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DISCIPLINARY SPACES

Spatial Control, Forced Assimilation
and Narratives of Progress since the
19th Century

From:

Andrea Fischer-Tahir, Sophie Wagenhofer (eds.)

Disciplinary Spaces

Spatial Control, Forced Assimilation and Narratives of Progress since the 19th Century

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This volume looks at territories such as reservations, model villages and collective towns as the spatial materialization of forced assimilation and »progress«. These disciplinary spaces were created in order to disempower and alter radically the behavior of people who were perceived as ill-suited »to fit« into hegemonic imaginations of »the nation« since the 19th century.

Comparing examples from the Americas, Australia, North and East Africa, Central Europe as well as West and Central Asia, the book not only considers the acts and legitimizing narrations of ruling actors, but highlights the agency of the subaltern who are often misrepresented as passive victims of violent assimilation strategies.

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Introduction: Spatial Control, Disciplinary Power and Assimilation: the Inevitable Side-Effects of ›Progress‹ and Capitalist ›Modernity‹

ANDREA FISCHER-TAHIR/SOPHIE WAGENHOFER

›Modern state‹ actors seem to have frequently represented the opposite concept to mobility and were suspicious of people moving around. Accordingly, the emergence of ›modernity‹ saw harsh measures against non-sedentary groups, which were stigmatized as ›vagabonds‹, ›gypsies‹ and ›beggars‹ or, on the peripheries of empires and their colonies, as ›stone-age people‹ and ›savages‹. The »primitive accumulation of capital«, however, was a process characterized by the enormous mobility of people. Agricultural producers, dispossessed of their soil and means of production, were forced to form the urban industrial army of a »free« proletariat to be spatially and socially re-arranged (Marx 1969 [1867]: 744). Expansion of the capitalist »world system« (Wallerstein 1974) through the industrial revolution, robber, trade and settler colonialism, slavery, imperialism and war entailed processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. If ›modernity‹ implies the constant re-ordering of people in space, the question is clearly not mobility per se, but control over mobility. But why are states so obsessed with controlling people's spatial patterns of behavior?

James C. Scott highlights that spatial control of the population makes society legible and simplifies »the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion« (Scott 1998: 2). In addition, ›modern state‹ actors strive for legibility of the social in order to minimize uncertainty and contingency, and to a certain degree, to render the future scientifically predictable. This might best be achieved with a »modern city« design that is »grid«-based; its spatial logic allows for avoidance and suppression of disobedience, improvement of accommodation and control of the population's reproduction (Scott 1998: 57). The grid as a settlement scheme travelled from the late 19th to the 20th century

and spread across the world. As proponents of ›development‹ and ›modernization‹, labeled ›nationalist‹, ›socialist‹ or ›people’s democratic‹, numerous state actors made use of this scheme in urban planning and in strategies pertaining to the rural population. They created »[m]odel villages, model cities, military colonies, show projects and demonstration farms« – settlements that represented the »miniaturization« of large-scale transformation. These projects may have differed in terms of intent, goal and deeper sense, as well as in their duration and outcome, and the configuration of the actors involved. Yet, the miniaturized grid provided »politicians, administrators, and specialists with an opportunity to create a sharply defined experimental terrain«, which helped to minimize »variables and unknowns« in projects of change (Scott 1998: 257). The »miniaturization« scheme not only appeared in strategies to »improve the human condition«, the main concern of James C. Scott’s powerful study. Disciplinary spaces also emerged in the context of justifying the dispossession of indigenous people, counterinsurgency strategies, and ethnocidal policies leading to forced assimilation. In some places, the biopolitical forms of control and bureaucratic accommodation invented in the ›Global North‹ of the 19th century found their echo in strategies of cultural and physical destruction in the ›Global South‹ of the late 20th century.

One of the initial ideas for this book came with the awareness of striking similarities between reservations in the United States in the last decades of the 19th century and collective towns established during the genocidal campaigns in Iraqi Kurdistan in the 1980s under the Arab-nationalist Baath regime. These include the incorporation of men into state-organized forces to crush resistance and police new settlements, severe movement restrictions, distribution of food and other supplies (at times held back arbitrarily), and attempts to transform the ›traditional way of life‹ into something more ›modern‹ in terms of housing, economic practice, kinship, education and property relations.¹

Disciplinary spaces to confine Indian nations, on the one hand, and spaces to repress rebellious Kurds, on the other, constitute two cases that diverge temporally and spatially, and show significant differences both in their social structuration and their place in what is conceived as ›global history‹. This is undoubtedly one reason why research on the two contexts has remained disconnected. Some form of cross-area comparison could forge a link between

1 For reservations in the United States, see, for example, Knack/Stewart 1984, Hannah 1993; Perry 1993; Frantz 1999; Greenwald 2002; for comparison and interrelations with Canada (Great Lakes region), see Danziger 2009; for genocidal persecution of the Kurds in Iraq, see Kelly 2008; Hardi 2011; Mlodoch 2014; for Kurdistan-based (›local‹) knowledge production on the genocidal experience, see Fischer-Tahir 2012a.

the two, but bears the risk of oversimplifying each case.² There is, however, another reason for this disconnectedness. Social science inquiries are predominantly co-structured by what Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider (2006) call »methodological nationalism«: Researchers tend to equate society with the nation state – be it established, in the making or destroyed – and perceive those »states and their governments as the primary focus of social-scientific analysis« (Beck/Sznaider 2006: 283). Detecting the wider and longue-durée circulation of disciplinary techniques, however, calls for consideration of cross-border relations, intraregional and transregional connectivities, and the translocal movement of knowledge, people and goods. And this observation brings us to our own project.

