London 2013.

Southern and Central Africa that have a prior history of settler colonialism.³⁹ Although the reforms are notionally intended to benefit ordinary households, they have also given the state a firmer grip over rural populations. Finally land management reforms, which intersect with the first two, are about changing the rules of the game in the allocation of access rights.⁴⁰ The term “land management” is loaded because it implies that land is a public good that ought to be subjected to regulation from above. It is also profoundly ambiguous because land is discursively converted back into private property in the blink of an eye. A received wisdom in donor discourse is that Africa’s land systems are a barrier to investment and risk-taking because they are fractured and governed by non-market logics. If land was titled and then opened up to the market, so the reasoning goes, the result would be much greater efficiency in the agricultural sector as a whole. The creation of land registers is the first step towards what is intended to be a fundamental reorganization in the way land is allocated. The problem is that the state does not always own the land. Often land is vested in lineages or chieftaincies – or is at least accessed through them. Moreover, it is not uncommon for land rights to overlap, most notably in areas where farmers and agriculturalists co-exist. It can safely be predicted that land titling would create winners and losers, and that pastoralists would be overwhelmingly on the losing end – as they have been in Kenya, with its well-developed land market, for some decades now.⁴¹

All of this has important implications for the ways in which states relate to their rural populations. In recent times there have been two approaches designed to improve rural governance. The first is essentially to co-opt traditional authorities, often vesting them with substantive powers while rendering them more accountable to central control. This is what is being attempted in Mozambique where traditional authorities have gone from being treated as pariahs to governmental partners.⁴² The second approach assumes the form of decentralization, which ostensibly brings land, and other collective resources such as forests, under the management of elected local authorities that are formally absorbed within the structures of the state. In practice, decentralization has often proceeded in tandem with the embedding of traditional authorities that are not usually popularly elected. Although local government systems have been in place for a couple of decades now, there is little evidence to suggest that they have won common acceptance.⁴³ Typically rural populations have been reluctant to pay taxes to local government bodies, which have remained dependent on subventions from the centre. Moreover, local authorities have lacked the capacity to effectively intervene in land allocation, which has

39 I. Scoones, *Debating Zimbabwe’s Land Reform*, Brighton 2014; B. Cousins and C. Walker (eds.), *Land Divided, Land Restored: Land Reform in South Africa for the 21st Century*, Johannesburg 2015.

40 A. Manji, *The Politics of Land Reform in Africa*, London 2006.

41 K. Homewood, *Pastoralists and Boundaries: Ecological Outcomes of Boundary Formation in Maasailand*, in: P. Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju (eds.), *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, London 1996.

42 L. Buur and H-M. Kyed, *State Recognition of Traditional Authority in Mozambique: The Nexus of Community Representation and State Assistance*, Uppsala 2005.

43 J.T. Dickovick and J.S. Wunsch (eds.), *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength*, Boulder 2014.

meant that existing conventions have in practice continued as before. If central authority were to attempt to drive land management reforms in a more intrusive manner, it would no doubt have a fight on its hands because the legitimacy of what is proposed is so much in question. But the basic fact still remains that farming has lost its attraction, and most especially so for rural youth. A classic example would be the Casamance region of Senegal which has an abundance of wetlands that are ideal for paddy rice production, but where the youth increasingly look to escape to Dakar and overseas to fashion a livelihood. The depopulation of the African countryside – already well-advanced in a vast country like Angola – may only increase the potential for “land grabs”. Herein, of course, lies an obvious vicious circle.

The second domain is that of Africa’s cities, many of which have experienced very rapid growth in recent times. The startling population projections for some of Africa’s largest agglomerations suggest that this is only going to gather momentum over the coming decades. The growth of cities has some obvious implications for the future of African states. The expansion of the Lagos Metropolitan Area is simply staggering: it is estimated to have grown from 5.3 million people in 1991 to around 21.3 million today.⁴⁴ The cities are the places where the state is most visibly present in the shape of government Ministries. The cities are also the places where populations are the most politically volatile – as is reflected in vote-switching and street protests. The challenges surrounding urban governance are profound, to the point of seeming intractable. As cities expand, the population that needs to be fed, housed and employed increases; there is greater congestion; and waste disposal becomes a serious public health concern. Although urban planners have attempted to channel the expansion, reality is typically several decades ahead of the plan. Such has been the case with Maputo where the planned expansion of the 1990s was designed for a much smaller population.⁴⁵ Moreover, as cities sprawl into what was once the countryside, large informal areas spring up beyond the contours of the formal plan – that is, until they are included retrospectively. Managing Africa’s urban expansion is arguably the greatest governance challenge that will be faced in the coming decades. In the current climate, it is difficult in most cases to imagine a highly co-ordinated response. Part of the reason is that, in the context of decentralization reforms, many of the challenges sit somewhere between being the concerns of metropolitan authorities and the central state, both of whom are strapped for resources. Only in South Africa, does local government command a significant chunk of the national budget: namely 25 per cent in 2010 as against an average of 8 per cent for all African countries. Despite its federal revenue formula, the corresponding figure for Nigeria is only at the continental average.⁴⁶ Although Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are much discussed, it striking that 70 per cent of all African PPPs have been dedicated to telecommunications and a further 11 to

44 <http://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-metrolagos.php> (accessed 15 October 2015).

45 P. Jenkins, *African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Land*, in: F. Locatelli and P. Nugent (eds.), *African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Space*, Leiden 2009.

46 T. Paulais, *Financing Africa’s Cities: The Imperative of Local Investment*, Washington DC 2012, table 3.4., p. 121.

transportation, with water and sanitation only receiving two per cent.⁴⁷ In a nutshell, the provision of urban amenities has not been considered sufficiently profitable to attract the interest of private investors.

What emerges, therefore, is a patchwork of responses in which a range of actors come up with their own short-term solutions. In many countries, land is allocated for urban settlement by those who claim to be the owners without reference to the central state or the metropolitan authorities. Informal settlements sprout in the absence of amenities such as running water or refuse disposal. It is only later on that some informal settlements benefit from upgrading in what is essentially an attempt at amelioration after the fact. In other cases, land is sold privately to developers who proceed to create gated housing schemes and the shopping malls that are much beloved by the African middle classes – typically away from the bustle of the inner cities. And finally, there are the grandiose projects in which the central authority enters into partnerships with external investors. Recent examples include the waterfront development and new cities of Angola and, even more so, Eko Atlantic City which is an ultra-modern “fantasy city” – dubbed “Africa’s Hong Kong”⁴⁸ – that is currently being built on land reclaimed from the Lagos lagoons. These initiatives, which are inevitably highly speculative in their financing, are based on the “boosting” commonly associated with global mega-cities. They look outwards to their counterparts elsewhere in the world and are more or less imagined as a concrete bubble that is sectioned off from the wider society. The role of the state is effectively that of the gatekeeper rather than the architect or builder, but if any of these projects were to come to fruition and create a functional form of urbanism, with associated “agglomeration effects”,⁴⁹ African states would bathe in some of the reflected glory.

This brings us conveniently to the third domain, which is the interface between Africa and the external world. During the first decades of independence, African governments typically tried to develop from behind tariff walls. The logical implication was that it would be necessary to maintain tight controls over the flow of goods at the international boundaries. In recent decades the push has rather been in the opposite direction. Under Structural Adjustment, exchange rates were allowed to float and most of the protections accorded to domestic industries were removed. This went along with the pursuit of regional integration initiatives promoted under the banner of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and supported by the African Union (AU).⁵⁰ After some decades when scepticism about infrastructure as the magic bullet was the *de rigeur*, the current development orthodoxy holds that Africa can achieve both regional integration and a more equitable insertion into the global economy through large-scale investments in

47 Paulais, *Financing*, pp. 170–171.

48 <http://www.ibtimes.com/nigerias-new-city-eko-atlantic-construction-lagos-fuels-criticism-praise-2048964> (accessed 15 October 2015). The project is being led by a company owned by a Lebanese-Nigerian, while much of the building work is being carried out by Chinese firms.

49 World Bank, *World Development Report, 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography*, Washington DC 2009.

50 F. Söderbaum and I. Taylor (eds.) *Afro-Regions: The Dynamics of Cross-Border Micro-Regionalism in Africa*, Uppsala 2008.

port facilities, roads, railways and bridges. As with urban planning, the role of the state has been redefined in the process. Hence, the core financing for the infrastructure is typically coming from the European Union or China, while African states serve as the guarantor. The physical infrastructure is built by multinational companies, often with local businesses as junior partners. And much of the subsequent management of infrastructural facilities is sub-contracted to private companies or public-private partnerships. All of this raises the important question of what impact the project for “respacing Africa” is likely to have upon African states themselves.⁵¹

Contrary to a pessimistic reading, it seems reasonable to conclude that we are not witnessing the hollowing out of African states under the reign of neo-liberal capitalism, but a reconfiguration of the institutional landscape. For many state employees, the nature of the work is undergoing important changes, and this is likely to become more prevalent over time. For example, one of the consequences of regional integration within the East African Community (EAC) is that Ugandan Customs officials are present in the Kenyan coastal port of Mombasa. The computer records that they generate for goods destined for the Uganda market are intended to be accessed by the Customs authorities in both countries in order to prevent double taxation and ease the flow along the transport corridor.⁵² At the same time, the value attached to state work continues to shift. Whereas some parts of the state apparatus have come to be considered as the “poor relations”, others are in the process of being re-valored. Typically, police personnel in African countries feel undervalued, especially as private security companies have moved in to plug the gaps.⁵³ At the same time, newly-constituted Revenue Authorities, which include the internal tax authorities and Customs, have been revitalized.⁵⁴ The sense of a pecking order often comes down to matters as simple as the newness of uniforms and office equipment, but it also extends to the possibilities for training, travel and additional perks. In Ghana, the Police Service may appear to be near the bottom of the food chain by comparison with the Immigration Service, but personnel within the latter also feel that they are less well-treated than their Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) counterparts. As Brenda Chalfin indicates, there are also internal hierarchies within CEPS, as some personnel are seconded to work with those drawn from private firms, but this is simply an additional complexity associated with the remaking of bureaucracy in general.⁵⁵ The importance attached to the revenue agencies, of course, reflects the economic reform agenda that has been ongoing since the 1980s. But it is also integral to the attainability of some of the ambitions associated with state agendas. It is unlikely that African states will ever become

51 U. Engel and P. Nugent (eds.), *Respacing Africa*, Leiden 2010.

52 In 2014, however, the problem was that the two sets of authorities are using different computer systems. Interview with Nelson Mugisha, URA Customs officer, Lwakhakha-Uganda, 30 August 2014.

53 R. Abrahamsen and M.C. Williams, *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*, Cambridge 2011; T. Diphooorn, *Twilight Policing: Private Security and Violence in Urban South Africa*, Berkeley 2015.

54 O.H. Fjeldstad and M. Moore, Revenue Authorities and Public Authority in Sub-Saharan Africa, in: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47 (2009) 1, pp.1-18.

55 B. Chalfin, *Neoliberal Frontiers: An Ethnography of Sovereignty In West Africa*, Chicago 2010, p. 231.

fiscal states in the accepted sense of the term, but certain forms of extraversion do make it more likely that African states will have the capacity to deliver a range of public goods on the back of rising revenues. Over the past decade, taxes as a percentage of GDP have risen across the continent, but the progress has typically been slow – and the picture is even less impressive once oil revenues are taken out of the equation.⁵⁶ If African states are to truly re-invent themselves, we can be sure that raising revenues and establishing trust in the tax system will be fundamental – as they have been everywhere else.

3. Conclusion

Within African Studies, it has become fashionable to document people and goods on the move. Whether globalization is seen as potentially advantageous, or is regarded with greater scepticism, the general message is that Africa is undergoing rapid change, and that on the whole this presents exciting prospects that are worthy of closer investigation. After all, who can fail to be intrigued by the revelation that there are already up to 130,000 Africans living in the Chinese city of Guangzhou?⁵⁷ To turn the focus back on African states might seem like a retrograde step because they are probably the least susceptible to rapid change. In this paper, I have opted to be unfashionable for the reason that I believe that states continue to matter. They are influenced by the global flows in their own ways, as I have sought to demonstrate with respect to bureaucracies, but they also continue to influence the ways in which Africans experience globalization. To a remarkable extent, the *idea of the state* that was inherited with independence has displayed a remarkable resilience even when its materiality has been placed in question.

In this article, I have argued that some fundamental challenges to state boundaries have arisen as political actors struggle to fashion alternative imaginaries and to carve out territory. But for all the turmoil in particular regions, it does not seem very likely that many new states, Islamist or otherwise, will coalesce in the near future. Nor does it seem remotely likely that in the era of neo-liberalism, African states will become any less important. Aside from the essential gatekeeper functions they perform, there are certain public goods that the state is best placed to provide. Ironically, at least when viewed in the light of Weber, the monopoly over violence, and hence the guarantee of personal and collective security, is probably not one of those. But states have a role to play in making African cities more livable and in facilitating Africa's place in world commerce. As Africa's cities grow apace, it is reasonable to expect that urban populations will assert their demands in a more direct manner. Herein lies the possibility for the emergence of new kinds of pro-

56 For example, in Ghana tax revenue as a percentage of GDP (excluding oil) rose from 11.9 per cent in 2003 to an estimated 14.1 per cent in 2013. Table 1, <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/Africa-tax-and-inequality-report-Feb2014.pdf> (accessed 15 October 2015).

57 M. Lee, *Africa's World Trade: Informal Economies and Globalization From Below*, London 2015, pp. 20, 22; citing H. Haugen, *Nigerians in China: A Second State of Immobility*, in: *International Migration* 50 (2012) 2.

ductive social contracts.⁵⁸ Of all the things that the state can contribute, re-fashioning a sense of political community is arguably amongst the most profound.

58 P. Nugent, *States and Social Contracts in Africa*, in: *New Left Review* 63 (2010), pp. 35-68.

BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

Andrea Komlosy: Arbeit. Eine globalhistorische Perspektive. 13. bis 21. Jahrhundert, Wien: Promedia 2014, 204 S.

