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Un renouvellement des problématiques

# Territorial shock: Toward a Theory of Change

Choc territorial: Vers une théorie du changement

**Gertjan Dijkink**

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## Résumés

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Cet article cherche à interpréter la territorialité comme une formation sociale ayant un fondement géographique, qui se recompose pendant les périodes décisives de l'histoire. Depuis les dernières décennies du vingtième siècle, selon cette conception, plusieurs tentatives ont essayé de comprendre 'la globalisation' en intégrant les 'reterritorialisations' du passé (en particulier la naissance des États à la fin du Moyen Age). Le modèle dynamique que l'auteur propose ici repose sur trois principes territoriaux (autorité, clôture et identité) qui s'avèrent actifs ou passifs, de façon alternative, à chaque passage d'une époque territoriale à

une autre. Ce mécanisme éclaire aussi les grandes révolutions spirituelles qui accompagnent le changement territorial et dont les contemporains découvrent maintenant l'effet déstabilisant. D'après cette perspective nous entrons dans une époque dans laquelle la solidarité territoriale (la citoyenneté) est mise à l'épreuve. Il est entendu que cela ne fait que renouveler la géographie du pouvoir, sans la mettre hors jeu, et quand bien même des courants spirituels nouveaux postulent une déterritorialisation absolue au titre du vitalisme individuel (et d'autres formes d'allégeances).

This article tries to explain territoriality as a social assemblage linked to a geographic base which is restructured during crucial (axial) periods in history. Since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, frequent attempts have been made to understand 'globalization' by looking to earlier 're-territorializations' in history (particularly the emergence of territorial states in Europe at the end of the Middle-Ages). The dynamic model proposed by the author involves three territorial principles (control, closure and identity) that alternate in terms of active and passive at each transition to a new territorial epoch. This mechanism also casts some light on the great spiritual (religious) changes that seem to accompany territorial change and reveal its disturbing impact (like an earthquake) on contemporaries. According to this perspective we are now entering a period in which territorial solidarity (citizenship) is severely tested although a clear geography of power continues. New spiritual movements promote de-territorialization and individual resilience.

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## Texte intégral

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Earthquake survivors often report a severe sense of disorientation during severe groundshaking, a whole-body confusion and loss of moorings - both figurative and literal. Our frame of reference is the ground we stand on, and when that reference frame shifts without warning, something deep in us is affected. The earth simply isn't supposed to move, we assume, and when it does we are profoundly unsettled.

Earthquake consultant Richard Briggs in *Asia Times*, October 9, 2009.

## Introduction: The study of territorial change

If the moving earth can severely disorient us, what then may we expect about changing territoriality? Political territoriality is a system of governance and personal identification based on physical anchoring points like boundaries. One would expect any change in that system to be severely disturbing as well. The territorial order has changed profoundly with the historic rise of Empires and States and it will purportedly do so in the course of 'Globalization'. Such changes are slow and not necessarily comprehensible during someone's life span but why couldn't they reveal themselves in shocks similar to what moving tectonic plates induce in the case of an earthquake? Unfortunately the social world is complex. Various and simultaneous systemic changes compete as explanation of societal confusion and then there is the even more crucial question what actually should count as a shock. From the clinical psychologist's perspective it means an individual's temporal inability to understand what is happening and to move on with one's life. Events such as the invasion by a foreign army or the terrorist attacks of September 11 are likely candidates for being identified as sources of shock. During the first hour of the September 11 attacks TV reporters used words such as 'Pearl Harbor', 'war', 'God', 'pray' and 'America' suggesting a struggle of historic and cosmic proportions (Reynolds and Barnett 2003). Appealing to religion is apparently one way to cope with perplexing events which include territorial change as will be argued in this article. But is any shock involving territorial invasion the sign of a subterranean systemic change?