Our critical endeavor is about the spatial materialization of forced assimilation and ›improvement‹ rhetoric. We look at territories created by ›nation builders‹ to radically alter the behavior of people perceived as culturally ›other‹ and basically ill-suited ›to fit‹ hegemonic imaginations of ›the nation‹. We seek to shed light on struggles over space and the production and transformation of disciplinary spaces such as reservations, model villages and collective towns, and on the complex processes during which these and other representations of spatial control were discursively and materially constructed. Spanning the 19th to the 21st century and North and East Africa, West and Central Asia, Australia and the Americas to Central Europe, we highlight spatial control in the name of ›the nation‹, ›progress‹, and ›development‹ and the overlapping with the cultural destruction and sometimes physical annihilation of groups of people placed outside society.

In doing so, we are aware that individuals and groups targeted with disciplinary power frequently resisted and, pursuing their own strategies, (re-) claimed authority over space. Hence our volume not only considers the acts and legitimizing narrations of dominant groups, but additionally seeks to emphasize the agency of people often represented in both political and academic discourses as passive victims of violent relocation and assimilation strategies. We want to go beyond the reading of relocation and forced assimilation as mere top-down projects imposed by the state. Instead, our contributions show that these processes were infinitely more complex; they involved a variety of actors who, in many cases, perceived and interpreted disciplinary projects as simultaneously oppressive and emancipatory.

2 On opportunities and limitations of comparative area studies, see Oettler 2015.

SPATIAL CONTROL AND DISCIPLINARY SPACES

Norbert Elias writes that what is commonly called »the modern age is characterized, above all in the West, by a certain level of monopolization. Free use of military weapons is [...] reserved to a central authority [...] and likewise the taxation of property and income [...] is concentrated in the hands of a central social authority« (Elias 1998: 139). In general, Elias's civilization theory is »Eurocentric« and »universalistic« (see Duerr 1988, 2005). Yet, we want to take the notion of »monopolization« as a point of reference, since it makes sense in contexts of West European colonialism, Russian and Soviet imperialism, (other) nation building, and of counterinsurgency strategies pursued by regimes to re-centralize state authority. At least this is the case when these processes are examined ›from above‹.

When individuals and groups struggle for authority and power, »command over space [...] is of the utmost strategic significance« (Harvey 1989: 186). In turn, when the struggle concerns land conceptualized in terms of material resources (soil, water, flora, fauna, minerals) and/or as space inhabited by spirits and ancestors, authority is enforced by both political and violent means. Thus, »[t]he experienced materiality of colonialism is grounded [...] in dispossessions and repossessions of land« (Harris 2004: 167). Expropriation and appropriation frequently went hand in hand with signifying practices to legitimate oppression, marginalization, or in the extreme case, the physical annihilation of indigenous populations. One such discursive strategy is what Edward Said (1978) calls »othering«; representational acts to constitute the ›other‹ in relation to the ›self‹ with the aid of images, texts, narratives and, of course, binary oppositions. The latter can range from ›us‹/›them‹, ›modern‹/›traditional‹, ›civilized‹/›savage‹ and ›nation state‹/›non-state space‹ to the ›good‹ versus the ›evil‹.³ Neither are spatial binaries of ›center‹/›margin‹, ›urban‹/›rural‹ and ›core‹/›periphery‹ innocent categories to describe or – as in debates on dependency, world system and periphery since the 1960s⁴ – to criticize spatial relations on a local, regional or global scale. As representations these conceptual binaries do not simply reflect what appears to be ›natural‹ or ›objective realities‹ but structure discursive and material practice; their »territorialization [...] fosters their reification« (Fischer-Tahir/Naumann 2013: 19).

3 Hinton (2002: 8-9) lists 36 binary oppositions that emerged from Enlightenment discourses on ›civilization‹.

4 See Prebisch 1950; Wallerstein 1974; Senghaas 1974; Amin 1976; Bouziane et al. 2013; Fischer-Tahir/Soudias 2015.

The notion of »monopolization« essentially describes state formation based on the spatial organization of violence. The making of disciplined subjects obedient to a central authority is likewise a spatially structured process: Discipline as a power mechanism, we learn from Michel Foucault, operates through the regulation of time and of people's activities and behavior. It is imposed on the subjects through a complex system of surveillance. At the same time, discipline »proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space«, organized through techniques such as *enclosure*, *partitioning*, *the rule of functional sites*, and *rank* (Foucault 1995: 141, 142-149).⁵ Whereas historically Foucault's analysis applied to the regulation of »normal« citizens of the emerging »modern world«, numerous authors made use of his analytical tools to describe the »great confinement« (Foucault 1995: 98; 2001) in colonial contexts; for example, in terms of French and British urban architecture in Africa and South East Asia (Njoh 2007; Scriver/Prakash 2007), missionary and boarding schools in India, Australia, Canada and the United States (May et al. 2014; Stout 2012), and last but not least, medicine and hygiene in various historical settings (e.g., Saha 2016; Anderson 2006). Other research indicates, however, that the subjugation of mobile groups requires additional conditions to those prominently examined by Foucault. Matthew Hannah (1993), for example, discusses U.S. government strategies pursued in the 1870s vis-à-vis the Oglala Lakota of the Northern Plains, which served to radically transform Native American spatial patterns of economic practice and political representation. He argues that social control of the unconfined also demands that people are »individually identifiable in most activities, and that private property [is located] at fixed addresses« (Hannah 1993: 412).