Rezensiert von
Jürgen Schmidt, Berlin

Ist das Verfassen dieser Rezension Arbeit? Lohn in Form eines Honorars gibt es nicht. Die Lektüre des Buches erfolgte zum Teil in der Freizeit auf dem Balkon. Sie war anregend und gewinnbringend an Erkenntnissen. Last und Mühsal hielten sich also in Grenzen. Andererseits geschah das Verfassen des Textes überwiegend während der Arbeitszeit und am Arbeitsplatz als Teil wissenschaftlicher Arbeit, die wiederum entlohnt wurde. Ohne diesen Bezugspunkt hätte ich das Buch kaum gelesen, also doch eine Form der Pflicht und Bürde.

Um solche Spannungslinien geht es in Andrea Komlosys Buch „Arbeit. Eine globalhistorische Perspektive“: Was macht Arbeit aus? Wie entwickelten sich Konzepte, Begriffe und Wirklichkeiten von Arbeit zwischen dem Hochmittelalter und der Gegenwart? Ein breites Programm, das sich Komlosy vorgenommen hat, aber sou-

verän – wenngleich wohl unvermeidbar mit Zuspitzungen und Verallgemeinerungen – meisterte. Das Buch gliedert sich in zwei unterschiedliche Teile. Auf den ersten rund 80 Seiten geht die Autorin das Thema begriffsgeschichtlich und konzeptionell an. Im zweiten Teil schneidet sie sechs Zeitachsen und analysiert zu jeweiligen Stichjahren – 1250, 1500, 1700, 1800, 1900, 2010 – die Entwicklung der Arbeit und Arbeitsverhältnisse.

Konzeptionell geht Komlosy von einem weiten Arbeitsbegriff aus. Die Einengung auf Lohn- und Erwerbsarbeit sowie auf ein „Normalerwerbsverhältnis“ gelte es zu überwinden. Sowohl aus geschlechterspezifischer als auch aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive sei offensichtlich, dass Arbeit sich keineswegs in diesen Ausprägungen erschöpfe. Zahlreiche Formen der Arbeit in Haushalt, Pflege und Reproduktion würden nicht bezahlt, und manche seien auch nicht bezahlbar. Ihre zentrale Hypothese ist aber die „von der Gleichzeitigkeit und der Kombination unterschiedlicher Arbeitsverhältnisse. Die Vorstellung einer linearen oder stufenweisen Abfolge von Produktionsweisen und mit diesen verbundenen Arbeitsverhältnissen wird zurückgewiesen“ (S. 7). Neben dem von Komlosy konstatierten unbestreitbaren Vordringen von Lohnarbeit, sieht sie als parallele „Grundkonstanten“ der Arbeits-

welt „Sklaverei, Zwangsarbeit, Subsistenzarbeit“ (S. 23).

Wie es zur Durchsetzung der Vorstellung der bezahlten Erwerbsarbeit als Ideal kam, zeigt Komlosy in einem kurzen Durchgang durch die Diskursgeschichte zum Thema Arbeit von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Lange Zeit hätte die Unterscheidung in mühevollen Arbeit auf der einen Seite (labor, labour, Arbeit, z. B.) und Verwirklichung im Werk (opus, work, Werk) auf der anderen Seite das Spannungsverhältnis markiert. Mit der Ökonomisierung der Arbeit im 18. Jahrhundert erhielt Arbeit ihre engere Zuschreibung als Erwerbsarbeit und sinnerschöpfende, Fortschritt schaffende Kraft. Zwar habe es gegen diese liberal-ökonomische Vorstellung von sozialistischer („Entfremdung“) bis hin zu konservativer (Ökonomisierung der Gesellschaft) Seite Kritik gegeben. Doch letztlich blieb im Zentrum der Debatten ein „Arbeitsbegriff, der Arbeit mit Warenproduktion, Wertschöpfung und Tauschwert verbindet“ (S. 18).

Gegen diese „eurozentristische Meistererzählung“ bringt Komlosy zum einen die feministische Perspektive in Stellung: Sie rückte Haus- und Subsistenzarbeit, „die prinzipiell ohne Geld und ohne Markt“ (S. 53) stattfindet, ins Bewusstsein. Zum anderen eröffnete die globalgeschichtliche Perspektive die Möglichkeit, sich „auf den Eigensinn anderer Kulturen einzulassen und Sichtweisen herauszuhören [...], die vielleicht auch neue Einsichten in die europäischen Verhältnisse bringen“ (S. 24). An diese konzeptionellen Einordnungen schließen sich konkrete Untersuchungen des Wortgebrauchs „Arbeit“ im Wörterbuch der Brüder Grimm sowie im Chinesischen an, denen Komlosy eine Vorstel-

lung von „Analysekategorien“ folgen lässt. Unter anderem stellt sie „Begriffspaare zur Kategorisierung von Arbeitsverhältnissen“ – selbständig/unselbständig, frei/unfrei, ehrbar/unehrbar, freiwillig/Zwang, bezahlt/unbezahlt, formell/informell, sozial abgesichert/nicht abgesichert, organisiert/nicht organisiert – sowie „Grauzonen“ von Arbeit und Nicht-Arbeit vor. „Quer durch alle Bereiche“ liefern dagegen Kategorien wie Geschlecht, Familienstand, Alter, Ethnizität, das Verhältnis von Arbeit und Nicht-Arbeit. In dieser Breite und Vielfalt kann Komlosy in den folgenden „Zeitschnitten“ Arbeit über mehr als 700 Jahre und in globaler Perspektive nicht behandeln. Sie hätte sonst keine 200-seitige Einführung schreiben können, sondern ein viel umfassenderes Werk verfassen müssen.

Daher kommt dem letzten Abschnitt des ersten Teils eine zentrale Bedeutung für den Aufbau des zweiten Teils der Arbeit zu. Hier betont Komlosy noch einmal, dass es ihr um die Gleichzeitigkeit von unterschiedlichen „Arbeitsverhältnissen“ geht, sie, „die Haushalts-Perspektive für das Herausarbeiten von Verbindungen“ für entscheidend hält (S. 77), über Migrationsprozesse Haushalte in überörtliche Verbindungen einbezogen werden und über ungleichen Tausch und überregionale Güterketten eine „ungleiche interregionale Arbeitsteilung“ (S. 82) entstand.

So vorbereitet eilt Komlosy auf rund 15 bis 20 Seiten pro Stichjahr durch die Geschichte der Arbeitsverhältnisse. Einleitend erfolgt jeweils eine „allgemeine Charakteristik der Weltwirtschaft sowie der politischen Kräfteverhältnisse“ (S. 85), dem ausgehend von den Arbeitsverhältnissen vor Ort – in der Regel mitteleuropä-

ische Regionen – sich eine Untersuchung der überregionalen sowie großräumigen Verbindungen anschließt. Die synthetisierende Leistung ist dabei in den einzelnen Abschnitten beeindruckend. Eine wichtige Rolle spielt an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit das Verlagswesen in Komlosys Darstellung, da sich hier vielfältige Überschneidungsebenen ergaben: zwischen Männer- und Frauenarbeit, zwischen Arbeit im Haushalt und Arbeit für den Markt, Formen der Selbständigkeit und Unselbständigkeit. In der hochindustrialisierten Welt um 1900 dagegen „(drängte) der auf Erwerbsarbeit eingeschränkte, proletarische Arbeitsbegriff sich auch den Menschen in jenen Weltregionen auf, in denen das industrialistisch-kommodifizierte Arbeitsverständnis gar keine oder nur für kleine Enklaven Bedeutung hatte“ (S. 162). Wie das alternative Verständnis in den anderen Weltregionen aussah, wird allerdings nicht weiter elaboriert.

Zur gleichen Zeit um 1900 erlebte die europäische, bürgerlich geprägte Vorstellung der Familie als „Ort, an dem nicht gearbeitet wurde“ (S. 163), ihren Höhepunkt. Dabei wurde gerade an diesem Ort die Gleichzeitigkeit verschiedener Arbeitsverhältnisse sichtbar. War dieses Ideal durchaus in Arbeiterfamilien präsent, ließ es sich in der ökonomischen Wirklichkeit oft nicht umsetzen: die Mitarbeit aller Familienmitglieder war notwendig. Und im bürgerlichen Haushalt war die Gleichzeitigkeit der verschiedenen Arbeitsverhältnisse und Arbeitsvorstellungen auf engstem Raum besonders offensichtlich. Für Dienstboten, die zum Haushalt aber nicht zur Familie gehörten, war zu arbeiten „kein Makel, sondern eine Pflicht. Stillen, Wickeln, Kochen, Servieren, Empfangen,

Putzen, Spaziergehen, Spielen, Lehren war alles Arbeit, wenn es von Dienstboten verrichtet wurde. Taten es die Frauen und Töchter, geschah es aus Liebe“ (S. 163).

Für die Gegenwart schließlich betont Komlosy die „große Fragmentierung“ der Arbeitsbedingungen und Erwerbsbiografien. Das Spektrum reicht von der „sozialpartnerschaftlich sozialisierte[n] ArbeiterInnen- und Angestelltenklasse“ und den Aufsteigern und Gewinnern neuer Technologien über prekär-flexibel beschäftigte Arbeitskräfte bis hin zu Arbeitslosen und Sozialhilfeempfängern, die zu gemeinnützigen Arbeiten herangezogen werden.

Zwei Einschränkungen seien neben dem positiven Gesamteindruck erwähnt. Zum Einen: Was in ihrer „tour de force“ durch die Weltgeschichte der Arbeit in den Hintergrund gedrängt wird, ist eine stärker kulturgeschichtliche, auch ethnografisch gewichtete Herangehensweise. Während im ersten Teil diese Ansätze vorhanden sind, geraten sie im zweiten Teil der Zeitschnitte in den Hintergrund. Dort ist die Arbeit im Wesentlichen eine konzise, zuspitzende Wirtschaftsgeschichte aus dem Blickwinkel der Arbeitsverhältnisse.

Zum anderen ist trotz Komlosys Kritik an einer eurozentristischen Sichtweise auf das Thema Arbeit die europäische Dimension vorherrschend. Die Autorin räumt selbst ein, dass eine „durchgängige Multiperspektivität“ sich „nur in einem kooperativen Vorhaben realisieren“ lasse, „in welches Forschende mit Regionalkompetenzen aus allen betroffenen Weltregionen eingebunden“ wären“. Von daher ist dieser zuletzt genannte Einwand weniger eine Kritik an Komlosys Buch, sondern zeigt die bestehenden Schwierigkeiten globalgeschichtlicher Ansätze. Denn Komlosys Verdienst

ist es, eben mit der globalgeschichtlichen Herangehensweise die eigenen, zentral-europäischen Vorstellungen hinterfragt und auf ihre begrenzte Reichweite aufmerksam gemacht zu haben.

Boris Barth / Stefanie Gänger / Niels P. Petersson (Hrsg.): Globalgeschichte. Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven (= Globalgeschichte, Bd. 17), Frankfurt am Main: Campus 2014, 320 S.

Rezensiert von
Matthias Middell, Leipzig

Der Titel dieses äußerst inspirierenden Sammelbandes soll all diejenigen irritieren, die mit dem Singular Globalgeschichte noch immer Phantasien von der Möglichkeit eines universalhistorischen Allumfassungsanspruchs verbinden – auf Französisch wäre das Missverständnis auf den Begriff der *histoire totale* zu bringen. Dagegen machen die Herausgeber geltend, dass jede Globalgeschichte im Konkreten beginnt und sich möglichst nicht in schiefer Abstraktion verlieren soll, aber doch den globalen Charakter der zugrunde liegenden Prozesse im Auge behalten müsse. Sie gehören dem Arbeitszusammenhang der Konstanzer Forschungsstelle „Globale Prozesse“ an, die aus dem Preisgeld des Leibniz-Preises der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft für Jürgen Osterhammel finanziert wird. Nicht alle arbeiten in Konstanz, sondern u.a. auch in Cambridge,

Köln, Freiburg, London, Washington, Sheffield und Zürich. Die für eine Geschichte der Weltgeschichtsschreibung in Deutschland evtl. bedeutsame Frage, ob wir es mit einer Art Osterhammel-Schule zu tun haben, bleibt halb beantwortet. Im engeren Sinne wird eine solche Identifikation strikt vermieden, im weiteren Sinne ist die Zahl der internen Referenzen auf Konzepte und Begriffe so hoch, dass zumindest von einer dichten epistemologischen Gemeinschaft und nicht nur von einem losen Diskussionszusammenhang gesprochen werden kann.

Hervorgehoben wird ein Globalisierungsbegriff, der Verflechtungen über mehrere Kontinente in den Mittelpunkt rückt, während davon abgegrenzt Globalgeschichte als „häufig nicht primär an der Analyse von Verflechtungen interessiert“ beschrieben wird (S. 10). Während also Globalisierungsgeschichte in dieser Lesart von vornherein einen Gegenstand hat, müssten Globalgeschichten „von irgendetwas“ erst noch jeweils ihr Objekt bestimmen – etwa die Musik im 20. Jh. (Martin Rempe) oder eine Geschichte des Sports (Jürgen Osterhammel). Mit John Darwin¹ wird gleichzeitig postuliert, dass eigentlich jede Geschichtsschreibung ihren Gegenstand in einem globalen Kontext situiert, auch wenn dieser nicht explizit benannt, untersucht und beschrieben wird oder gar explizit geleugnet wird, wie es bei jenen Geschichten der Fall ist, deren absolute Einzigartigkeit behauptet wird. Eine nachdrückliche Situierung im globalen Zusammenhang verlangt allerdings eine gründliche Kenntnis zumindest mehrerer Kontexte, Offenheit für die Provinzialisierung der bislang an diesen Gegenstand angelegten Begriffe und Konzepte sowie

eine explizite Reflexion der eigenen Positionalität.