- 1 In this respect I deviate from the way war seems to be treated in the philosophical discourse of De (...) [...](#)
- 2 See the work of a research group about the Akkadian Empire existing in the 3rd millennium B.C. [http \(...\)](#)

2 How disturbing such events may be, neither the violation of a boundary nor the relocation of a boundary necessarily indicates changing *territoriality* or territorial order. Political territoriality is a system of rules and practices that sustains an order of territorial ‘assemblages’ that in its turn has emerged from earlier such orders by re-territorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, Bonta and Protevi 2004, Smicek 2007). Wars do not automatically indicate that a territorial order is losing its consistency: they may on the contrary be an essential part of its survival.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly valid for ancient empires like the Roman Empire. Let me, in order to remain for a while at this level of concreteness, dwell on what seem to be important historic territorial orders. Rudimentary states date from very early in history (China and Mesopotamia in the two millennia before our era) but their origin and modes of control, closure and identity (see later on) are cast in shadows like those of the very early Empires<sup>2</sup>. Nonetheless, the Empire – created by a power centre swallowing neighboring states and tribes – is one of the earliest forms of political territoriality on which we have written documents at first-hand (particularly from China and later on from Rome). The Roman Empire was the direct source of the medieval European territorial order although the latter’s political thrust was much weaker and subjected to further fragmentation by feudalism that started at the end of the first millennium (C.E.). The dissolution of this diluted imperial order into a modern state-system has drawn most interest from researchers that came to realize that globalization is a historic shift that may be represented as the reverse of what happened in Europe in the centuries before 1600 (Bull 1977, Ruggie 1993, Sassen 2007). The rise of the bureaucratic state as it manifested itself in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a transformation that is usually treated as a distinctive feature of the Modern state. I would recommend considering this change a (minor) territorial shift because of the enormous impact of the new link between infrastructural control (Mann 1986) and national identity which made political power both more indirect and productive in the High-Modern state compared to the Early-Modern period. Finally we now experience the ‘epoch of Globalization’ which has unleashed most of this intellectual interest and is considered by many commentators a ‘major territorial shift’.

3 How we should represent global territoriality is a point of controversy. For some commentators the change amounts to the end of political (or state-) territoriality, others prefer the perspective of re-territorialisation. Geographers were among the first to criticize the epistemological fallacies inherent to the dominant territorial (state) order. Agnew introduced the term ‘territorial trap’ (Agnew 1995) and Taylor inspired by his own work on world city networks characterized the ontology of the traditional political map as a ‘mosaic meta-geography’ (Taylor 2000). However there has not been a concerted effort toward building a synthetic model of territoriality in the postmodern world. We have been offered a range of concepts

describing new 'geographies of power' and spatial relations such as 'space of flows' (Castells 1989), 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1990), 'glocalisation' (Swyngedouw 1992, Brenner 1997), 'jumping scale' (Smith 1996), extraterritoriality (Franke, Weizman et. al., 2003, Weizman 2007), etc. Those who searched for a model have either arrived at statements on a possible 'neo-medieval' order (Bull 1977, Ruggie 1993) or they have studied the course of European history in order to discover a mechanism of territorial change (Maier 2000, Sassen 2007). Saskia Sassen's (implicit) reliance on complexity theory is sophisticated but dominated by the transformation from medieval to modern and subsequently to global 'assemblages'. This approach is strongly based on a political-economy perspective whereas the historian Charles Maier's political perspective rather reveals a fine pattern of (sub)stages between 1500 and 2000. This change, he suggests, is analogous to simultaneous shifts in the dominant paradigms of physics (from Newtonian mechanics to Maxwellian electromagnetic fields).

4The complexity paradigm requires that we explain each new order (emergence) as a product of actors and behaviors that were already present in the preceding stage. This prevents the essentialist view of globalization as a sort of external process that simply descends upon us erasing the current order. Globalization occurs because it is produced by states in order to save themselves (albeit in different form) under new technological and social conditions. Many years ago an author already described European integration as 'rescue of the nation-state' (Milward 1992). Sassen (2007) applies a similar outlook on the creation of institutions of global governance but does it help us to conceptualize the territorial order of the near future? Territory is an important term in Sassen's book but only as part of a conceptual triplet that is presented as the basic intellectual tool for analyzing the dynamics of assemblage formation: territory, authority and rights. The interplay between these principles is supposed to offer a key to understanding changing systems of governance involving the creation of new world-individuals. I agree with Sassen that this conceptual framework touches basic mechanisms of change but it has not yet produced a clear image of territoriality in the Global Age. Moreover her analysis has a cultural weakness that particularly reveals itself in the principle 'rights' which obscures the divergent forms of loyalty (not fixed in law) that sustain associations of people. I would suggest the term 'identity' but then her analysis would have had to cover some other phenomena such as nationalism that now are conspicuous by their absence in *Territory, Authority and Rights*.