Colonial strategies and enactments to »individualize« the supposedly »collective savages« correlated with processes of making the individual identifiable as in the »Old World«, e.g., through the invention of surnames, birth certificates or travelling documents, as well as with »science-based« social categories and systems to quantify individuals (Anderson 1983; Scott 1998). But somehow these strategies of »individualizing« the »savages« seemed to contradict the collective spirit of the mobile, disciplined groups essential to the colonial endeavor. Thus, in the United States of the 19th century, »the frontier line was extended westward less by individual pioneers, homesteaders, rugged individualists, than by banks, railways, the state and other collective sources of capital« (Smith 1996: xviii).

5 For a comparative reading of Elias and Foucault in terms of subject formation as a historical process and their respective methods of genesis and genealogy, see Dahlmans 2008.

These capital sources sprang from the materialization of bourgeois-liberal imaginations of private property imposed as a ›success model‹ on large parts of the world through various forms of violence. Nicholas Blomley (2003) discusses specifically »the frontier, the [cadastral] survey and the grid« as spaces of violence created historically to establish, operate and legitimate the »Western property regime«. Referring to Neil Smith's impressive study on gentrification and the »new urban frontier« in New York, Amsterdam, Budapest and Paris of the 1980s and 1990s (Smith 1996), Blomley stresses the contemporary significance of certain »tropes« to distinguish the ›self‹ that respects private property from the ›other‹ as the »constitutive outside« to private property (Blomley 2003: 125). The most prominent escapees from the capitalist world system, however, tended to implement their ideas of collective property relations and the socialist mode of production in similar ways. Soviet plans for ›progress‹ saw the frontier in terms of territorial (re-)conquest of large areas in Central Asia and Siberia. Soviet urban and rural planning also made use of the grid to regulate the interconnection of work and life, and to improve social recreation as a prerequisite for labor efficiency, as well as a means of political discipline (Resnick/Coven 1983; Gestwa 2010; Grützmacher 2012).

It has been argued from the perspective of legal geography that »in the prevailing social order power is often described, conceptualized, exercised and experienced in terms of rights and no-rights« and that »a space without social (and legal) meaning is simply a location« (Delaney/Ford/Blomley 2001: xix). This certainly holds true for a wide range of non-capital-based cultures and social orders that disappeared in the course of time. Although the imagination of land as private property was unknown in many parts of the world, people attached legal meaning to space, regardless of whether it meant permanently fixed or fluid in terms of daytime, season or life cycle, or was relational to age, gender and group or individual status. Practices of this kind have survived in many instances or were modified, bearing witness to the simultaneity of regimes that regulate rights and no-rights in terms of spatial divisions and behavior. Significant for capitalist society is the commodification of space and the reification of social relations that originated and were forged in historical processes and, at the same time, the taking for granted of political geographies controlled by national governments and a system of international relations. Legal meanings of space have been individually and collectively internalized and habitualized through processes of normalization, institutionalization, knowledge, experience and what Foucault (2007: 108) refers to as »governmentality«, to the extent that in everyday life individuals and groups tend to obey them without question. The ›genesis‹ of these meanings, their inherent power relations and

multiple, overlapping and competitive character, as well as their openness to social negotiation tends to emerge in times of individual or collective crisis, radical change, war and occupation, upheaval and insurrection, (forced) migration, states of emergency and, last but not least, in struggles over the »right to the city« (Lefebvre 1968).

As this volume deals with spatial control and disciplinary techniques to establish, to maintain or to challenge the dominant relations of power, we feel the need to define some of our keywords. Without claiming to invent something completely new, we understand spatial control roughly as the exercise of authority over territory and the distribution of people in space. Authority can be prospective, stabilized and permanent or last no longer than a moment in time. Spatial control in this book primarily refers to the power over the symbolic representation of territory and its boundaries, the definition and enforcement of movement patterns, settlement schemes, modes of land division, and the utilization of other material resources. Authority can be fabricated through (combinations of) violence and military force, political and legal enactments, social negotiation, work and discipline, and signifying practices.

With disciplinary spaces we broadly refer to structured and structuring materiality. The creation of disciplinary spaces serves as a more effective and/or experimental means of regulating people's behavior; discipline is often closely related to work. We see the schemes, ideas and performances that are at work in the production of disciplinary spaces as representations of social order and consequently as forms of organized knowledge shaped by human practice, which is itself subject to transformation and change (Baberowski 2009). Disciplinary spaces could be identified as locally situated and territorially bounded, and as structured by global-local dependencies. It makes little sense, however, to »enclose people, resources, and knowledge within a ›local‹ domain« and to ignore the »translocal ties that in part *constitute* those places« (Castree 2004: 135, his emphasis). In this regard, research critical of notions such as ›the global‹, ›globalization‹ and ›global history‹ as overemphasizing north-south dependencies and transfers has pointed to connectivities that are »neither necessarily global in scale nor necessarily connected to global moments« (Freitag/von Oppen 2010: 3). Hence the notion of »translocality« as referring to »the sum of phenomena which result from a multitude of circulations and transfers [...] of people, goods, ideas and symbols« would facilitate the understanding of south-south relations and highlight »experience and agency« in the respective societies (ibid.: 5).

We do not see spatial control as the privilege of rulers or aggressors. Neither do we regard it as the exclusive weapon of collectively organized resistance and

revolutionary forces. Instead, we understand that in many instances actors pursue strategies of spatial control simply to ensure that certain economic, political or spiritual/religious tasks are accomplished. This can apply to practices in wider territories or at single household level, to the silent recourse to abandoned spatial patterns as well as to the symbolic and material appropriation of a disciplinary space once imposed ›from above‹. In either case, (repetitive) performances create space. Authority over territory and the spatial distribution of people is therefore both the prerequisite and the result of space production, since »we do not live, act and work ›in space‹ so much as by living, acting and working we produce space« (Smith 1984: 85).