Ein Folgeproblem ist das der territorialen Rahmung globalhistorischer Studien zwischen der längst nicht mehr selbstverständlichen Zugrundelegung nationalstaatlicher bzw. volkswirtschaftlicher Untersuchungseinheiten und einer Weitung ins Globale von Weltregierung und Weltwirtschaft. Hier sieht die Einleitung eines der wichtigsten Probleme, für das die Globalgeschichte bisher noch keine völlig befriedigende Antwort gefunden hat. Bernd-Stefan Grewe schließt hieran mit einer Geschichte über einen spektakulären Goldraub auf dem Schiffstransport vom südafrikanischen Durban nach London an, die er nutzt, um die Vorzüge des Commodity-Chains-Ansatzes herauszustellen, mit dem sich globale Zusammenhänge deutlicher machen lassen als bei rein territorialisierten Untersuchungsräumen. Ebenso wie man Akteuren bei ihren grenzüberschreitenden Aktivitäten quasi über die Schulter schauen kann, lassen sich auch Waren von ihrer Verfertigung aus Rohstoffen und Halbfabrikaten bis zur Distribution an den Endkonsumenten verfolgen, auf jeder Station neue abzweigende Vernetzungen beobachten und Machtasymmetrien ebenso wie Aufmerksamkeitsverteilungen analysieren. Was in dem Aufsatz von Terence Hopkins und Immanuel Wallerstein 1984² noch eine vage Ahnung von der Produktivität eines Zugangs war, hat sich inzwischen zu einer ausdifferenzierten Untersuchungsindustrie ausgewachsen, die im gegenwärtigen Interesse der *global economic history* an der *great divergence* etwas unterbelichtet erscheint.

Stefanie Gänger entwickelt eindrucksvoll ihre These von der globalen Wirksamkeit

der Chinarinde seit der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jh.s, gewonnen an den Hängen der Anden und angewandt in den vielen Malariagegenden der Welt. Sie macht deutlich, dass die gewonnenen und vertriebenen Mengen durchaus ausreichen, um die erhebliche, aber eben doch kalkulierbare Zahl Malaria-exponierter Menschen zu behandeln und den Widerstand einer traditionellen Medizin, die sich von solcher Medikamentengabe wenig versprach, zu überwinden. Mithilfe der Archive der spanischen Kolonialverwaltung, der Berichte über die Behandlung von Militärkontingenten und der Stellungnahmen von Ärzten zu den Erfolgen der Malariabekämpfung kann sie zeigen, dass die Chinarinde den Aufschwung der Plantagenwirtschaft, das Überwinden von Rückschlägen bei der Ausweitung der Frontierzonen in Nordamerika und ein vorsichtiges Vordringen in Asien und Afrika von den küstennahen Stützpunkten ermöglichte. Vorsichtigerweise lässt die Vf. allerdings offen, ob die Kausalität, die bisher zwischen Fortschritten in der Infektiologie und Tropenmedizin einerseits und der zweiten Welle europäischer Kolonialisierung nach 1880 vermutet, neu bewertet werden muss.

Christof Dejung versucht den indischen Baumwollhandel aus dem allzu engen Korsett einer allein imperialgeschichtlichen Betrachtungsweise herauszulösen und folgt damit einer von Kaori Sugihara vorgeschlagenen Perspektive, den innerasiatischen Handel höher zu gewichten und insgesamt die Weltwirtschaft des 19. und 20. Jh.s eher als Nebeneinander regionaler Subsysteme denn als bereits vollständig integrierte Globalwirtschaft aufzufassen. Ein solcher Ansatz ist vor einigen Jahren

bereits Adam McKeown bei der Analyse dreier global wirksamer, aber letztlich auf Großregionen konzentrierter Migrationsregimes nützlich gewesen³ und hat – ganz ähnlich wie Dejungs Schlussabschnitt – die These einer Deglobalisierung in den 1920er Jahren geschliffen.

Boris Barth widmet sich der Finanzwirtschaft und beginnt mit dem Erdbeben 1906 in San Francisco, dessen Folgeschäden infolge weit ausgreifender Brände die internationale Versicherungswirtschaft herausforderten. Ach ihn beschäftigt das von Harold James formulierte Paradigma der Ent-Globalisierung, die er zumindest nuanciert. Allerdings ist er mit seiner Untersuchung auch näher an James' Gegenstand als etwa Dejung. Deutlich wird dadurch, wie stark der Periodisierungsvorschlag zweier großer Globalisierungswellen beginnend in den 1880er Jahren und in den 1990er Jahren der Beobachtung des internationalen Finanzsektors geschuldet ist.

Sven Trakulhun erörtert – ausgehend von seiner Beschäftigung mit dem Königreich Siam und den dort tätigen Missionaren – den Platz der Ideengeschichte in einer globalen Zirkulationsanalyse und plädiert dafür, Ideen in den Kontexten von Wissenssystemen mitsamt ihrer Praktiken von Aneignung, Benutzung, Verdrängung usw. zu untersuchen. Valeska Huber nimmt den Faden auf und geht der Frage nach, wie das Englische zur Sprache der Globalisierung wurde. Sie kann anhand des Projektes eines British American Scientific International Commercial (Basic) English von Ogden und Richards zeigen, dass die Ausbreitung des Englischen weder allein Nebenprodukt größerer Prozesse noch die radikale Vereinfachung zum internationalen Kommunikationsmedium allein

Effekt der Nutzung durch sprachliche Dilettanten, sondern vielmehr auch Folge zahlreicher strategischer Prozesse war.

Analog zu den regionalisierten Teilmärkten des Welthandels im 19. Jh. beobachtet Martin Remppe massive Fragmentierungen in der internationalen Musikermobilität des 20. Jh.s und beginnt mit dem Beispiel des amerikanischen Folk-Sängers Sixto Rodriguez, dessen Platten in den 70er Jahren zu Hause eher floppten, aber besonders in Südafrika größte Popularität errangen, ohne dass der Künstler selbst etwas davon mitbekommen hätte. Ein anwachsendes Tourneewesen stand in Spannung zu gewerkschaftlichen Bemühungen, die Auftrittsmärkte für heimische Künstler zu schützen. Warum allerdings solch gegenläufige Tendenzen nicht mit dem Begriff Globalisierung verbunden werden könnten (S. 206), erschließt sich nur, wenn man diesen Begriff für eine quasi idealtypische Entgrenzung in alle Richtungen reserviert. Dass Globalisierung eine Dialektik von De- und Reterritorialisierung, einen immer wieder erneuerten Zusammenhang von *flows* und *control* darstellt, bleibt dabei undiskutiert. Remppe macht aber zu Recht darauf aufmerksam, dass eine inzwischen in die Alltagssprache vorgedrungene Reduktion von Globalisierung auf Delimitierung und schrankenlose Verflechtung der beobachtbaren Widersprüchlichkeit nicht entspricht. Bleibt der Globalisierungsbegriff für einen scheinbar einheitlichen linearen Prozess reserviert, wird man diesem Dilemma nicht wirklich effektiv begegnen können. Der Beitrag Rempes (wie weitere in diesem Band) weist allerdings in eine andere Richtung – anstelle von Globalisierung im Singular erscheint es plausibler, von unterschiedlichen, parallelen oder ge-

geneinander gerichteten Globalisierungsprojekten auszugehen, die in ihrer Summe die nur scheinbar widersprüchlichen Tendenzen von Verflechtung und Fragmentierung ergeben. Einer solchen Sichtweise auf „Vielfalt und Formenreichtum von Globalisierungen“ neigt wohl auch Jürgen Osterhammel in Abgrenzung von der unter Sozialwissenschaftlern grassierenden Verflechtungseuphorie der 1990er Jahre zu (S. 234-236), der in seinem Aufsatz diese vermittelnde Perspektive an die Globalgeschichte des Sports anlegt. Dabei macht er auf die „Gründlichkeit, ja Radikalität weltweiter Vereinheitlichung ... verbunden mit einer ungewöhnlichen Konsequenz von Normbeachtung und Normerzwingung“ als Spezifikum des Sports aufmerksam (S. 238). Dass dies nicht historische Unwandelbarkeit bedeutet, zeigen die zahllosen Strategien internationaler Sportverbände in jüngerer Zeit, die Regeln ihrer Sportart den Bedürfnissen des Fernsehmarktes anzupassen. Ein eigenes, global wirksames Sportrecht und die erstaunlich unabhängige Institutionalisierung der global agierenden Sportverbände gehören ebenso zu den Beobachtungen, die es plausibel erscheinen lassen, den Sport als Vorreiter bei der Erzeugung „weltumspannender Interaktionsräume“ zu sehen. Die Orientierung an globalen Leistungsnormen (materialisiert in Rekordlisten), eine weltweite Öffentlichkeit, die diesen Wettbewerb verfolgt, und eine hochgradige Politisierung (durch Staaten ebenso wie durch Verbände/NGOs) gehören ebenfalls zu den Charakteristika eines globalisierten Sports. Abweichend von den übrigen Beiträgen liefert Osterhammel die ausgewählte Globalgeschichte – den Aufstieg von Basketball in China – den theoretischen

Überlegungen nach und exemplifiziert einige der benannten Aspekte.

Hierauf folgen zwei Beiträge von Niels P. Petersson zur Reformulierung der Agenda von *labour history* in globaler Perspektive (anhand eines Tarifkonflikts 1975–1978 um die Non-Domiciled Seafarers in Großbritannien) und von Jan C. Jansen, der die jüngste Migrationsgeschichte der klassischen Verflechtungsregion Mittelmeerraum auf ihre fragmentierenden Tendenzen abklopft, die eher zu subregionaler Homogenisierung entlang ethnisch-religiöser Kriterien führen und damit im diachronen Vergleich zu einer „Entmischung“ für die Gesamtregion, wobei darin auch die Auswanderung ganzer Minoritäten enthalten ist. Auch hier sieht sich der Leser wieder mit *global history* als Konnektivitätsgeschichte konfrontiert, der das Beispiel entgegen gehalten wird, um mit gegenläufigen Tendenzen auf die Unvollständigkeit von „Globalisierung“ aufmerksam zu machen bzw. „ein historisches Phänomen in den Blick [zu nehmen], das globalhistorisch eminent wichtig erscheint, das aber mit den typischen Narrativen der Globalhistorie nur schwer vereinbar ist“ (S. 295).

Globalgeschichten eignen sich, so kann man nach Lektüre dieses überaus anregenden Bandes folgern, hervorragend zur aufregenden Hypothesenbildung. Dies macht einen großen Teil der Attraktivität heutiger Weltgeschichtsschreibung aus, denn sie führt der Leserschaft bislang übersehene Verbindungen zwischen oft weit voneinander entfernt anzutreffenden Phänomenen, Verursachungen und Wirkungen vor. Dieser Art Geschichte zu schreiben haftet etwas sympathisch Subversives an, denn immer wieder können vorschnell formulierte Verallgemeine-

rungen vor allem aus den Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften untergraben werden. Die Beiträge dieses Bandes setzen mit ihrer Miniarbeit keineswegs an unbeachtlichen Randlagen an, sondern zielen jeweils auf zentrale Fragen der Reichweite, der Periodisierung, von Kausalzusammenhängen und der narrativen Ausgestaltung von Globalgeschichte. Allerdings sind sie mehrheitlich durch eine gewisse Zögerlichkeit charakterisiert, diese zentralen Fragen auch direkt anzugehen und aus dem beeindruckenden Materialreichtum, der allen Aufsätzen zugrunde liegt, eine eindeutige und deshalb auch evtl. angreifbare These zu formulieren. Dieses Zögern wird ebenso sympathisch wie nachvollziehbar begründet – Globalgeschichte steht leicht in der Gefahr, historische Kontingenz auszublenden; für viele Gebiete verfügen wir nur über einen unzureichenden Forschungsstand, die Sache selbst erweist sich als zu komplex für die aktuell verfügbaren Theorieentwürfe und Begrifflichkeiten. So laden die präsentierten Globalgeschichten aufgrund der hohen Qualität ihrer Ausarbeitung dazu ein, ihren Platz in einer Globalgeschichte weiter zu untersuchen. Aber man sieht sich auch mit einem Dilemma konfrontiert, über das man des Öfteren von angehenden Globalhistoriker/innen hören kann. Globalgeschichten eignen sich für (höchst anspruchsvolle) akademische Qualifizierungsarbeiten, denn sie erlauben die Anwendung der ganzen Bandbreite professioneller Techniken, die das Fach entwickelt hat. Zugleich aber verlangen das allgemeinere Publikum und die Nachbardisziplinen eine leichter in klaren (also unterkomplexen) Thesen konsumierbare Globalgeschichte, und dieser Appetit wird durch die Versprechen, die jede der

Globalgeschichten auch enthält, noch gesteigert.

Der vorliegende Band repräsentiert das beeindruckend hohe Niveau der deutschen Globalgeschichtsschreibung, die sich inzwischen durch eine bemerkenswerte Ausdifferenzierung nach Themengebieten, Methoden und internationalen Kooperationen auszeichnet.

Anmerkungen:

- 1 J. Darwin, Writing Global History (Or Trying To), in: Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften 20 (2009) 2, S. 59–74, hier S. 59.
- 2 K. Hopkins/I. Wallerstein, Commodity Chains in the World Economy Prior to 1800, in: Review 10 (1984) 1, S. 157–170.
- 3 A. McKeown, Global Migration 1846–1940, in: Journal of World History 15 (2004) 2, S. 155–189.

**Judith Große/ Francesco Spöring/
Jana Tschurennev (Hrsg.): Biopolitik
und Sittlichkeitsreform. Kampagnen
gegen Alkohol, Drogen und Prostitu-
tion, 1880–1950 (= Globalgeschichte,
Bd. 18), Frankfurt am Main: Campus
2014, 384 S.**

Rezensiert von
Judith Fröhlich, Zürich

Die Konstruktion von sozialen Problemen, namentlich von Devianz, beschäftigt Historiker und Soziologen seit einigen Dekaden.¹ Dabei gelten Alkoholismus, Drogen- sucht und abweichende Sexualpraktiken als Bestandteile derselben diskursiven Felder, die das Verhältnis zwischen dem moder-

nen Staat, Gesellschaft und Individuum bestimmen.² Selten aber wird hervorgehoben, dass ein und dieselben Akteure die definitorischen Ansprüche über Devianz entwickelten und wirkungsmächtig in sozialen, medizinisch-psychiatrischen und politischen Bereichen durchsetzten. Hier setzt der vorliegende Sammelband an.³ Der in der Einleitung von den HerausgeberInnen veranschlagte Leitgedanke ist, dass im ausgehenden 19. Jh. zivilgesellschaftliche, so genannte Sittlichkeitsreformbewegungen auf globaler Ebene zu wichtigen Problematikern avancierten, deren Moralvorstellungen bis ins 20. Jh. biopolitische, staatlich sanktionierte Maßnahmen der Bevölkerungskontrolle prägten. Im gewählten Fokus bietet der Sammelband damit einen wichtigen Beitrag zur „Geschichte von moralischem Denken“⁴, die derzeit eine Konjunktur erlebt.