5Nonetheless control, closure and identity (the labels I will use) offer a conceptual tool for a preliminary study of types of territorial dynamics that can be associated with different historic periods (figure 1). We should be careful, however, in interpreting history as a succession of static types. First, because many forms are co-existing like the imperial structure of the 'Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation' in the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century while full-fledged sovereign states like France and England flourished at the same time. In the next stage the latter behaved simultaneously as territorially unified states in Europe and as Empires with

respect to their overseas colonies. Some writers have proposed the opposition between Empire and State as a continuum that in the course of history is liable to shifts in one or the other direction like the movement of a pendulum (Watson 1992). Second, we should beware of a static view of territoriality because its essence may be rather found in the temporal configuration of integrating forces than in some unchanging material manifestation. The principle of closure, often considered as the essence of territoriality, will immediately illustrate this proposition in the chronological overview of different territorial epochs presented below.

## Early imperial territorial order

- 3 Thus the dynamics that characterize ‘imperial territoriality’ is located in the control category be (...)

6 On the face of it, closure, in the sense of being bordered, seems the prerequisite for any manifestation of territoriality. Yet, one cannot talk about a boundary without knowing what kind of transborder interaction and external legitimacy it involves. As Peter Taylor has emphasized, a territory is not merely a container but something implying rules of inter-territoriality (Taylor 1995). Since Qin and Han times a classic empire like China always pursued a clearly defined external boundary in order to enable administrative control. At the same time its subjects presented their own Emperor as a universal and divine ruler. This interpretation of man and world (identity) is clearly inconsistent with the practical aim of territorial delineation.<sup>3</sup> The implication of this paradox is twofold. First, one principle should be made passive in order to set free the other one (figure 1). Passive means that it is not partaking in the construction of a sovereign territory, an idea that obviously is not compatible with universal authority. Identity in this case can help to secure social order at home but cannot assist in building a territorial order. Second, the imperial border cannot be a stable line because power is constantly challenged by local tribes and states. This has led to the identification of imperial peripheries as ‘frontier zones’ rather than boundaries (Kristoff 1956). The (territorial) passivity of identity in Empires means that imperial territorial dynamics are derived from control or closure or some interaction between them. Such interaction is demonstrated for example by the impossibility to distinguish between internal and external security in Empires: the army is equally focused on both. In the Qin and Han Empires one even avoided the institution of army commander as a fixed post. The military rank of ‘general’ was allotted to reliable and courageous officials for the duration of a project like the suppression of a rebellion or the pacification of nomadic neighbors (Loewe 2005, p. 58-59).

7 The bursting onto the scene of Empires gives us also the earliest cues about territorial shock. The very rise of Christianity itself can be attributed to the



incorporation of Middle Eastern tribal kingdoms in the Roman imperial system in the century before the birth of Jesus Christ (Showalter 1998). As citizens of a true-to-type empire the Romans were not bent on effacing ethnic or cultural differences and local patterns of authority. They were certainly keen on leaving their footprint in distant lands in the shape of temples celebrating Rome's war victories, gods and emperors. Thus they scattered Roman identity marks in the culturally heterogeneous landscape of conquered peoples but identity was not part of their territorial machinery. This was control in the shape of militarily defeating people and subsequently using local authorities to ensure stability. One can also include the more soft strategy of instilling a competitive spirit in peripheral communities that aspire to become a node in the 'global' Roman trade network. The Empire exercised coercion but offered opportunities as well and it inspired awe in other peoples by suggesting that Rome's success must have been willed by the gods.