RELOCATION, ETHNIC CLEANSING, AND FORCED ASSIMILATION

This volume is a collection of essays that address relocation as a spatial technique of disciplinary power und cultural assimilation, intersecting in several cases with genocidal or ethnocidal destruction. Apart from taking a critical geography approach, the book also adopts a genocide research perspective.⁶ We are nevertheless aware that not all relocation is organized with physical violence or the result of ethnic cleansing. An example from ›our country‹ is the relocation of the rural population in the region of Lusatia in former East Germany of the 1960s and 1970s, which affected Germans and Sorbs alike. It served the expansion of brown coal mining and had no assimilationist goals whatsoever. In contexts of both expansive and internal colonialism, however, relocation was and is often crucial to appropriating land, natural resources and labor force, and linked to assimilationist strategies or/and to ethnic cleansing.

The Bosnian War (1992-1995) led to the widespread assumption in political and academic debates that ethnic cleansing occurs for the most part in regional or civil wars in the interests of territorial occupation or what Brendan O’Leary et al. (2001) call »right-sizing the state«. Ethnic cleansing is rendered a »security-creating tool« aimed at »the consolidation of power over a specific territory through population removal« (Booth Walling 2012: 63-64). It is also conceived as a strategy for punishment, the spreading of fear or the outcome of unleashed violence, with military or paramilitary entities and undemocratic or dictatorial regimes considered the usual perpetrators. Scholars have stressed, however, that the removal and destruction of social groups constituted as ›other‹ is a historical

6 For a comprehensive overview of genocide research, see Jones 2006.

pattern developed prior to ›modernity‹ (Bell-Fialkoff 1999; Naimark 2001).⁷ Other scholars interpret ethnic cleansing as an integral part of nation building – since ›people began to entwine the *demos* with the dominant *ethnos*, generating organic conceptions of the nation and the state that encouraged the cleansing of minorities‹ (Mann 2005: 3, his emphasis). According to Michael Mann, ›[m]urderous cleansing is uncommon. Assimilation, backed up by milder institutional coercion, has dominated‹ (ibid.: 18). This begs the question of how those targeted experienced this ›mild‹. Either way, Mann’s argument on a ›direct relationship [...] between democratic regimes and mass murder‹ is compelling. With reference to the 19th-century politics of forceful relocation and physical annihilation in order to displace and reduce the indigenous population in colonial Australia and the United States, he argues that ›settler democracies in certain contexts have been truly murderous, more so than more authoritarian colonial governments. The more settlers controlled colonial institutions, the more murderous the cleansing‹ (Mann 2005: 4). Some years earlier, historian and American Indian Movement activist Ward Churchill (1997) commented in a more sarcastic manner on this dark side of ›civilization‹ and ›progress‹, and on the political bias when it came to recognizing historical ethnic cleansing:

›the nazi master plan of displacing and reducing by extermination the population of the western U.S.S.R. and replacing it with settlers of ›biologically superior German breeding stock‹ is roundly (and rightly) condemned as ghastly and inhuman. Meanwhile, people holding this view of nazi ambitions tend overwhelmingly to see consolidation and maintenance of Euro-dominated settler states in places like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, the United States and Canada as ›basically ok‹, or even as ›progress‹‹. (Churchill 1997: 84)

The forced removal notably of indigenous groups to make room for ›progress‹ prevails to this day. These groups face relocation or land dispossession in many parts of the world. Marked as ›development‹, ›integration into the international market‹ or ›master plan‹, it comes in the form of erecting dams, ambitious ›late-modernist‹ construction projects, and land grabbing. Political recognition of the crimes addressed by Ward and tackling contemporary ethnocidal relocation and genocidal persecution is always contingent on the ›national interest‹ and power relations at national and international level (Callagher 2013).

The relationship between ›modernity‹ and mass killing has been discussed in depth in Holocaust research. Very prominently, Zygmunt Bauman makes the

7 This approach echoes Leo Kuper’s famous statement on genocide: ›The word is new, the concept is ancient‹ (Kuper 1981: 9).

suggestion »to *treat the Holocaust as a rare, yet significant and reliable, test of the hidden possibilities of modern society*«, showing that it was »the rational world of modern civilization that made the Holocaust thinkable« (Bauman 1989: 12-13, his emphasis). Rationality applies to the mode of production and social organization required to set the »machinery of destruction« in motion (Hilberg 1985). Rationality also relates to the more or less science-based processes of ›othering‹ that precede, accompany and serve to justify physical annihilation; whenever »boundaries of an imagined community are reshaped in such a manner that a previously ›included‹ group [...] is ideologically recast (almost always in dehumanizing rhetoric) as being outside the community, as a threatening and dangerous ›other« (Hinton 2002: 6).⁸ Indeed the perpetrators were highly ›creative‹ in inventing dehumanizing categories and narratives to legitimize mass murder, mixing religion, science, notions from the era of leprosy and plague with ›modern‹ medicine. Sporadically, dehumanizing rhetoric enfold its murderous intent with the use of ›simple‹ common knowledge. »A cockroach cannot give birth to a butterfly« as preparation for the slaughter of the Tutsis in Rwanda 1994 (Sinema 2015: 27) and »nits make lice« to encourage volunteer cavalry to also kill the children of the Cheyenne and Arapaho in Sand Creek, United States 1864 (Ward 1997: 228-238) are merely two shocking examples from the past.⁹

Helen Fein (1990: 24) reminds us that the focus on mass killing tends to neglect other forms of attempted »interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members«. These include the destruction of livelihoods, the abduction of children and sterilization. Less eliminationist strategies are language prohibition, restriction of movement or imposition of modes of economic production and social reproduction that differ greatly from previous living customs and under the given circumstances are almost impossible to adopt. Forced assimilation is more than the attempt to radically change patterns of behavior, since it not only involves the subjugation of minority and indigenous groups by the dominant society, but also their social destruction.