Die zehn Kapitel sind in vier thematische Teile geordnet. Im ersten Kapitel, das zugleich einzige des Teils I „Protestantische Mission und der frühe transnationale Sittlichkeitsaktivismus“, zeigt Ian Tyrrell, dass US-amerikanische Missionarsgesellschaften nicht einfach Mittler des US-amerikanischen Empire waren, sondern durch ihre Erfahrungen in Süd- und Ostasien den Kosmopolitismus zuhause ebenso wie den „missionarischen Ethos“ (S. 73) der US-amerikanischen Außenpolitik formten. Die Aufnahme westlicher Ideen durch lokale Vereinigungen in Asien oder anderen nicht-westlichen Teilen der Welt bleiben in Tyrrells Beitrag ausgeklammert, bilden aber den Gegenstand weiterer Kapitel in den Teilen III „Transnationale Diskurse und nationale Mobilisierungsprozesse“ und IV „Regulierungen und Effekte“.

Teil II „Psychiatrie, Sozialhygiene und die wissenschaftliche Kodierung des Moralischen“ gilt dem Zusammenspiel von Moralvorstellungen und Professionalisierungsbestrebungen in Medizin und Psychiatrie an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jh. Martin Lengwiler untersucht die Anfänge der modernen Psychiatrie, die sich entlang der „Alkoholfrage“ konstituierten. Lengwiler zeigt auf, dass die psychiatrische Definition vom Alkoholkonsum als „Hauptursache eines pathologischen Degenerationsprozesses“ (S. 90) sich in die kritische sozialpsychische Stimmung im Westen am *fin de siècle* fügte. Trotz einer internationalen Orientierung ergaben sich nationale Unterschiede in der Tragweite psychiatrischer Debatten. Im deutschsprachigen Raum bzw. Frankreich zeitigte die Psychiatrie Einfluss auf zivilgesellschaftliche Abstinenzbewegungen, wohingegen sie kaum politische Geltung erreichte. Demgegenüber blieb die psychiatrische Forschung in den USA, die vergleichsweise spät institutionalisiert wurde, in öffentlichen Debatten marginalisiert. Den Führungsanspruch in der Prohibitionsbewegung setzten protestantisch-freikirchliche Kreise durch, deren Zielsetzungen mit staatlichen Gesetzgebungen übereinstimmten. Ähnlich stellt Francesco Spöring zur vom Schweizer Psychiater Auguste Forel geprägten Abstinenzbewegung im deutschsprachigen Raum fest, dass dieser ein sozialhygienisches, also an der Volksgesundheit ausgerichtetes Denken eigen gewesen sei, das religiöse Prinzipien dezidiert abgelehnt habe. Eine gelungene Ergänzung zu den Befunden der beiden Autoren bietet Annika Hoffmann mit einem Beitrag zu den Debatten um den nichtmedizinischen Opium- und Kokainkonsum in

der Weimarer Republik. Laut Hoffmann sei keine lineare Medikalisierung in der Konstruktion vom Drogenproblem festzustellen. Im Gegenteil steuerten moralisch und sittlich-religiös geprägte Bedenken die vorgeblich wissenschaftlich-objektiven Debatten, ja sogar die rhetorischen Strategien von Ärzten.

Teil III gilt der Aneignung von internationalen Debatten in nationalen Bewegungen. Judith Große untersucht die zivilgesellschaftlichen Kampagnen, die sich gegen die staatliche Kontrolle von Prostitution zur Eindämmung von Geschlechtskrankheiten und den Frauenhandel entwickelten. Verbänden gemeinsame Zielsetzungen feministische Abolitionsbewegungen und medizinische Fachkreise ab etwa 1900, boten sittlichkeitsreformistische und sozialhygienische Argumente nicht nur Konfliktlinien zwischen diesen beiden Gruppierungen, sondern verliehen auch feministischen Vereinigungen in Deutschland und Großbritannien national anders gewichtete Schwerpunktsetzungen. Björn M. Felder unterstreicht, dass die „Volksgesundheit“ bzw. die „Volksseuchen“ Alkohol, Syphilis und Tuberkulose zu Leitwörtern nationaler Bewegungen im späten Zarenreich avancierten. Die sich daran entfachten Debatten förderten eine radikale Umsetzung von Temperenz und Eugenik in den späteren baltischen Staaten und Finnland und hatten Vorläufercharakter für die Gesundheitspolitik in der Sowjetunion. Thomas Fischer beleuchtet die Auswirkungen der internationalen Prohibitionskampagnen gegen Koka und Kokain unter US-amerikanisch-europäischer Ägide in den Andenländern. In Bolivien blieb Koka als kulturelles Konsumgut und potentes Aufputzmittel weithin

akzeptiert aufgrund der erfolgreichen Propaganda vom wichtigen Agrarverband. Demgegenüber nutzte ein Teil der Elite in Peru die Kokafrage, um sich gegenüber der indigenen Unterschicht abzugrenzen und dieser das politische Mitspracherecht zu verweigern.

Teil IV beleuchtet politisch-rechtliche Aushandlungsprozesse in kolonialen bzw. postkolonialen Kontexten. Manju Ludwig untersucht die legalen Reformen im kolonialen Indien, die sich gegen Eunuchen bzw. gleichgeschlechtlichen Verkehr zwischen Männern in Strafanstalten richteten. Trotz nur mäßiger Durchschlagskraft fanden diese Reformen die Unterstützung von lokalen Behörden und zivilgesellschaftlichen Akteuren, die mit der Annahme von kolonialen Reformideen ihre Nähe zur britischen kolonialen Elite vorführten bzw. die Diskriminierung von Minderheiten förderten. Gernot Klantschnig geht der bislang wenig untersuchten Geschichte der Drogenpolitik in Nigeria nach. In den 1950er und 1960er Jahren problematisierten nigerianische Psychiater den Cannabiskonsum, wobei sie in Anlehnung an westliche Suchttheorien differenziert sozio-ökonomische Ursachen der Sucht aufgriffen. Die Machtübernahme von Militärregimes aber, die das Drogenproblem eindimensional mit Disziplinlosigkeit in der Armee und einer nationalen Krise in Zusammenhang brachten, verhalf einer nicht auf Medikalisierung, sondern Kriminalisierung bauenden repressiven Drogenpolitik zum Durchbruch. Schließlich untersucht Robert Kramm-Masaoka die Erziehungsprogramme für US-amerikanische Besatzungssoldaten im nachkriegszeitlichen Japan. Die Programme stellten japanische Frauen als einzige Ursache von

Geschlechtskrankheiten dar und entwarfen Japan als „sexualisiertes und promiskuitives Land“ (S. 350). Demnach sollte nicht Prophylaxe sondern Abstinenz die Gesundheit und Disziplin der Soldaten heben. Kramm-Masaoka schlägt damit einen Bogen zum dem Sammelband zugrunde liegenden Leitgedanken. Die Angst vor politischer Subversion blieb an die Konstruktion von Devianz entlang moralischer Kategorien gebunden, die medizinische Begründungen nicht überlagerten, sondern ergänzten.

Ob eine Eigendynamik im Wandel von Konsumkulturen, die sich etwa aus dem Zugang zu neuen Drogen, neuen Behandlungsmethoden, Marktfluktuationen oder schlicht dem Aussterben bzw. Aufkommen bestimmter Subkulturen ergaben, kurzum ob „exogene Faktoren“⁴⁵ auf die Konstruktion von Devianz rückwirkten, etwa angedeutet in Klantschnigs Beitrag, müsste allenfalls als Frage aufgeworfen werden, führt jedoch über das Thema des vorliegenden Sammelbandes hinaus. Dieser zwingt nicht nur in der Zusammenschau von verschiedenen als deviant geltenden Praktiken und den zur Konstruktion von Devianz beitragenden Problemakteuren, sondern auch in der ansonsten selten in ein und demselben Band vereinten unterschiedlichen Spezialisierung der Beiträge, die von west-, osteuropäischer Geschichte und Imperialgeschichte bis zur außereuropäischen Geschichte Lateinamerikas, Westafrikas und Japans reicht. Der global angelegte Fokus vermag die transnationale Verflechtung von moralischen und medizinisch-psychiatrischen Vorstellungen einerseits und nationale Unterschiede andererseits in der Entstehung von zivilgesellschaftlichen Bewegungen und im

Gegenzug staatlicher Regulierungen in verschiedenen Lebensbereichen hervorzuheben, die sich aus jeweils spezifischen sozialen oder politischen Abgrenzungsbedürfnissen ergaben.

Anmerkungen:

- 1 Historiker berufen sich auf die von Michel Foucault in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren entwickelten Überlegungen zur Konstruktion von Devianz (M. Foucault, *Die Hauptwerke*, mit einem Nachwort von Axel Honneth und Martin Saar, Frankfurt am Main 2008). Zeitgleich kamen konstruktivistische Theorien in der Problemsoziologie auf, wie: P. Conrad/J. W. Schneider (Hrsg.), *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*, Philadelphia 1992; J. I. Kitsuse/M. Spector, *Social Problems: A Reformation*, in: *Social Problems* 20 (1973), S. 145–159; diess., *Constructing Social Problems*, Menlo Park 1977; J. R. Gusfield, *The Culture of Public Problems. Drinking, Driving and the Symbolic Order*, Chicago 1981.
- 2 Auf den Zusammenhang von Debatten über Alkohol und Drogen weist bereits eine der Mitherausgeberinnen in einem weiteren Sammelband hin: H. Fischer-Tiné/J. Tschurenne (Hrsg.), *A History of Drugs in Modern South Asia. Intoxicating Affairs*, Abingdon 2014.
- 3 Der Sammelband baut auf den Ergebnissen einer internationalen Tagung: J. Große, Tagungsbericht: *Fighting Drink, Drugs, and Venereal Diseases: Global Anti-Vice Activism, ca. 1870–1940*, 01.04.2012–04.04.2012, Ascona, Switzerland, in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 14.07.2012, <http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-4311>. Eine Besprechung findet der Leser bereits bei A. De Vincenti, Rezension zu: J. Große u. a. (Hrsg.), *Biopolitik und Sittlichkeitsreform. Kampagnen gegen Alkohol, Drogen und Prostitution 1880–1950*. Frankfurt am Main 2014, in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 07.07.2015, <http://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezuecher-23421>.
- 4 J. Goldstein, *Toward an Empirical History of Moral Thinking. The Case of Racial Theory in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France*, in: *American Historical Review* 120 (2015) 1, S. 1–27.
- 5 D. T. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise. A History of Opiate Addiction in America*, Cambridge, MA 2001 [1982], S. 5.

Stephan Conermann (Hrsg.): Everything is on the Move. The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks (= Mamluk Studies, vol. 7), Bonn: V&R unipress 2014, 353 S.

Reviewed by
Isa Blumi, Geneva

For most readers of *Comparativ*, evoking the Mamluks will likely conjure up associations with the Medieval and Early Modern “Islamic” world and a system of military recruitment that sent capable Circassian, Central Asian and Balkan men to serve rulers in the Islamic World, many of whom were once “slaves” themselves. A geographically vast polity that entails a complex web of intersecting chains of human associations, what is called the “Mamluk Empire” in this book invariably corresponds well with revisionist approaches to telling a global history. Fusing the now extensive theoretical literature on how we can understand any number of complex societies through the prism of “nodes of different networks [that] existed side-by-side,” Editor Dr. Professor Conermann (University of Bonn) and his fellow 14 contributors provide an elegant argument for comparative research that cuts across disciplines and periods of expertise. Indeed, Dr. Conermann’s exceptional volume highlights the various ways one integrates the Mamluk Caliphates with various new approaches to the study of Global History which must include the analysis of

how “networks” disaggregate, rather than neatly codify, both human constituencies and the geographies they inhabit.

In this regard, most of the contributions successfully integrate the various concepts refined in both the New Area Studies and the critical reassessment of the phenomenon of the “Empire-State” informed by the so-called spatial turn in modern historiography. The result is a number of exceptionally sophisticated chapters that help the reader identify a number of physical and cognitive networks with one or more nodes in Mamluk-controlled territories.

In one way or another, be it through the notion of “egocentric networks” developed by Steve Borgatti, or the various “Mental Networks” first conceived in these terms by Dipesh Chakrabarti, we see how fruitful the cross-fertilization of concepts of association can be to the study of the 1250–1500 period in the larger Islamic World. In fact, each of the 15 chapters, authored by experts of the early modern world, contribute to this appreciation for the interactions reflected in the various social, intellectual, military, scientific and commercial networks intersecting the complex polities administered by the non-Arab soldier-administrators known as Mamluks by way of either of these two frameworks of analysis.

Crucially, some chapters actually highlight how neatly interchangeable such approaches are and that the very study of, for instance, educational networks that linked scholars of the era can contribute to shaping the career paths, and thus influence the political standing of the jurists, soldiers, administrators, and clergy who made up these societies. The two chapters authored by Thomas Bauer and Moham-

mad Gharaibeh on such egocentric networks are in this sense bridging as well the other important theories known as Mental Networks. As concepts (legal traditions, spiritual guidance, scientific and even artistic methods) we come to realize that the geographic reach of human interactions, often formally infused by religious or educational institutions actively patronized by the Mamluk state, reflect the underlying intellectual guiding principle of the volume: “connectivity in motion” (p. 23). In this regard, Albrecht Fuess’ discussion on how the concept of Holy War developed and transformed from the Mamluk to the Ottoman periods reveals how ideological as well as strategic distinctions necessarily meant war was experienced and fought in very different ways over the period covered in this volume. For the Mamluks, according to Fuess, this notion of jihad constituted a defensive idea while that of the Ottomans promoted state expansionism, and important distinctions between two seemingly similar political orders are made clearer with the actual study of how people migrated within and beyond these Mamluk and Ottoman territories. In Bethany Walker’s study, drawing mainly from the analysis of villages, the “community” becomes an active space of interaction infused with “actor networks” that crucially sheds analytical light on how migration can also help orientate Mamluk constituencies in ways that ultimately contribute to the very political formulations that make the Mamluk and Ottoman regimes in Syria and Egypt especially evocative in a Global History frame.