8The problem in Judea was that the control-closure dynamics of empire, epitomized by the Roman adage that peace is assured by victories in war, did not square with the Jewish closure-identity perspective that claimed one God favoring one people and one territory. Jews converting to Christianity were shocked by the unifying 'transnational' power of the imperial system and tried to reconcile it with their monotheistic tradition, replacing war with love or the 'Holy Spirit'. They created the vision of an all-encompassing kingdom in heaven. The books of the Old Testament never speak about kingdom in this way, only about kingdoms in the Middle East, but the New Testament almost exclusively does. By applying the worldly term kingdom to an all-encompassing authority (in heaven) the New Testament or Christianity reveals a global ambition. It eventually succeeded when the Roman Empire became Christian in the fourth century A.D.

9Two years after his death in 44 B.C., the Roman Senate proclaimed Julius Caesar 'god'. His son and successor, Augustus, who ruled when Jesus was a youngster, consequently used the title 'son of God' (*divi filius*). As Showalter remarks 'Many of those who referred to Jesus as "son of God" knew perfectly well that a Latin form of the phrase was among the most frequent descriptions for Augustus and his successors' (Showalter 1998, p. 395). The imperial challenge of Christianity was obvious for its early adherents and somewhat later for the rulers in Rome who persecuted Christians. But the Christian religious innovation was an act of reconstruction rather than deconstruction. Crossan and Reed assert: '... both Jesus and [the apostle] Paul are not so much trapped in a negation of global imperialism as establishing its positive alternative here upon earth.' (Crossan & Reed 2005, p. 409). This statement captures the synthetic drive called up by a previous territorial shock.

10Whereas Christianity was a way to adapt to empire, Islam rather originated as a strategy to defeat empire. This all the same implied assimilation of the imperial territorial mode but from the outset the context made this enterprise more political than Christianity. 'Allah's is the kingdom of heaven and earth' is the

typical expression from the Koran and one should notice the empathic addition 'earth'. At the end of the sixth century the partly nomadic world of tribes in the Arabian Peninsula was not threatened by one but even by two empires: the Christian Byzantine Empire in the west and the Persian Sassanid Empire in the east. It gives an indication of the alarm caused by this encroachment among tribes lacking any type of territorial organization like the state that the phantom of a pair of pincers (Israel /the West and the Persians) crushing the Arab world was haunting Arab imagination until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Abdulghani 1984). There have been several attempts to explain the rise of Islam from socio-economic or geographical factors. One of them was the hypothesis that Islam rose in response to social tensions produced by the booming Meccan trade (Watt 1953). Patricia Crone, specialist in early Islamic history, has taken the edge of such explanations by arguing that factors like trade or social tensions are not fundamental enough and not sufficiently specific in time and place (the cradle of Islam was Medina rather than Mecca) to explain such a revolutionary change in people's way of life and outlook (Crone 1987). What sort of change and spiritual crisis could have preceded the astonishing march of Islam? According to Crone, only the foreign penetration of Arabia characteristic of the late sixth- and early seventh-century fits as an explanation.

11The foreign penetration touched on tribal societies that were not able to muster political resources (state institutions) as defense against an alien invasion. They responded to the threat with religious means: a monotheistic belief that, so to say, matched the power of worldly empires and that replaced the multiple and manipulatable gods of the Arab tribes. This religious strategy proved a lucky strike when within the time span of a century the Islamic Umayyad Caliphate ruled over a territory extending from the Indus to the Atlantic Ocean.

## **Transition to Early-Modern territorial order**

12The closure principle remained active when the (Early-)Modern state emerged from imperial and feudal power structures at the end of the Middle-Ages but in a different way. In the centuries that were to come, closure was a new territorial imperative that did not promise stability. The struggle for closure implied two things: the hierarchical subordination of previously autonomous and overlapping authorities to one central ruler or government and the mutual recognition of boundaries by the central governments of neighboring states. Historical studies of local political change have demonstrated how ponderously this 'territorialization' of the boundary proceeded during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries even in an early centralized state (France) with its seemingly 'obvious' border of the Pyrenees separating France and Spain (Sahlins 1989). Elsewhere a fighting flared up in political centers around the question of who was really entitled to represent the



common interest (*res publica* or fatherland): the monarch, the estates or the (well-to-do) common people (Friedeburg 2004). This firmly linked the issue of closure to the principle of identity which was further underpinned by religious strife. Princes embraced religion in order to emphasize their role as protector of the people. Ensuing religious wars in a way caused territorial shock but this is not the territorial shock that I would associate with the transition to the Early Modern territorial order.