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- 8 Hinton's definition of genocide stems from an anthropological perspective, drawing on Helen Fein's (1994) genocide definition and Benedict Anderson's (1983) notion of imagined communities.
 - 9 There are current concerns that racist ›othering‹ as symbolic violence is intensifying in many parts of the world, for example in the context of the authoritarian regulation of refugee movement and migration, and – frequently associated with it – in terms of the ›war on terror‹. Some authors suggest that in such contexts symbolic violence spun around a ›good‹ versus ›evil‹ binary has ›genocidal potential‹ (e.g., Nagengast 2002).

(COUNTER-)NARRATIVES OF ›PROGRESS‹, AGENCY AND KNOWLEDGE

Raymond Williams remarks that the English word »progress« was used in the late 17th century in the sense of »moving from this world to that which is to come« (Williams 1983: 244). The history of ›progress‹ is thus closely linked to European settler colonialism. First used by agents with a strong religious identity and agenda, ›progress‹ became increasingly secularized and was established to mean »movement as from worse to better«. The »abstraction of this movement« made it a »historical pattern that produced Progress as a general idea, in close association with the ideas of civilization and of improvement« (ibid.).

Whether ›progress‹ is defined as »from worse to better« in terms of technological advancement, political and social institutions, science, medicine and hygiene, productive forces and modes of production, decolonization and the reorganizing of international relations or, last but certainly not least, in terms of gender relations, it remains a normative and relational concept. Countless tales of ›progress‹ have evoked a variety of counter-narratives, from the pre-Marxist critique of industrial capitalism, socialist, communist and anarchist ideas, strands of cultural pessimism, feminism, through the broad spectrum of answers from the colonized and decolonized ›Global South‹ to the self-determination movements of internal colonies around the globe. ›Progress‹ was mounted in »ideology in the negative sense« as »false consciousness« that served to stabilize social order and the ruling power, and in »ideology in the positive sense« aimed at the abolition of exploitation, alienation and injustice (Geuss 1981).

The contributions in this essay collection see or explicitly address both forms of ideology as relevant on the ground. As we learn from the case studies, the ideas brought forward or represented by actors from ›above‹, ›below‹ and ›in between‹, as well as the concrete modalities of re-ordering spatial relations are multifaceted and contradictory, and hence resistant to simplifying categorization. In other words, the notion of ›progress‹ employed in the contributions is more open and complex. Historical and anthropological research on south-south-relations at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin suggests reading progress as a »horizon of possibilities, [as] a temporal blank screen upon which visions of reality can be projected by given actors«. »Progress«, Katrin Bromber and her colleagues argue, »can, potentially, be brought about through a set of transformative actions, which might either serve to alter or maintain the *status quo*.« (Bromber et al. 2015: 1) This approach seeks to counter imaginations of ›progress‹ as a unilateral north-south transfer. It highlights the emic notions of

actors at the descriptive level, emphasizing »contingency« and »the open-ended quality of social existence« (ibid.: 3).

We tend to adopt this view, as it disconnects ›progress‹ from ›moving forward‹ and – at least partly – ›disempowers‹ the usual symbol-handlers and decision-makers: politicians, ideologues, technocrats, businessmen, journalists, and (other) academics. This not least because it conceives of ensembles of (potential) actors as expressing their visions in the much broader terms of social origin, gender, age, status, class and education, giving space to the experience and representations of the »subaltern« (Spivak 1988). Adopting this conceptual approach correlates with certain basic assumptions on agency. We favor the notion of »agent« as referring to »a person engaged in the exercise of power in the sense of the ability to bring about effect and to (re)constitute the world« (Ahearn 2001: 113). In addition, reading those visions and their counter-visions, and the diverse ways in which people react or fail to react to either of them calls for an understanding of knowledge that is critical of such notions as ›high culture‹, ›science‹ or ›elites‹. Drawing on Fredrik Barth (2002: 3), we understand knowledge to be whatever »a person employs to interpret and act on the world«; knowledge refers to bodies of »substantive assertions and ideas« that exist as a result of social relations, communication and representation. This allows us to take various forms of knowledge into account without reproducing knowledge hierarchies, where science tops the ladder and everyday knowledge occupies the bottom rung. It also recognizes that the ability to interpret and to act is distributed, acquired and performed in ways that cut across social boundaries of ethnic and religious group, class, gender or age. In short, awareness of the multiple schemes to reconfigure spatial relations and the endless outcomes and possibilities for interpretation inspired our (counter-) narratives of progress.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Into the West, into the East: Spatial Control and Property Relations

The contributions in the first chapter depart from the hegemonic argument that justifies sedentarization and mandatory (re-) settlement as the prerequisite for ›modernization‹. Central to the land-taking politics and ideologies of ›progress‹ are specific notions of property relations and the nation, all of which were aimed at re-ordering people's patterns of spatial behavior and their imaginations of space and time.