It is here that the contribution by Henning Sievert perhaps best highlights the value of this volume to a larger reading

audience. The sequestration and settlement of soldiers drawn from the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus invariably creates the kind of contentious exchanges deemed critical to understanding the depth and variability of networks shaping village and urban life in the world at this time. As first studied so brilliantly by Professor Jane Hathaway more than 20 years ago, the politics of military „households“ constituted those struggles to establish and expand influence in the settled constituencies these soldiers made in Mamluk Syria and Egypt that ultimately animated the ideological underpinnings of a truly transregional, integrative, and highly political social order. In this respect, Sievert’s social network analysis not only sheds light on the power struggles between clans formed around prominent migrant soldiers, but also the importance of family networks (the households that Jane Hathaway first studied in both early modern Egypt and Yemen), elaborating on the types of relations these men forged with local women, larger families, merchants, scholars and other (sometimes rival) households. It is these deeply researched nodes of exchange – read as kinship, commercial, spiritual and performative relations – that constitute the entire spectrum of network analysis on offer in this valuable book.

In many ways this volume makes for a perfect text to teach Global history as most of the contributions help the reader appreciate how differently we can adopt the notions of networks to develop a more complex picture of the ways in which various peoples, often of different religious, political, and geographic orientation, interacted. Such intersections of “different” peoples seems essential to teach the younger stu-

dent in our present times where the reductive logic of the media infuses also the textbooks sold to university students today. The contribution of George Christ for instance, usefully analyzes how something akin to “news networks” informing merchants trading between Venice and various Mamluk polities shaped the contours of the entire Mediterranean’s political economy. As such, these networks integrated as well as defined both the distinctive and shared spaces by which actors engaged each other. As social, political, cultural, and/or economic interactions manifested in various kinds of networks, these exchanges extended the legal barriers that seemingly secured distinctive roles for subjects of these Mamluk polities, as demonstrated in the chapter by Johannes Pahlitzsch. Indeed, as Orthodox Christians constantly forged working relationships across the political boundaries separating Byzantium and the Mamluk Sultanate, Dr. Pahlitzsch offers a fascinating contrastive study to those who found similarly complex associations shaping Mamluk spirituality. Michael Winter, in an excellent comparison of two distinctive Sufi networks emerging in Syria and Egypt, as well as Carl F. Petry, in his study of the travels of various mystics in the period, help the reader reconceive the geographic, spiritual and ultimately cultural “limits” of the Medieval/Early Modern world. In sum, this volume is an excellent addition to the already extensive literature fitting this genre and, more importantly, usefully contributes and expands the sophisticated conclusions made by the vanguard of trans-regional studies of this era to highlight how we must move beyond the crude binary constructions that still, in

the media and many academic texts, distinguish Islam from Europe.

Silke Strickrodt: Afro-European Trade in the Atlantic World. The Western Slave Coast c. 1550–c. 1885, Woodbridge: James Curry 2015, 266 S.

Reviewed by
Natalie Everts, Amsterdam

After the Scramble for ‘the Popos’ took off in the 1880s, the people of Little Popo (modern Aného) were incorporated in German Togoland (Togo), whereas those of Grand Popo found themselves subjected to French rule in Dahomey (Bénin). Though debates among historians of Africa tend to question if the colonial partition actually mattered much to the local inhabitants, to the peoples of these two western Slave Coast states – Grand Popo (Hula) and Little Popo (Ge) – it did. Only shortly before they had experienced the transformation from the slave trade to the legitimate trade, but the new boundaries cut the coastal centres off from the palm oil plantations situated inland. It also impeded canoe transport across the region’s lagoon system, which since time immemorial had been a pillar of their economy. In spite of this, as Strickrodt argues, it is a simplification to regard this dramatic partition to be just an external matter - caused by foreign settlers who were attracted to get their piece of the pie. Structural disunity among Popo’s fragmented commercial

elites, that can be traced back to the early 19th century or even before, had resulted in a power vacuum in both polities.

The internal African political structure and how it was affected by the Afro-European commercial encounter on the *longue durée* is the focal point of this subtle and significant book. Notwithstanding the English, Dutch, Danish or Brandenburg trading companies did not establish permanent factories in the region, the western Slave Coast served as a long-term point of embarkation for enslaved Africans bound for the Americas. Nevertheless, it has been neglected in the historiography of pre-colonial sub-Saharan West Africa. Contemporary Europeans considered it an intermediate region, notably between Ouidah, which was incorporated by Dahomey (1727), and the Gold Coast hubs. Strickrodt's profound study definitely fills the gap. Particularly the long-term approach works out well as it enables the author to reconstruct patterns of economic and political transformations on the micro level, and to demonstrate the impact of interregional migration. A methodical investigation of generations of competing 'middlemen' reveals how the most successful slave traders among them achieved political influence, by assembling armed dependants to defend their cause and challenge their predecessors. At times this went with open violence between rivalling factions, particularly during the period of the illegal slave trade (1807–1860s) which was partly overlapped by the beginnings of the legitimate trade.

The first chapter questions how environmental aspects determined social arrangements. Indigenous Gbe-speaking peoples, such as the Hula, settled between the sea

and the lagoons. Inland waters abounded with fish and crops were cultivated on fruitful shores. They navigated the lagoons, that ran over a long distance from the west through the east, but did not venture out onto the dangerous sea.

Chapter two explores the opening up of connections to the wider Atlantic world. Unlike the open savannahs of the eastern Slave Coast, mountains formed a natural barrier against hinterland invasions in the west. Consequently, the Popo's were never subjected by another state, nor was there a main slave route leading from the interior to the western coast. Grand Popo, the coastal outlet of the small Hula kingdom, consisted of several settlements situated near the only natural entry (for canoes) into the lagoons. Little Popo was situated a few miles to the west, at a beach that used to serve Gold Coast canoe men as a way station. Europeans hired 'Mina' (originating from Elmina as well as other Gold Coast towns) as expert canoe men to carry out sea transport. Next to the Mina community, Ga refugees (Ge in the local tongue) from around Accra settled down in the 1680s, following their defeat by Akwamu. These and other groups of Akan-speaking migrants from the Gold Coast, merged with local Hula and founded the small, but plural Ge kingdom of Little Popo.

Oral traditions indicate that the Ge rulers (descendants from the Accra royal lineage) recognised the precedence of the Hula king of Grand Popo. While the latter remained a community of fishermen and farmers, the Ge kings of Little Popo consolidated their military power. Warrior king Ashampo stood out as becomes clear in the third chapter. Because his ceaseless

wars with neighbouring groups did generate captives, European captains started to frequent Little Popo to purchase slaves from him. Ashampo failed however to create a steady climate of trust in his coastal outlet, the precondition for success in the Afro-European trade. He depended on the trade to pay for his campaigns, but at the same time disappointed European buyers as he often proved to be unable to meet their demand. His own subjects feared him, since at times he seized people of free status to sell them off.

After Ashampo's death (1767) the centralized authority of the Ge kings declined in favour of an increasing number of independent merchants. With the rising demand for slaves Europeans and Afro-Brazilians started to favour the place above Ouidah, where the Dahomey king controlled trade. All of the Little Popo commercial class aimed at having their share in the trade, particularly two: the old 'Mina' community competed with a group of wealthy upstarts centred around one Lattie, who represented British interests and gained the upper hand.

In the fifth chapter political disintegration of the Little Popo community is analysed, in particular the 1820s civil war that was rooted in competition over what now had become the illegal trade. Tensions rose between members of the powerful Lawson family (i.e. Latties descendants) and an elderly trader of Mina origins. The latter, upon suffering defeat, broke away with his party and founded Agoué, on a beach a few miles to the east. Back in the old centre the Lawson family controlled most trade and cooperated with Francisco Felix de Souza, the legendary Viceroy of Ouidah, who originated from Brazil. He

was the most powerful slave dealer on the coast, and partly operated from Little Popo. Agoué attracted settlers too, among them liberated slaves from Sierra Leone and Brazil. In 1860, internal rivalry within Agoué spread over to Little Popo and war broke out again.

The trade activities during the transition phase (1807–1870s) are examined in the sixth and final chapter. In spite of British navy patrols the western Slave Coast became a centre of illegal activities. Prominent Ouidah traders had their human merchandize ferried across the lagoons to Little Popo or Agoué. Enslaved people were no longer kept in baracoons on the beach to await shipment, but in houses instead, as if they were domestic slaves. By 1867, when this finally came to a halt on account of the slackening demand in the America's, the palm oil production had already become big business. Both Little Popo as well as Grand Popo benefitted from the new possibilities, since they were situated favourably near to the lagoon on fertile soil. Agoué, built on a sandy beach, missed out.

Before, the 1860 war was seen as a conflict between slave traders from Agoué and upcoming palm oil entrepreneurs from Little Popo. If however considered from the perspective of the parties concerned, it had to do with the declining profitability of the illegal slave trade and clashes over their shares in it. When old slave trading elites were deprived of income which, admittedly, was due to the growing market for legitimate products, it also meant the loss of their political influence. The trade, or what was left of it, once again disrupted the coastal communities from inside out,

just like it had fragmented them in the more distant past.

G. R. Cole: The Krio of West Africa. Islam, Culture, Creolization, and Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century, Athens: Ohio University Press 2013, 272 S.

Reviewed by
Jacqueline Knörr, Halle

The Krio are the descendants of liberated slaves of diverse backgrounds who settled in Sierra Leone from the late 18th century onwards. Gibril R. Cole's major objective is to foreground the role of Islam in the formation of Krio society in the 19th century. The Muslim Krio have taken a backseat in much of Sierra Leone's historiography, which largely described Krio society as a relatively homogeneous group characterized by Christian values and an English worldview. Contrary to this widely (yet not unanimously) accepted view, Cole explores the heterogeneity of Krio society that included many who were neither Christians nor followers of Victorian values. He focuses on Islam in the construction of Krio society and the emergence of Krio identity, thereby shedding new light on processes of creolization in (and beyond) the region more generally and putting the assumed dominance of European-ness and Christianity among the Krio into a more specific perspective. Cole argues that "African Muslims played

a crucial role in the evolution of Krio society, which included vital contributions to the social, economic, and political landscapes of nineteenth-century Sierra Leone and West Africa" (p. 2). Cole "rejects the assumptions that Christianity and Europeanization were prerequisites for inclusion in a society that evolved out of the multifarious groups of Africans resettled in the Sierra Leone Peninsula" (p. 2). He shows that the relationships between the different groups of liberated Africans and local populations were more complex than hitherto anticipated and that the identity that evolved among them incorporated and integrated dimensions of various ethnic backgrounds. Hence, Krio society has always been multi-faceted and complex, rather than centered on European-ness and Christianity as its core characteristics. Krio identity, Cole claims, did not primarily build on a heritage of enslavement and emancipation, but on a heritage of multi-ethnic interaction and integration.

The book consists of six chapters plus an introduction and a postscript. In his introduction to the book, Cole explains the objectives of his book and reflects upon (some of) the achievements and (many of the) shortcomings (see previous paragraph) of previous scholarship concerning the study of Krio society. In the first chapter, Cole deals with the different processes of creolization (and Kriolization) in the 19th century that led to the emergence of Krio society as the result of ethnic interaction and mixture. The second chapter deals with the liberated Africans who settled in Sierra Leone after having been freed from slave ships bound for the Americas and with the spread of Islam among them. Cole shows how European officials

and missionaries alike disapproved of the increased number of Muslim settlers, interpreting it as threatening their political interests and civilizing mission. The spread of Islam among the settlers was rejected as a form of local resistance against colonial superiority. In chapter three, Cole focuses on (male and female) Muslim traders' roles in linking the colony with its Sierra Leonean hinterland and Atlantic West Africa more generally. The Krio diaspora in southern Nigeria – the so-called Saro – takes center stage in the fourth chapter. Cole shows how this diaspora that – according to the author – was driven by “a desire to expand their trade ventures for purposes of profit maximization, but also by a long and burning desire to reestablish contact with their natal communities” (p. 132), contributed to the spread and maintenance of Islam under colonial conditions in Southern Nigeria. Chapter five deals with the intra-faith tensions which arose between different groups of Muslims in some of the major settlements of liberated Africans (e.g. Fourah Bay, Fula Town), namely “between those who did not believe there was a place for indigenous African customs in a community defined by its Islamic values, on the one hand, and on the other, Muslims who asserted their right to uphold these customs” (p. 148). The final chapter looks at the educational efforts undertaken by Krio Muslims, not least in reaction to the increasing number of Christian missionary schools. Cole retraces the establishment of Muslim schools in Sierra Leone, paying particular attention to Edward W. Blyden's role in this process and with regard to the inclusion of “an African consciousness of history” (p. 208-9) in the school curriculum more generally. In his postscript Cole

reflects on the relevance of Islam on the emergence and establishment of Krio society in Sierra Leone and (referring once more to Blyden) on the cosmopolitan and – to some degree – Pan-Africanist dynamics given rise by “the cross-cultural and religious encounters among Islam, Christianity, and Yoruba and indigenous African religions in Sierra Leone and across West Africa” (p. 211).

Cole's book is an important contribution to the history of Krio and Sierra Leonean society. It focuses on social dynamics and interactions which played a vital role in the construction of Krio identity. It also contributes to our historical knowledge concerning the spread of Islam in West Africa and the Krio Muslims' role in it.

I do not see Cole's work as the re-writing of Krio or Sierra Leonean history and I disagree with his view that previous scholars have largely been “intellectual architects of the Krio myth” (p. 1), misleadingly characterizing the Krio as “Black Englishmen” (p. 1). There are many scholars who, before Cole, have stressed the heterogeneity of Krio society, many who have criticized the over-emphasis put on the Krio's proclaimed European-ness, many who have dealt with the African dimensions of Krio social and cultural practices. The solution to the – rightly stated and bewailed – neglect of Islam in the construction of Krio, Sierra Leonean, and Atlantic West African societies lies in the in-depth study of the latter, not in the retrospective denial of the Christian and European dimensions of Krio identity. Irrespective of whether the author (and other intellectuals) like it or not, there have been, and still are, many among the Krio who have emphasized and continue to emphasize their being more

“civilized”, “Westernized”, “European”, “English”, “educated” ... than the “natives”, the “people from upcountry”, the “Provincials”. Not too long ago (and not for the first time), a Krio in Freetown told me that he felt like a black man with white blood. I am not saying that this speaks of his – or other Krio’s – European-ness, I am saying that such statements tell us something about how people (like to) see themselves in relation to others and that if we want to study people (whether as historians or as anthropologists like myself), we cannot ignore what people say about themselves and others, irrespective of whether we share or like the ideologies underlying their statements.