- 4 Based on paintings that were identified in other pictures showing city council meetings in the town (...)

13 Whereas the transfer of different competences to one central authority could solve practical problems for ordinary people, it was particularly the transfer of moral authority to a worldly ruler that was shocking. The Church had been the sole arbiter of moral behavior but this role now shifted to the public domain. The parish church continued to be the place for official meetings but 'leaders now met there under the royal arms rather than under the cross or at least under both' (Hindle 2000, p. 229). The change was also reflected in representations of justice which for example in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century were entirely dominated by the Biblical prophecy of the Last Judgment whereas a century later similar paintings<sup>4</sup> put allegorical depictions of good government in the forefront (Zapalac 1990). Even in recent periods the transfer of competencies from Church to State could stir intense emotions. Mara Loveman has described how attempts to institute the civil registration of births and deaths in Brazil elicited a violent uprising in 1852 in which people armed with knives and axes threatened the lives of local authorities. Denying Church authorities the right to perform burial and baptism rites when civil registration had not taken place, pushed the state into the role of an agent that could, in Loveman's words, 'frustrate the hopes for eternal salvation of the citizen' (Loveman 2005).

14 Differently from the Roman Catholic Brazilians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Reformed Christians of the 16<sup>th</sup> century turned territorial shock into an attack on the Church thereby both assimilating a new territorial (closure-identity) dynamics and saving the hope of eternal salvation. Luther broke with the medieval epistemology of Thomas à Kempis based on the assumption that for the true believer God's works are ultimately recognisable in worldly events. By arguing that no earthly agent could really claim to be a manifestation of God's actions Lutherans found another way to legitimize a type of government that was not sanctioned by the highest authority on Earth. The Reformation was the spiritual answer to the territorial shock of the emerging sovereign state. This made salvation a personal matter but it also cleared the way for a government that could commit itself to moral principles.

15 The manifold links between the active principles closure and identity in the Early-Modern period can be seen as a defining territorial feature of this era. There is broad agreement on the fact that the Westphalia Peace Treaty (1648) brought

this period to an end and started the operation of an international state system depending on mutual recognition of authority and boundaries. However, statistics of the policy that may be considered the heart of the international system, the multilateral treaty, show a continuously low occurrence of such treaties after 1648 and a conspicuous jump upwards starting around 1800. As Denmark and Hoffmann have shown in a quantitative analysis, this jump was independent from changes in the number of states that appeared on the world stage (Denemark & Hoffmann 2008). Such findings suggest that the arrival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a more important change in closure than the Westphalia Peace Treaty. It actually turned closure into a more or less stable (passive) principle in the period of High-Modernity.

16What about control in the Early-Modern period? The logic of territorial change outlined above suggests that control should be classified as passive here. Is there a compelling reason why it can't be active simultaneously with closure or identity just like in the case of closure negating identity in Empires? One might argue that in a world where the dynamics is constituted by a struggle about *who* is representative of the common interest, the interest itself (i.e. its control) needs to be defined in 'objective' terms. The most tangible target for control was individual behavior and objectivity was derived from a moral view on behavior inherited from the medieval age. Much of the system of social regulation could be called objective or rather 'inter-subjective' precisely because it was not in the hands of a goal-oriented or capricious central government but constituted in due course by local caretakers of the middling sort: petty constables, churchwardens, yeomen and overseers (Hindle 2000). In the absence of a large state-bureaucracy early-modern government depended on such local networks to build really effective national codes and laws. The case for 'moral government' was also consistent with the active role of identity in this period.