The first contribution turns to South America in the 1930s and 1940s, and to *territorial rights, indigenous peoples and spatial imagination in Brazil*. The authors, *Thiago de Azevedo Pinheiro Hoshino* and *Thiago Freitas Hansen*, take the reader to the »March to the West«, a Brazilian government campaign to centralize the state and integrate the regions of this vast country. It is also a story of internal colonialism and dominance over indigenous groups, which involves taking and parceling their land, as well as their cultural assimilation. While the »indigenous family« was culturally dispossessed, their »otherness« added selectively to the narrative of »true Brazilianness« and the image of a nation of diversity that is on the move, »marching continuously towards progress«. From the perspective of critical legal geography, the authors discuss relations between law, power and space, exemplifying the manifold ways in which legal, political, scientific and other representations of social order are at work in a transformative process. They show how the territorial reconfiguration imposed by government leadership and the »pedagogy of property« that targets state subjects in general and indigenous minds in particular led to the emergence of a new geography of property.

Andrei Dörre deals with spatial control, projects of *development and property regimes* on the ground of *Rangeland in Central Asia*. In a diachronic perspective, he looks back at historical processes of territorialization and interaction between the state and mobile groups in the Fergana Region. He first examines the Czarist colonial era, followed by the Soviet era. Whereas in pre-colonial times pastoralists shaped their economic and social activities across territories under different political rule, Czarist and Soviet policies to re-order territories deeply affected people's lives. Behind Czarist regulations to facilitate movement control and taxation and Soviet campaigns to nationalize the means of production was a rationale based on and legitimized by imaginations of »modernity« and »progress«. Russian administrators and symbol-handlers labeled non-sedentary groups »half-savage« with »chaotic land use«. In the Soviet era, »backward« pastoralists were the target of measures of spatial control that saw the establishment of disciplinary spaces such as the Kolkhoz and Sovkhoz, where concepts of discipline and work in collectivization were taught with the aim of enhancing state-controlled livestock production and transforming society.

The chapter rounds up with *Emily Greenwald's* contribution on the 1887 General Allotment Act, known as the Dawes Act, adopted by the U.S. Congress with the aim of *re-ordering American Indians' spatial practices*. While some supporters saw this Act as a way to »civilize« Indians, to abandon tribal collectivism and introduce individual private land ownership, others hoped for the sale of unallotted land. Indeed scholarship has interpreted the Dawes Acts as

a device to further dispossess Native Americans. Greenwald, on the other hand, tells us a story that is more complex. Her empirical focus is on the Nez Perce Reservation. She describes negotiations between ethnographer and state representative Alice Fletcher, on the one hand, and the Nez Percés, on the other. In doing so, she highlights the ways in which the Nez Percés partly obeyed and partly resisted but on the whole sought spatial control of their land. As a result, in one and the same reservation the land division showed different patterns. Here the contribution emphasizes the agency of those seen as powerless victims in both narrations of the Act in terms of rude dispossession and the narrative intent to »save them [the Indians] from extinction«.

Settlement Schemes and Development Dreams

This chapter addresses ›modernization‹ and ›development‹ since the second half of the 20th century in East and North Africa and in West Asia. In the foreground are settlement schemes for the purpose of enhancing the human condition, the control of social reproduction and the rebellious potential of the people, and finally as a by-product of acts to bring about ›progress‹ at the expense of an ethnic minority. Again, the chapter underlines the contingencies of human existence.

Priya Lal's contribution on villagization and the ambivalent production of rural space in Tanzania discusses the African socialist *ujamaa* initiative aimed at national development and the integration of the rural population. The author asks about the scheme to which the new village subscribed; was it an »autonomous traditional space, counterinsurgency tool, site of scientific modernization or unit of socialist transformation«? Critical of interpretations of villagization as modernist and socialist transfers of development schemes, Lal underscores the translocal ties and exchange of ideas to which *ujamaa* owed its existence. She also contradicts the reading of the *ujamaa* experiment as imposed by state authority and as culminating in disaster. Instead, she looks at villagization on the ground. With the aid of archive material and the memories of elderly inhabitants of the southeast Mtwara region, she exemplifies the complex dynamics of political and spatial logics. What began as a voluntary project that was welcomed for its promise of schools and health care infrastructure turned later into mandatory relocation. Inhabitants of the villages, on the other hand, respected only in part the imposed modes of settlement, economic practice and instructions ›from above‹. In many cases they returned to officially abandoned spatial patterns, including migrant labor.

Mélanie Genat deals with *socialist ›villagization‹ in Iraqi Kurdistan* during the 1970s. Celebrated by the ruling Baath regime and the Moscow-oriented Communist Party as ›progress‹, the Iraqi *mujamma*^e (collective town) was not simply the appropriation of models from the socialist block but also echoed schemes implemented in Egypt, Algeria and Tanzania. In the Iraqi case, villagers likewise welcomed the new settlement as promising access to electricity, health care, education, and well-paid jobs in state-controlled farms and factories. However, given the strength of the Kurdish movement and the precarious living conditions of the lower class in the rural areas, the collective town was an attempt to ›buy peace‹, safeguarded by Kurdish police. War (both with Iran and the Kurdish guerilla) and the logic of the *rentier state* (oil export/food import, lack of investment in industry and agriculture, but expansion of the state bureaucracy and the military sector) put an end to these development projects. The author concludes that the result of relocating and centralizing large parts of the rural population was »the creation of a new, dependent community that suited the central government’s counterinsurgency objectives«.

In *Thomas Schmidinger’s* contribution on *spatial control, ›modernization‹ and assimilation in Northern Sudan*, we learn about settlements based on schemes and material appropriated from elsewhere, and partly signified by actors as manifestations of ›progress‹. The setting here is radically different and focuses on *dams* along the Nile River. The author shows that these ambitious development projects both on the Egyptian and the Sudanese side are implemented at the expense of the indigenous Nubian population. He sees the Nubian region as an internal colony where authoritarian central regimes decide on the implementation of projects to tame nature. They do so without prior negotiations with local inhabitants and even fail to invent more convincing narratives for flooding Nubian land than simply the need to improve the supply of electricity for the Sudanese nation. At the same time, the Arab-nationalist and Islamist regime in Khartoum sees the »Nubians’ successful preservation of their languages and some of their pre-Islamic traditions as a threat« and pursues a strategy of Arabization. In his contribution, the author clearly addresses fears among Nubian political activists of ethnocidal assimilation.