To sum up: The weakness of Cole’s book, in my view, lies in his de-contextualization and de-historicization of previous scholarship. The strength of his book – which clearly outweighs its weakness – lies in its author’s ability to venture in depth and in detail into yet under-researched and under-represented dimensions of Krio and Sierra Leonean history and to aptly demonstrate the interrelations between various historical processes in a comprehensible and convincing manner.

Willard Sunderland: *The Baron’s Cloak. A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2014, 344 S.

Rezensiert von
Lutz Häfner, Göttingen

Der an der Universität von Cincinnati lehrende Willard Sunderland ist ein durch mehrere Veröffentlichungen zur Kolonisation in der eurasischen Steppengebieten des Zarenreiches ausgewiesener Spezialist. Er versteht seine jüngste Studie als eine Darstellung des Russländischen Imperiums im Prisma des Lebens von Baron Roman Fedorovič von Ungern-Sternberg. Dieser wurde 1885 in Graz in eine deutsch-baltische Adelsfamilie geboren und 1921 in Novonikolaevsk (Novosibirsk) nach einem Schauprozess von den Bolševiki erschossen. Den Umstand, dass zahlreiche Details seiner Biographie nicht zu rekonstruieren sind, deutet Sunderland nicht als Nachteil. Er macht aus der Not eine konzeptionelle Tugend in der Form eines bifokalen und zugleich asymmetrischen Ansatzes. Das Werk ist weniger als Biographie denn als mikrohistorische Studie konzipiert: „With a simple turn of our camera, we can transform him [Ungern, LH] from a poor biographical subject into a revealing microhistorical one“ (S. 9). Ziel ist ein Synergieeffekt, der sich aus der Kombination zweier Untersuchungsgegenstände, einer Region und des übergeordneten imperialen Forschungsproblems, erzählt aus der

Sicht eines Einzelschicksals, ergeben soll. Der Mehrwert seines Ansatzes liegt laut Sunderland darin, dass er die Komplexität des Lebens im Russländischen Imperium einschließlich der Differenzerfahrungen zu schildern vermag, die gemeinhin bei Generalisierungen verloren gingen (S. 5).

Das Buch ist chronologisch nach biographischen Etappen des Protagonisten aufgebaut und besteht aus elf räumlich verteilten Kapiteln. Die ersten drei (Graz, Estland, St. Petersburg – Manchuria – St. Petersburg) behandeln Geburt, Kindheit und die Adoleszenz bis hin zum Abschluss der Kadettenanstalt. Kapitel vier bis sieben (Beyond the Baikal, The Black Dragon River, Kobdo, War Land) behandeln Ungerns Dienstzeit bei verschiedenen Kosakenregimentern im asiatischen Landesteil des Imperiums und an der deutsch-russischen Westfront im Weltkrieg bis zum Ausbruch der Februarrevolution. Die letzten vier Abschnitte (The Ataman's Domain, Urga, Kiakhta, Red Siberia) thematisieren die Zeit von Revolution und Bürgerkrieg und damit jene Epoche, in der sich Ungern als Kriegsherr und Kommandeur seiner „asiatischen Division“ – einem aus zahlreichen Ethnien zusammengesetzten Verband von maximal etwa 3.500 Söldnern und Freibeutern – in der zentralasiatischen *frontier* zwischen Sibirien, der Mongolei und China seinen Namen machte. In den Augen der Sowjets war er ein Konterrevolutionär, ein „weißer Offizier“, der das Ancien régime wiedererrichten wollte. Für viele Bewohner des Grenzgebiets war er ein Plünderer, Mörder und grausamer Antisemit, die Japaner nutzten ihn temporär als Verbündeten, für die chinesischen Zentralbehörden war er ein Unruhestifter, der schwache staatliche Strukturen wiederholt

bedrohte, und in den Augen der Mongolen war er eine verehrensvalue Persönlichkeit, weil er ihr Oberhaupt Bogda Khan aus der chinesischen Haft befreit hatte.

Sunderland hat ein überaus spannend geschriebenes Buch verfasst, das in die Tradition der Reisebeschreibung gerückt werden kann. Unbestreitbar ist der immense Aufwand. Der Autor hat Akten aus über einem Dutzend Archiven in drei Kontinenten, dazu zahlreiche Quellen und Darstellungen in wenigstens einem halben Dutzend Sprachen herangezogen. Aber hat sich dieser Aufwand gelohnt? Der Ertrag scheint in einem schlechten Verhältnis dazu zu stehen. Negativ gewendet, könnte Sunderland der Vorwurf gemacht werden, dass der methodische Ansatz ein Buch nicht trägt, weil die Lücken in Ungerns Biographie zu groß sind. Faktizität und Fiktionalität liegen hier zu dicht beisammen. Wiederholt finden sich Formulierungen, die auf bloße Spekulation verweisen: „Yet we have no proof, so the most we can do is imagine“ (S. 81), „[w]e don't know where Ungern was“ (S. 125, ähnlich S. 141), „[w]e have no direct evidence“ (S. 146), „[b]ut without more material it is hard to say“ (S. 185), „because we haven't had the sources“ (S. 187). Wenn er mutmaßt, Ungern könnte bei Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkriegs wie Hitler auf die Knie gesunken sein (S. 125), wird die Studie unseriös. Assoziationen mögen nützlich sein, doch solche abwegigen Spekulationen sind müßig, sie erklären nichts und haben mit dem eigentlichen Thema nicht das Geringste zu tun.

Der Teufel liegt auch im Detail. So werden Abkürzungen eingeführt, aber erst später aufgelöst und erklärt (S. 1, 7). Die Polylingualität des Verfassers haben Verlag und

Lektorat offenbar hoffnungslos überfordert: Diverse Fehler – von falschen Buchtiteln bis hin zu fragwürdigen Übersetzungen wie „occupation“ mit „Besitz“ (S. 28) oder auch „rota“ mit Regiment statt mit Kompanie (S. 48) – geben darüber bedröht Auskunft.

Passagenweise kommt die Darstellung glänzend ohne jeglichen Rekurs auf Ungern aus (S. 126–130). Dies bedeutet aber auch, dass er seltsam konturlos bleibt. Urteilt man auf der Basis seiner Schul- und Kadettenjahre, war Ungern einerseits sehr mittelmäßig, andererseits auch ein zu Disziplinlosigkeit neigender Einzelgänger. Dennoch überrascht, dass die Protektion durch familiäre Netzwerke nicht ausreichte, ihm zügiges Avancement zu gewähren. Dies wäre ein durchaus übliches Karrieremuster im Ancien régime gewesen. Ungern war ein personifizierter Widerspruch, der sich einerseits auf Ehre, Tradition, Gerechtigkeit, seinen lutherischen Glauben und die zehn Gebote berief, andererseits aber in seiner Kriegführung keine Gräueltaten aussparte. Ungerns „antibolschewistischer Kreuzzug“ wirkt komödienhaft, sein Verhalten erratisch, der Realitätsverlust ausgeprägt, so dass Fragen nach der Stabilität seiner Psyche durchaus angemessen erscheinen. Sunderland stellt sie nicht (S. 201).

Umso überraschender ist, dass Ungern 1920 versuchte, nach Österreich zurückzukehren. Der Autor nennt keinerlei Gründe für Ungerns Gesinnungswandel und verweist zur Erklärung auf eine Akte aus einem Moskauer Archiv. Das hilft dem Leser nur bedingt. Aber diese kleine Episode illustriert zugleich, dass der methodische Zugriff deutliche Schwächen offenbart. Über das Imperium sagt diese Facette nichts aus; und hinsichtlich des

Protagonisten lässt Sunderland den Leser im Stich.

Sunderland subsumiert seine Studie wie folgt: „Because he lived in so many places, he allows us to see more pieces of the puzzle than most“ (S. 230). In der Tat ist die Studie ebenso facettenreich wie farbig, aber die konsekutiv zusammengesetzten Teile variierender Orte ergeben weder ein Gesamtbild noch haben sie Erklärungskraft. Die Mongolei und St. Petersburg/Petrograd hatten 1905 wie 1920 wenig gemein. Eine Konstante aber war das Gefälle zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie. Was bleibt als Fazit? Mit Macbeth möchte man mit Blick auf den Protagonisten des Buches sagen: „Leben ist nur ein wandelnd Schattenbild / Ein armer Komödiant, der seine Stunde lang sich auf der Bühne zerquält und tobt; / dann hört man ihn nicht mehr. Es ist eine Geschichte / [...] voller Klang und Wut, / die nichts bedeutet.“

Felix Wemheuer: *Famine Politics in Maoist China and the Soviet Union* (= Yale Agrarian Studies Series), New Haven: Yale University Press 2014, 325 S.

Rezensiert von
Robert Kindler, Berlin

Die furchtbarsten Hungersnöte des 20. Jh.s ereigneten sich nicht im subsaharischen Afrika, sondern in der Sowjetunion und in China. Dennoch haben die Katastrophen der Jahre 1931–1933, 1946/47 und

1958–1961 in systematischen Abhandlungen über Hungerkrisen vergleichsweise wenig Aufmerksamkeit gefunden. Der Sinologe Felix Wemheuer tritt an, dies zu ändern. Es geht ihm darum, Entstehung und Folgen der Hungersnöte zu verstehen und sie miteinander zu vergleichen. Überdies interessiert er sich für das Problem, wie Erinnerungen an den Hunger zur Etablierung nationaler Identitäten instrumentalisiert werden. Seine Herangehensweise bezeichnet Wemheuer selbst als „revisionistisch“. Und in der Tat versucht er in den empirisch orientierten Kapiteln seines Buches konsequent sozialhistorisch zu argumentieren und auf dramatische Beschreibungen des Hungers zu verzichten, die in anderen Darstellungen häufig dominieren.¹

Die ersten Kapitel enthalten kaum Überraschungen. Wemheuer erklärt, sowohl bei Russland als auch bei China habe es sich um „Länder des Hungers“ gehandelt; die Kommunisten seien also in Kontexten an die Macht gekommen, in denen Hungersnöte und soziale Instabilität zur Lebenserfahrung der Bauern gehörten. Um ihr Industrialisierungsprogramm durchzuführen habe die sowjetische Führung die Bauern ausgebeutet und auch die chinesischen Kommunisten hätten darauf gebaut, der Landbevölkerung Getreide abzugewinnen. Dies seien die Hauptgründe für den Ausbruch der beiden Hungersnöte. Alternative Erklärungen, die schlechtes Wetter und Missernten in Feld führen, weist Wemheuer aus guten Gründen zurück. (Und in einem späteren Kapitel erklärt er mit ebenso guten Argumenten, weshalb die Hungersnot in der Ukraine kein Genozid war.) Die Hungersnöte bezeichnet er treffend als „Great Leap Famines“. Beide Regimes

versuchten, den Hunger aus den Städten herauszuhalten. Die Bauern wurden zugunsten von Stadtbevölkerung und Armee bei der Versorgung mit Getreide benachteiligt, denn sowohl Stalin als auch Mao verstanden, dass ihre Herrschaft ernsthaft gefährdet war, wenn es in den Zentren massiven Hunger gab. Deshalb versuchten die Kommunisten Migrationen zu verhindern und gingen mit aller Härte gegen Bauern vor, die in die Städte drängten.

An mehreren Stellen setzt sich Wemheuer kritisch mit dem „entitlement approach“ auseinander; einem der wichtigsten Ansätze zur Erklärung von Hungersnöten. Dieser Zugang sei jedoch zu allgemein um die hier untersuchten Fälle besser zu verstehen (S. 151). Ähnlich klar fällt das Urteil hinsichtlich der von Amartya Sen und Jean Drèze vertretenen These aus, dass Demokratie und Pressefreiheit essenziell für die Vermeidung von Hungersnöten sind. Hier wird eingewandt, dass die sozialistischen Regime in der Lage gewesen seien, Hungersnöte dauerhaft zu vermeiden.

In der Tat gab es in beiden Staaten nach 1947 beziehungsweise nach 1961 keine Hungersnöte mehr. Was waren die Ursachen dafür? Die sowjetische Führung akzeptierte die privaten Felder der Bauern, importierte große Mengen Getreide und implementierte ein – wenngleich bescheidenes – Wohlfahrtssystem auf dem Lande. Wemheuer argumentiert überzeugend, dass all dies aus der Perspektive eines Bauern, der die Hungersnöte von 1932–1933 und 1946/47 sowie die Hungerjahre während des Zweiten Weltkriegs überlebt hatte, ein großer Fortschritt gewesen sei. In China versuchte der Staat hingegen die Bevölkerungsentwicklung mit Hilfe der Ein-Kind-Politik unter Kontrolle zu bringen und

gleichzeitig den massenhaften Zuzug bauerlicher Migranten in die Städte zu verhindern. Zwar gelang es, akuten Hunger zu vermeiden, doch bis in die späten 1970er Jahre gehörte chronischer Mangel zum Alltag von Millionen chinesischer Bauern (S. 235). Trotz erheblicher Unterschiede in ihren jeweiligen Möglichkeiten und Mitteln sei es evident, so Wemheuer, dass Einparteiendiktaturen in der Lage seien, Hungersnöte zu verhindern, wenn sie den Willen dazu aufbrächten. Kann man also davon sprechen, dass die beiden Regime ihre „Lektionen gelernt“ hatten? Oder war es nicht vielmehr so, dass der Hunger erst dann keine Bedrohung mehr darstellte, als die menschenverachtenden Führer Stalin und Mao nicht mehr am Leben waren?

An zwei Sonderfällen, die ansonsten kaum Gemeinsamkeiten aufweisen, wird untersucht wie Hungersnöte zur Schaffung nationaler Identität beitragen können. Sowohl im Falle der Ukraine als auch am Beispiel Tibets lässt sich zeigen, wie sich zunächst im Exil ein Opferdiskurs entwickelte, der – zumindest in der Ukraine – unter geänderten politischen Vorzeichen schließlich zur offiziellen Staatsräson werden kann. Auch im Falle Tibets ist der Hunger in politisches Minenfeld und wer ihn nur erwähnt, zeigt damit seine oppositionelle Haltung gegen die offizielle chinesische Politik an.

Es ist nahe liegend und überzeugend, dass sich der Autor als ausgewiesener Experte für chinesische Geschichte auf die Hungersnot in der Volksrepublik konzentriert. Hier liegt denn auch der Schwerpunkt des Buches, während eine Perspektive auf die Sowjetunion ausschließlich aus der Sekundärliteratur entwickelt wird. Daran ist nichts auszusetzen, geht es hier doch nicht

um die Präsentation neuer empirischer Befunde. Dennoch fallen einige problematische Behauptungen auf: So ist es höchst fraglich, ob man die Zeit nach dem Ende des Hungers als die „guten Jahre“ unter Stalin bezeichnen kann (S. 32). Die implizit vorgetragene These, die Hungersnot in der Ukraine sei relativ gewaltfrei verlaufen (S. 167ff.), ist verkürzt: Der Hunger war eine direkte Folge der verheerenden Gewaltruption der Kollektivierungskampagne und nahm in vielen Regionen Formen eines Bürgerkriegs an.² Und schließlich seien Zweifel an der Behauptung erlaubt, die Hungersnot habe die Städte weitgehend verschont. Zwar ist es zutreffend, dass vor allem die Bauern hungerten und die sowjetische Führung versuchte, Städte und Soldaten bevorzugt zu versorgen, doch auch in den urbanen Zentren herrschte – vielfach extremer – Mangel.³

Der Text argumentiert, beiden Staaten seien durch die Hungersnöte erhebliche Legitimationsprobleme entstanden. Alle Versuche, den Hunger zu beenden, müssten daher stets auch als Maßnahmen interpretiert werden, diesem Mangel abzuhelpen. Doch trifft diese Annahme zu? Nach allem was wir wissen, sahen die meisten ukrainischen und russischen Bauern im Staat vor allem eine strafende Gewalt, der es tunlichst zu entkommen galt. Oder anders formuliert: Der gute Staat war für die Bauern ein abwesender Staat. Für die Legitimität staatlicher Ordnungen interessierte sie nicht. Genauso war es auch bei den Bolschewiki. Mit der Kollektivierung versuchten sie, dem Dorf ihre Ordnung aufzuzwingen und während der Hungersnot hatten sie damit schließlich Erfolg. Dem Hunger setzten sie schließlich ein Ende, weil nicht die Legitimität, sondern

der Bestand ihrer Herrschaft in Gefahr geraten war. Manches von dem, was der Autor über das Ende des Hungers in China schreibt, scheint gleichfalls in diese Richtung zu weisen.

Man muss nicht alle Schlussfolgerungen Felix Wemheuers teilen, um in „Famine Politics“ einen herausragenden Beitrag zur Debatte um Hungersnöte im Sozialismus zu erkennen. Es sind insbesondere zwei Aspekte die hier von besonderer Bedeutung sind. Erstens: Die Hungersnöte waren entscheidend für das Verhältnis zwischen Staat und bäuerlicher Bevölkerung. Sie waren Akte brutaler Unterdrückung. Zugleich schufen sie auch die Voraussetzungen für eine dauerhafte Koexistenz zwischen Bauern und Kommunisten. Letztere verstanden, dass sie nicht allein mit Zwang agieren konnten, sondern dass sie der Landbevölkerung Konzessionen machen musste. Zweitens zeigt das Buch eindringlich, dass es in der Verantwortung von Staaten liegt, ob Hungersnöte ausbrechen. Und sie haben es in der Hand, ihnen ein Ende zu setzen.

Anmerkungen:

- 1 Der Autor kritisiert hier insbesondere die Arbeit von Frank Dikötter: *Maos Großer Hunger. Massenmord und Menschenexperiment in China*, Stuttgart 2014.
- 2 B. Falk, *Sowjetische Städte in der Hungersnot 1932/33. Staatliche Ernährungspolitik und Städtisches Alltagsleben*, Köln 2005.
- 3 F. Schnell, *Räume des Schreckens. Gewalt und Gruppenmilitanz in der Ukraine 1905-1933*, Hamburg 2012.

Sven Oliver Müller / Jürgen Osterhammel / Martin Rempe (Hrsg.): Kommunikation im Musikleben. Harmonien und Dissonanzen im 20. Jahrhundert, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2015, 312 S.

Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht (Hrsg.), Music and International History in the Twentieth Century (= Explorations in Culture and International History, vol. 7), New York: Berghahn 2015, 278 S.

Rezensiert von
Friedemann Pestel, Freiburg

Seitdem Sven-Oliver Müller 2010 das Nachdenken über einen *musical turn* in der Geschichtswissenschaft angestoßen hat,¹ geht eine wachsende Zahl substanzieller Beiträge der Frage nach, ob der *musical* und *acoustic turn* „the next big thing“ (Gienow-Hecht, S. 1) an der Schnittstelle von Kultur-, Diplomatie- und Emotionsgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jh.s werden könnte. Zwei Produkte dieser Konjunktur gilt es im Folgenden vorzustellen. Sie stammen aus Forschungskoooperationen, die bereits mit einschlägigen Publikationen hervorgetreten sind, und markieren zugleich zwei Pole einer Geschichte von Musik als sozial-politischer Praxis im Dialog von Geschichts- und Musikwissenschaft.² Nachdem bislang im geschichtswissenschaftlichen Interesse an Musik eher das 19. Jh. im Vordergrund

stand,³ widmen sich beide Bände nun explizit dem 20. Jh.

Sven Oliver Müller, Jürgen Osterhammel und Martin Rempe fassen in ihrem Tagungsband Musik als Kommunikationsprozess sozialer Gruppen und damit als „sozial relevante Kulturtechnik“ (S. 11). Dieses konstruktivistische Verständnis erlaubt es, über musikalische Praktiken und Rezeptionsformen der Leitfrage nach Kommunikationsräumen im 20. Jh. nachzugehen und die Kernfunktionen musikalischer Kommunikation herauszuarbeiten: Information, Meinungsbildung, Vergesellschaftung und Unterhaltung. Der Vorteil dieses Ansatzes liegt in der Verflüssigung wirkmächtiger und teilweise bis in die disziplinären Forschungskulturen hinein verfestigter Gegenkategorien: Komposition vs. Aufführung vs. Rezeption, „E-“ vs. „U-Musik“ und eben Geschichts- vs. Musikwissenschaft. In methodischer Hinsicht verschiebt sich dadurch der Fokus auf musikalische Aufführungen als kommunikative Akte und soziale Praktiken, auf öffentliche Diskurse und auf mediale Repräsentationen von Musik. Diese Schwerpunkte bilden die Klammer für die in drei Abteilungen gegliederten 13 Fallstudien, die in ihrer Gesamtheit das ganze 20. Jh. abdecken, räumlich jedoch durchaus eklektisch ausgewählt sind. Ein klarer Schwerpunkt auf Deutschland wird insbesondere erweitert durch Schlaglichter auf Afrika und Japan.

Unter der Überschrift „Traditionslinien und Aufbrüche“ geht es im Deutschland-dominierten ersten Teil um Kontinuitätslinien zum 19. Jh. unter den Bedingungen eines sozial und medial erweiterten Zugangs zu musikalischen Aufführungen, maßgeblich durch die wachsende Präsenz

von Musik im öffentlichen Raum und die Entwicklung von Rundfunk und Schallplatte. Celia Applegate zeigt, welchen Anteil Militärmusikkapellen des 19. Jh.s an der Verbreitung und Popularisierung eines Repertoires hatten, das sich nicht einseitig auf Militär- oder Kunstmusik reduzieren lässt, sondern hinsichtlich Genre- wie auch geografischen Grenzen Träger vielfältiger Transferprozesse wurde. Martin Thrun widmet sich an der Schwelle vom 19. zum 20. Jh. einer Umbruchphase im musikalischen Publikumsverhalten. Die zunehmend zum Schweigen gebrachten Konzertbesucher widersetzten sich der „ästhetischen Polizei“ insbesondere bei Aufführungen Neuer Musik, wobei sich die Missfallensbekundungen weniger auf künstlerische Minderleistungen als auf das jeweils aufgeführte Werk bezogen. Daran knüpft William Weber unter Bezugnahme auf seine These von der *great transformation of musical taste*⁴ an. Anhand einer umfangreichen Auswertung deutscher Konzertprogramme legt er offen, dass Werke lebender Komponisten zunehmend seltener in den Konzertzyklen für großes Publikum gespielt wurden. Sie wurden vielmehr in „Novitäten“-Formaten separiert, da zeitgenössische Musik den intendierten Kommunikationsprozess zwischen Ausführenden und Publikum bedrohte. Stephanie Kleiner schließlich wirft anhand des Publizisten und Kasseler bzw. Wiesbadener Intendanten Paul Bekker ein Schlaglicht auf die politisch-soziale Bindungskraft von Musik in der Nachkriegszeit der 1920er-Jahre. In dieser Phase bedurfte es neuer symbolischer und institutioneller Formen, um mit Musik den Anspruch zu verfolgen, einen „neuen“ republikanischen Menschen zu bilden.

Der zweite Teil „Emotion und Gefolgschaft“ widmet sich dem Komplex musikalischer Partizipation und Führung und damit dem die Zeitgenossen immer wieder beschäftigenden Phänomen des „Charismas“ von Musikerpersönlichkeiten. Sarah Zalfen untersucht zunächst das gemeinschaftliche Singen auf SPD-Parteitag als politische Kommunikationsform und stellt die vielfältigen Gebrauchsweisen von Parteitagsmusik heraus, in deren Zuge die Grenze zwischen Ausführenden und Zuhörenden performativ aufgehoben wurde. Gleich drei Beiträge nehmen sich im Anschluss des wohl einschlägigsten Typus musikalischer Führungsgestalten an – des Dirigenten. Hansjakob Ziemer schlägt am Beispiel des Wirkens von Willem Mengelberg in Frankfurt einen Bogen zurück zu den „Skandalkonzerten“ des frühen 20. Jh.s, wobei hier die emotionale Polarisierung nicht den Werken, sondern der Dirigierweise geschuldet war. In methodischer Hinsicht enthält der Beitrag wichtige Anregungen, nicht nur die Dichotomie von Ausführenden und Publikum aufzubrechen, sondern die beteiligten Akteure in ihren Netzwerkstrukturen zu betrachten. Dazu zählt insbesondere die kommunikative Funktion von Musikkritikern als Deutern, damit aber auch als „Erziehern“ für die *musical literacy* des Publikums. Jürgen Osterhammel interessiert sich in kollektivbiografischer Perspektive für das Selbstverständnis der die erste Jahrhunderthälfte dominierenden Dirigentengeneration der „1890er“. Dirigenten wie Fritz Reiner, Hans Knappertsbusch, Adrian Boult, Erich Kleiber oder Charles Munch deckten ein breites Erfahrungs- und Karrierespektrum ab und legten zugleich Rechenschaft über ihr dirigentisches Selbstverständnis sowie

ihre kommunikative Rolle im Musikleben ab. Den Gegenpart zum eher „sachlichen“ Habitus dieser Protagonisten verkörperte zweifelsohne Leonard Bernstein, den Sven Oliver Müller anhand von Selbstzeugnissen, Kollegenbeobachtungen und Biografien als höchst erfolgreichen Musik- und damit Emotionsvermittler beschreibt. Der distanzlose, aber durchaus reflektierte Einsatz von Emotionen prägte Bernsteins konsequent öffentlich gelebte Rolle zwischen Publikum, Veranstaltern und Komponisten.

Der dritte Teil „Grenzüberschreitung und Aneignung“ setzt zwei höchst unterschiedliche Schwerpunkte. Die ersten Beiträge durchleuchten die kommunikative „Raum-Zeit-Verdichtung“ (S. 19) des 20. Jh.s anhand musikalischer Transfers. Toru Takenaka widmet sich dem bekannten japanischen Fall, wo der Transfer westlicher Musik zu einem Kernanliegen des gesellschaftlichen Modernisierungsprojekts des Meiji-Regimes nach 1868 wurde. Hervorzuheben ist vor allem der Verweis auf die innergesellschaftlichen Dynamiken dieses häufig „von oben“ beschriebenen Akkulturationsprozesses. Europäische Musik, transportiert über die christliche Kirche, kompensierte als alternatives symbolisches Zeichensystem Frustrationserfahrungen der alten Eliten. Ebenso stand der japanische Wagnerismus um 1900 für eine Identifikationskrise der jungen Generation mit dem Restaurationsregime.

Claudius Torp zeigt am Beispiel des erzieherischen Einsatzes von Missionsmusik im subsaharischen Afrika, wie europäische musikalische Praktiken durch ihre lokale Aneignung „entortet“ (S. 215) wurden. Die wachsende Indigenisierung der Musikpraktiken war nicht zuletzt fehlenden

Professionalisierungsmöglichkeiten geschuldet und lässt sich keinesfalls auf Synkretismus reduzieren. Vielmehr gelingt es Torp, die Bindungs- und Abgrenzungskraft von Missionsmusik differenziert aufzufächern. Die globalen Verflechtungen musikalischer Kommunikation kommen bei Martin Rempe am deutlichsten zum Tragen. Der Import der kubanischen Rumba nach Belgisch-Kongo mithilfe europäischer Schallplattenfirmen stellt auf originelle Weise Kultur als Kompensationsform zu politischen und ökonomischen Entwicklungsmustern der späten Kolonialzeit heraus. Jenseits ethnischer Zugehörigkeiten und rassistischer Hierarchien entstand über den auf die Rumba konzentrierten afrikanischen Schallplattenmarkt der 1930er bis 1960er Jahre ein eng umgrenzter eigener Kommunikationsraum.