Spatial Control, Knowledge and the ›Other‹

The third chapter examines the semantic of narratives of exclusion and annihilation, and knowledge constructions that define and redefine the ›other‹ in processes of nation building. The contributions take a *longue-durée* perspective

and show the transformations and persistence of representations and modes of spatial control.

Hurriyet Babacan and Narayan Gopalkrishnan discuss enforced settlement, control and fear in Australian national discourse. ›Othering‹ began, the authors argue, when European invaders and settlers declared Australia ›terra nullius‹ (unoccupied land), rendering Aboriginal people invisible or inferior, and justifying this with several narratives, among them the idea that Aboriginals failed to ›cultivate‹ the land in terms of *agriculture*. What is represented today as the Australian nation was born of frontier violence, massacres of Aboriginal people, and enactments aimed at their dispossession, segregation and ethnic destruction. The authors discuss the many policies to subjugate the Aboriginals who did not die out. They show that according to ›White‹ demands resulting from and pushing forward political and economic developments, categories such as ›Aboriginality‹, ›full-blood‹, ›pan-Aboriginals‹, and ›half-cast‹ were defined and have repeatedly been redefined in terms of meaning, rights denied and measures imposed on the people categorized. The contribution also underlines the continuity of modes to control ›the other‹. They argue that notably since World War II, fear of losing spatial control over the continent is embedded in discourses on nationhood and accompanies policies to regulate immigration of various ethnic groups, arranged in a hierarchy of ›others‹.

Christian Pommerening's contribution deals with frictions and continuations in conceptualizing ›Zigeuner‹ (gypsies), focusing on Central Europe since the late 18th century. He examines discourse fragments from German-speaking ethnic studies, pedagogy, literature and criminalistics, and he sheds light on measures and projects aimed at spatial control, sedentarization, and forced assimilation of people summarized under the term ›Zigeuner‹. In doing so he highlights the entanglement of science and politics, and the flux of knowledge through time. The author shows that knowledge constructions alternated between social and ethnic criteria; they were incoherent, flexible and modifiable, and thus a suitable means to include and ›educate‹ those categorized as well as to exclude and annihilate them. Mobility, however, was a key moment of definition and made the decisive difference to the necessary territorial centralization and unavoidable ›modernization‹ by placing the ›other‹ in opposition to the ›civilized world‹. At the end of the 19th century, ›Zigeuner‹ ultimately became a policing concept to control all kinds of non-sedentary social groups and a ›category for anyone who failed to conform to the image of the subject as a productive worker living in a controlled habitat‹.

Disciplinary Space as Counterinsurgency – Encountered and Countering

The fourth chapter centers on model villages constructed in the context of genocidal counterinsurgency in Central America and West Asia in the 1980s. Forced settlement emerges as a method of spatially and socially controlling the survivors of massacres and deportation, as well as of suppressing continuous rebellion. The chapter journeys from the spatial dimensions of a process of ethnic destruction to those in practices of memory and reconstruction.

Anika Oettler first of all turns our attention to *scorched earth campaigns, forced settlement, and ethnic engineering in Guatemala*. She concentrates on the transformation of counterinsurgent strategies of physical annihilation into a disciplinary policy of militarized resettlement and ethnic engineering. In order to re-establish authority over the national territory, the military launched a number of murderous campaigns against guerilla groups and their real or potential supporters among the indigenous population of the conflict areas. Following these operations, the regime began to resettle the displaced population in so-called *aldeas modelos* (model villages), strategic hamlets said to have emerged under the influence of advisors from the United States, but also from Argentina, Israel and Taiwan. Oettler's article outlines the variety of discursive traits that merged into this specific strategy of spatial control, and the translocal ties in terms of actors, ideas and techniques. These model villages were also designed for discipline. The goal was to convert the survivors of genocide into a »rigidly controlled workforce«, to »civilize« the Indians and to integrate them into a »modern Guatemala«, whereas the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church competed to (re-)conquer the Indians' souls.

The last of the case studies brings us back to collective towns in Iraqi Kurdistan. *Karin Mlodoch* shows how survivors of the genocidal Anfal Campaign transform a *space of violence and destruction into one of social reconstruction*. She looks at space from a psychological perspective, relying on concepts of trauma and recovery elaborated in critical psychology. Her empirical focus is the collective town referred to by the Iraqi regime as »Steadfastness« but renamed »Liberation« under Kurdish semi-independence in 1992. As long as the Iraqi army controlled Kurdistan, Anfal survivors were detained in camp-like conditions, dependent on food rations. Under Kurdish rule, the place was neglected both by the autonomous government and by international aid. Only the collapse of the Iraqi regime in 2003 and Kurdish access to oil and gas resulted in a construction boom and social improvement, and – since the main perpetrators were brought to justice – in a »sense of satisfaction«. Mlodoch shows the many

ways in which women Anfal survivors appropriate this former space of violence. She argues, however, that this is not some kind of »subversion«, but rather a process of negotiation intertwined with the survivors' »psychological, economic and social stabilization and recovery«.

Disciplinary Spaces?