Die anschließenden Beiträge zur westdeutschen Pop- und Folkmusik der zweiten Jahrhunderthälfte beziehen das Schlagwort der Grenzüberschreitung auf das Genre. Klaus Nathaus vollzieht in seiner Analyse des sozialen Publikumswandels westdeutscher Popmusik einen zunächst überraschenden Perspektivwechsel auf die Produzentenseite von Musikverlagen, Rundfunkanstalten, Plattenfirmen und Disc Jockeys und wendet sich damit gegen das wirkmächtige Narrativ von Populärkultur als Abbild größerer soziokultureller Entwicklungen. Er zeigt, dass musikalische Kommunikation zunächst nicht über Aushandlungsprozesse mit dem „realen“ Publikum stattfindet, sondern der Musikgeschmack eines imaginären Publikums das Angebot prägt. Erst die allmähliche Orientierung an tatsächlichen Publikumszahlen der entsprechenden Formate haben – jedoch unabhängig von politischen und

wirtschaftlichen Wandlungsmustern – zu einer größeren stilistischen Bandbreite auf dem westdeutschen Popmusikmarkt geführt, ohne dass deren Ursachen eingehender ergründet worden wären. Detlef Siegfried nimmt dazu eine Kontrastperspektive ein und analysiert die Musikfestivals in Waldeck und Roskilde als Kommunikationsereignisse und damit Indikatoren für gesellschaftliche Wandlungsprozesse. Sein Zugriff ist primär institutionengeschichtlich und arbeitet den Stellenwert von Größe, Ausrichtung und Erlebniswert der Festivals für ihre Publikumsreichweite heraus.

Die hier versammelten Fallstudien sind vielfältig, dicht und im Einzelfall zunächst für die Spezialisten interessant. Seinem programmatischen Anspruch, Musik im 20. Jh. kommunikationsgeschichtlich aufzuschließen, wird der Band aber neben den systematischen Überlegungen der Einleitung durch immer wieder eingeflochtene reflexive Passagen in den Fallstudien gerecht. Überlegungen zur Dezentrierung musikalischer Transfers von der europäischen Perspektive zu teilweise autonomen musikalischen Kommunikationsräumen abseits hegemonialer oder hierarchischer Strukturen oder zu kommunikativen Missverständnissen sind über den jeweiligen Spezialfall hinaus relevant und warnen zu Recht vor linearen Vorstellungen von sozialer Kommunikation mittels musikalischer Praktiken.

Das Profil des von Jessica Gienow-Hecht herausgegebenen Bandes *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century* unterscheidet sich von dem soeben betrachteten. Er ist thematisch-methodisch kohärenter, zugleich aber auch monoperspektivischer, was sich aus dem Titel nicht auf

den ersten Blick erschließt. Den Kern des Bandes bilden Aufsätze zur Politisierung des internationalen Musiklebens und zur Rolle des Staates als kulturdiplomatischem Akteur während des Kalten Krieges. Der räumliche Fokus liegt maßgeblich auf den Vereinigten Staaten in internationaler Perspektive. Innerhalb dieses Rahmens, dessen Forschungskontext Jessica Gienow-Hecht in der Einleitung räumlich breiter gefasst ausleuchtet, versammelt der Band musik- und geschichtswissenschaftliche Beiträge, die Musik als Maßstab für Quantität und Qualität internationaler Beziehungen betrachten.

Unter den konzeptionellen Säulen findet sich neben den Kategorien Genre, Kalter Krieg und Einflussnahme auch hier die der Kommunikation. In den Beiträgen spiegelt sich jedoch deutlich wider, dass das Hauptaugenmerk auf der Rolle des Staates liegt. Hier konstatiert Gienow-Hecht das scheinbar paradoxe Zusammenwirken gegenläufiger Prozesse, nämlich einerseits einer wachsenden staatlichen Kontrolle und Funktionalisierung von Musik für (außen-)politische Zwecke und andererseits wirkmächtige Vorstellungen des internationalen und apolitischen Charakters von „klassischer“ oder „zeitgenössischer“ Musik.

Dieser kulturdiplomatische Schwerpunkt erklärt, warum mögliche Korrektive und Komplemente zur dominanten Rolle der Politik im Musikleben – man denke an musikalische Traditionsbildungen, globale Musikmärkte oder die Reaktionen von Musikerinnen und Musikern auf politische Vereinnahmungsversuche – weitgehend außen vor bleiben. Umso aufschlussreicher sind dort, wo sie in den Beiträgen stattfinden, die Perspektiverweiterungen über die

musikpolitische Senderseite hinaus. Sie stellen Eigenlogiken der Aneignung diplomatischer Initiativen in den Zielländern ebenso heraus wie die Handlungsspielräume, die sich aus „weicher“ Musikpolitik gegenüber „harten“ politischen Handlungsformen ergaben.

In den ersten beiden Beiträgen steht zunächst die „Abwesenheit des Staates“ in den internationalen Musikbeziehungen im Mittelpunkt. David Monod präsentiert mit den Barisson Sisters eine Varietégruppe, die um 1900 in Europa und den USA gastierte. Allerdings unterschieden sich sowohl die soziale Zusammensetzung der Publika als auch die kulturellen Wahrnehmungsmuster auf beiden Kontinenten grundlegend. Spielten staatliche Akteure im Falle der singenden Variétékünstlerinnen keine Rolle, so markierte die von Anne C. Shreffler untersuchte Positionierung der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Neue Musik in den 1930er Jahren eine gezielte Strategie, politischen Vereinnahmungsversuchen zu entgehen. Von Gegeninitiativen seitens der Sowjetunion und des nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Reiches unter Druck gesetzt, verteidigte die Gesellschaft ein unpolitisches, autonomes Kunstverständnis, das sich jedoch unvermeidlich in eine Position expliziter politischer Neutralität verwandelte und damit Konstellationen des Kalten Krieges vorwegnahm.

Ohne dass Musikdiplomatie eine exklusive Domäne der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jh.s gewesen wäre, haben alle sechs Beiträge der zweiten Sektion zum Verhältnis von Musik und internationaler Politik ihren Fokus auf der Zeit nach 1945. Toby Thacker analysiert Musik als politisches Instrument der vier Besatzungsmächte in

Deutschland 1945 bis 1949, diskutiert das Verhältnis von Kooperation und Konkurrenz und berücksichtigt vor allem die aktive Partizipation deutscher Künstler und Publika in den *re-education*-Prozessen. Diese schlug sich nicht zuletzt in Repertoire- und Genrefragen nieder. Einerseits wurde hier *German music* anknüpfend an frühere Internationalisierungsprozesse neu semantisiert. Andererseits behielt klassische Musik gerade gegenüber dem Jazz das höchste Prestige.

Danielle Fosler-Lussier eröffnet anschließend den Schwerpunkt zu amerikanischer Kulturdiplomatie im Kalten Krieg, wendet sich gegen unilaterale Sichtweisen auf diplomatische Beziehungen und betont ebenfalls die *agency* von Diplomaten, Impresari und Zielpublika. Insbesondere plädiert sie dafür, langfristige Vorbereitungsarbeiten für kulturelle Veranstaltungen, die Zusammenarbeit von Diplomaten mit lokalen Vertretern, Partizipationsformen und Nachwirkungen zu untersuchen. So sehr diese methodische Absicht einleuchtet, verwundert es, dass auf Quellenebene der spezifische Wahrnehmungs- und Darstellungsfiler diplomatischer Berichte nicht eingehender diskutiert und durch ergänzendes Material aufgebrochen wird.

Vor dieser Herausforderung steht auch Jonathan Rosenbergs Fallstudie zu staatlich finanzierten Tourneen amerikanischer Orchester nach Asien und Lateinamerika in den 1950er Jahren. Wie auch in den anderen Beiträgen aufscheint, eigneten sich musikalische Gastspiele in besonderer Weise, dem weit verbreiteten Stereotyp der USA als materialistischer, mithin „kulturloser“ Nation entgegenzuwirken und den internationalen politischen Führungsanspruch durch den Anspruch auf Hochkul-

tur performativ zu untermauern. Als aufschlussreich für die wiederkehrende Frage nach der tatsächlichen Wirksamkeit von Kulturdiplomatie, ihres qualitativen und quantitativen Einflusses auf internationale Beziehungen erweist sich die Rezeption der einhellig akklamierten Tournee des New York Philharmonic Orchestra 1958 nach Lateinamerika im Vergleich zu den deutlich kritischer wahrgenommenen zeitgleich stattfindenden Staatsbesuchen von Vizepräsident Richard Nixon.

Am Ende der USA-Sektion erprobt auch Emily Abrams Ansari eine kulturgeschichtliche Erweiterung der Diplomatiegeschichte. Am konkreten Beispiel der Krise um die amerikanische Militärbasis in Island Ende der 1950er-Jahre zeigt sie unmittelbare politische Wirkungen kulturdiplomatischer *soft power* auf bilaterale Beziehungen auf. Hier gelang es, mithilfe musikalischer Gastspiele das Image der Vereinigten Staaten auf isländischer Seite so zu verbessern, dass eine Schließung der Militärbasis abgewendet wurde. Der Stellenwert klassischer Musik besaß zudem eine sozio-ethnische Dimension, verzichtete die US-Diplomatie doch gezielt auf den Einsatz von Jazz, um Ressentiments isländischer Nationalisten gegenüber farbigen Soldaten keinen Vorschub zu leisten.

Dominierte in den vorangegangenen Beiträgen schon aufgrund der Quellenauswahl eine top-down-Perspektive, so geht die als *intimate history* angelegte Mikrostudie von Peter J. Schmelz den umgekehrten Weg. Als „private history with public ramifications“ (S. 214) analysiert sie den Briefwechsel des sowjetischen Komponisten und Dirigenten Igor Blazhkov mit dem westdeutschen Musikpublizisten Fred Prieberg und möchte damit musikalische

Akte in eine „dichte“ (ebd.) Kontextualisierung einbetten. Andrea F. Bohlmanns Studie zum Polnischen Lieder-Festival in Witebsk 1988 nimmt anschließend wieder die Vogelperspektive des staatszentrierten Kulturaustauschs, hier zwischen Polen und der weißrussischen Sowjetrepublik, ein. In der Gesamtschau demonstriert dieser Band nachdrücklich, welche Rolle der Staat im internationalen Musikleben vor allem während des Kalten Krieges spielte. Deutlich wird, in welchem Maße gerade US-amerikanische Politiker und Diplomaten auf die affektive Wirkung von Musik setzten, um das Image ihres Landes weltweit zu fördern, ohne dass es sich hier um lineare Kommunikationsprozesse zwischen Sender und Empfänger handelte. Hier bestätigen sich die Ergebnisse beider betrachteter Bände wechselseitig. Umso aufschlussreicher wäre es, in künftigen Forschungen gezielter nach Wirkungs- und Aneignungsmustern zu fragen, dem Verhältnis von kausalen und katalytischen Wirkungen musikalischer Aktivitäten auf internationale Beziehungen.

Drei Beobachtungen lassen sich aus der parallelen Lektüre beider Bände als Indikatoren für die weitere geschichtswissenschaftliche Erkundung des Phänomens Musik festhalten. Erstens erweist sich angesichts der internationalen bzw. globalgeschichtlichen Ausrichtung der Einleitungen beider Bände die methodische Trias von Vergleich-Transfer-Verflechtung in etlichen Fallstudien als wenig systematisch präsent, insbesondere wenn institutionengeschichtliche Zugriffe dominieren oder Komplemente zur Senderperspektive fehlen. Auch in der Zusammenschau der Fülle an Einzelergebnissen bleibt es weitgehend dem Leser überlassen, Bezüge zwi-

schen unterschiedlichen Ausgangs- und Zielkontexten, Akteursgruppen und Phasen des 20. Jh.s herzustellen. Der diachron wie synchron vergleichende Blick würde dagegen helfen, manche thematisch-geografische Volte, die beide Bände schlagen, einzufangen. Die Verflechtungsanalyse könnte ihrerseits weiterführende Antworten auf die Wirkungen musikalischer Kommunikation geben, insbesondere dort, wo sich Widerstände oder Konkurrenzverhältnisse abzeichnen.

Zweitens führen beide Bände die Themen- und Quellenvielfalt vor Augen, aus denen die Zusammenschau von Geschichte und Musik schöpfen kann. Hier existieren gerade auf dem Feld der Kulturdiplomatie große, erst in Ansätzen ausgewertete Korpora in den staatlichen Archiven. Hinzu kommen reichhaltige institutionelle Bestände sowie ein schier unerschöpfliches Reservoir an medialer Überlieferung, von Presseberichterstattung bis hin zu Konzertmitschnitten, die bislang kaum mit dem kulturgeschichtlichen Werkzeugkasten erschlossen worden sind. Auswahl und Aufbereitung geeigneter Quellenkorpora stellt auch zukünftigen Studien reichhaltige Ansatzpunkte wie arbeitspraktische Herausforderungen. Angesichts dieser Vielfalt wäre es im Sinne einer Multiperspektivität auf ein *travelling concept* wie Musik nur wünschenswert, wenn solche Perspektivwechsel anhand der Quellen empirisch fundiert würden.

Drittens erweist sich der Dialog zwischen Musik- und Geschichtswissenschaft als insgesamt fruchtbar, wenn man – wie der Rezensent – als Historiker hinnimmt, dass Vertreter dieser Disziplin sich in beiden Bänden in der deutlichen Überzahl befinden. Gleichwohl ist der produktiv-skep-

tische Schlusskommentar des Musikwissenschaftlers Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen zum Band *Kommunikation im Musikleben* bedenkenswert. Er weist darauf hin, dass Musik als Sonde für historische Prozesse weitaus intensiver diskutiert wird als die aus musikwissenschaftlicher Sicht ebenso berechnete Frage, inwiefern diese Abstraktion von der spezifisch ästhetischen Dimension von Musik auch problematisch sein kann.

Insofern wird die suggestive Frage nach einem *acoustic* oder *musical turn* vielmehr durch die Schnittmengen beider Disziplinen, nämlich ein konstruktivistisch-funktionalistisches Verständnis von Musik im Kontext ihrer konkreten Aufführungen, aufgewogen. Die ästhetische Dimension ließe sich dann, statt sie weitgehend auszublenden, als eine Zuschreibungs- und Wahrnehmungskategorie unter anderen begreifen.

Anmerkungen:

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