As Mlodoch's contribution indicates, not all disciplinary spaces investigated in this volume combine discipline with work; in this specific case the Iraqi oil *rentier state* at war required servants and soldiers rather than domestic productive workers. Yet, it is one more example of what *Matthew Hannah* states in his *commentary on disciplinary spaces*, which we quote at the end of our edited volume: »Modern regimes of spatial control have proven attractive to power elites and dominant ethnic groups across many different cultural, political-economic and geographic contexts«. Hannah examines our approach and the essays collected here in terms of empirical content and theoretical use value for research on space and power relations. Yes, our endeavor goes beyond a reading of spatial control in the figuration of European White settler colonialism as »the oppressors and indigenous people of color in the Global South the more or less defiant oppressed«. He stresses that the essays open several windows for comparison in diachronic and synchronic, as well as in interregional perspective. At the same time, Hannah argues that the focus on spatial control as a disciplinary technique to (re-)establish state power and form subjectivities obedient to the social order is too narrow. Instead, »spatial control regimes in the service of nation building can and do operate with a far wider palette of techniques of power than merely discipline, including various forms of biopolitics and governmentality«. Referring to a variety of transfers of ideas and techniques addressed in our volume, he suggests further investigation to discuss the extent to which strategies as applied in the ›Global South‹ have also »informed urban and regional planning, state management of working class populations, and similar social policy initiatives in Europe and other parts of the core«.

POSITIONALITY AND REFLECTIONS

Countering the (male) myth of ›objective‹ science, Donna Haraway argues from a feminist and radical constructivist perspective for dealing with academic knowledges as »situated«, as »the view from a body, always a complex,

contradictory, structuring, and structured body« (Haraway 1988: 589). We take her notion of »situated knowledges« as a point of departure to briefly outline our positionality and the making of this book. Its editors are of ›white‹ Austrian middle-class and East-German working-class ›origin‹, respectively, and have multidisciplinary backgrounds: Sophie Wagenhofer from history and Islamic and Jewish studies, and Andrea Fischer-Tahir from Arabic and Oriental studies, social anthropology and the history of religion. Working side by side for five years in a joint research center at the Humboldt University and the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin, we came across research programs dealing with representations of social order and translocality, and with the methodological and conceptual issues of area studies. But what preoccupied us most in common discussions about research on nation building, identity politics and museums in North Africa (Wagenhofer 2012; 2014), on the one hand, and space, violence and memory in Iraqi Kurdistan (Fischer-Tahir 2012b), on the other, were the spatial dimensions of identity and power, and genocide as a research field. Against this background, but also one that is structured by our political world views and experience, both of us were and still are wary of attempts to categorize people and measure human experience.

The idea for this book came in the course of a panel on Spatial Control at the annual conference of the Royal Geographical Society in 2014 (London).¹⁰ We could not have made it a reality, however, without inviting or rather convincing other scholars to contribute. Hence the book is not the outcome of discussions with the participating authors. Indeed, we have never even met seven of the thirteen authors in person. With regret as it happens because we learned much from their empirical findings and conceptual thoughts, which helped us to finally structure and shape the approach outlined in this introduction. In our gratitude for their commitment, we tried to ›discipline‹ them with our comments on first drafts as little as necessary and as softly as possible. Each of them has a (multi-) disciplinary background and is embedded in specific academic and political networks of knowledge production and circulation with the result that all of them work with different approaches and notions, and modes of representing findings. A number of authors conduct and present their research without explicit reference to the *spatial turn*, but open up the research they have hitherto carried out on forced assimilation, genocide, trauma or education and literature to

10 The panel was organized by geographer Matthias Naumann from the Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning, Berlin-Erkner, and Andrea Fischer-Tahir working at the research network Reconfigurations: History, Memory and Processes of Transformation in the MENA Region, Philipps University of Marburg.

consciously include the dimension of spatiality. An edited volume is a good format for the common presentation of what is usually separated by journals bound to specific disciplines or geographic areas, and to specific (Anglo-American) rules of academic representation. And this brings us to our final remarks on individual and collective acting in knowledge production.

What we commonly represent in essays, monographs and introductions, but especially in peer-reviewed journal articles of the humanities and social sciences is rightfully signed by individual authors. In contrast to other fields, and contrary to other historical and cultural contexts, single authorship is the norm. This practice, however, tends to veil the fact that the process of constructing knowledges is shaped to a greater extent collectively. Collective action begins with the socially organized application and elaboration of methodologies and concepts, and the presentation of findings according to rules of communication. »Situated knowledges« are also produced when researchers circulate in the various academic institutions with their various self-images, programs and financial dependency on and sometimes close entanglement with political and economic entities. These institutions provide the researcher with temporally more or less limited working contracts. As a result, our brains benefit from ongoing discussions and at the same time contribute to the formulation of notions and assumptions before we leave – mobile and flexible as we are disciplined to be – to sign the next contract at the next institution. As agents of the »cognitariat« we act in a matrix of »capitalisme cognitif« (Corsani et al. 2001). We often criticize this system for its neoliberal appearance and rules, but at the same time we re-constitute it by our practice.

The knowledge we represent is generated in concrete practices of text production. Ideas developed in cooperation with ›interlocutors‹, colleagues and research assistants in the field and shaped by comments from friends, relatives, colleagues, editors and peer-reviewers are constitutive of this hidden authorship, as is the intellectual work of translators, language editors and creative student assistants. And each with their own political bias influences the process of representation to a greater or lesser extent. Hence, apart from reflections on the political and economic structuration of the academic field and knowledge production, it is also »necessary to do a great deal more analytical reflection on the ways in which ›individual‹ and ›collective‹ forms of work hang together« (Bromber/Lange 2016: 97). In conclusion and opening up this space for further discussion, we would like to see our edited volume understood as the affirmative expression of collective work.

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