## Transition to (High-) Modern territorial order

17While closure assumed a passive shape from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, identity remained active by entering into a new compound with control. This important change gathered speed by the advance of industrial society which requires general education organized by the state. Since state-regulated education supposes a common language which threatens existing local identities and loyalties, a national identity offensive (nationalism) was called upon to create a national community and a new source of pride (Gellner 1983). The introduction of general standards (including a national currency) and common values enabled the form of control that Mann called infrastructural power, which means the exercise of power not over but through society.

- 5 The 'unification' of Germany did not only join but also divide the German speaking nation. The crea ([...](#))

18It sounds illogical to attribute the earmark 'passive' to closure in an era in which nationalists so often expressed dissatisfaction with existing political boundaries because these did not coincide with the ethnic map (Germany, Hungary, Italy, etc. in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century). Let us first establish that the boundary shifts that finally occurred did not unequivocally reveal a nationalist logic but rather the goals of (regional) hegemons<sup>5</sup> (Prussia, Piemonte, the Allied Powers at Versailles) in wars that were not started to achieve ethno-political aims at all. Second, nationalism was most successful in pushing forward 'the people' as a political entity that required some respect. This was not initially couched in democratic terms but it at least called up the awareness in political leaders that one needed to address (or brainwash!) the people. Even an authoritarian government as Prussia's switched to a completely new mode of communication when announcing reform measures in the Edict of 1807. "The propagandistic, exalted tone of the edicts was something new...Prussian governments had never spoken to the public in this way before..." reports Christopher Clark (Clark 2006, p. 342). This is the control-identity compound in action which would have been difficult to handle if heads of state had still acted as territorially loosely-coupled actors with interests in other royal families or extra-territorial adventures (as in the preceding period). Closure had to be tamed in order to play on a public which could embrace closure in the shape of citizenship. As the steep growth of the number of multilateral treaties (see above) after 1800 showed, a stabilization of closure was clearly going on.

19The nomination of nationalism as the spiritual answer to the high-modern territorial transition raises some questions: first the issue of causality and second the spiritual nature of nationalism. What was the nature of the territorial change that actually elicited the rise of nationalism in Europe? The standard reference to the industrial revolution is not tenable because on the European continent nationalist sentiments often preceded the industrial take-off. David Bell mentions three factors that explain the rise of nationalist language even long before the French Revolution: Franco-British rivalry, an extended constitutional crisis and 'new sensibilities associated with the Enlightenment' (Bell 2001). However, in indicating the Enlightenment as cause we should even dig deeper into the material and social infrastructure that facilitated its impact: the rise of a public sphere in the shape of coffeehouses, newspapers, novels, etc. The historian T.C.W. Blanning called the rise of a public sphere the crucial cultural transformation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Blanning 2002). It was a prerequisite for infrastructural power and for such phenomena as the changed relationship of the Prussian government with its citizens in the early 19th century but it also appealed to individual faculties of judgment of the citizen. In doing so, people were ripped off from the moral foundation on which Early-Modern control pivoted. The resulting disorientation was the essence of the territorial shock that marked the transition

to the High-Modern epoch. Nationalism tried to avert the dangers that the new public freedom implied. The Italian philosopher of nationality Mazzini (1805-1872) tried to capture the risen void in the word 'duty'. "Up to now morality has too often been presented to mankind in a negative, rather than an affirmative form. The interpreters of the law have typically said: 'Thou shall not kill; thou shall not steal.' But few, or none, have taught us the active duties of man: how we may be useful to our fellow creatures and further God's design on earth. Yet this is the primary aim of morality, and no individual can reach that aim by consulting his conscience alone" (Rechia and Urbinati 2009, p. 86).

20A second remark concerns the philosophical depth of nationalism which often elicits derogatory commentary. Mazzini's quote shows affinity with religion but a similar change occurred in theology in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The theological counterpart of romantic nationalism can be found in the preaching and work of the Prussian philosopher and clergyman Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) (Hoover 1989). Although not widely known as preacher of a historic religious message, Grenz & Olsen describe his influence as '...subtle but pervasive in Western Christianity. He is to Christian theology what Newton is to physics, what Freud is to psychology and what Darwin is to biology. ...he initiated a new era in theology... that has lasted at least for nearly two hundred years' (Grenz & Olsen 1992, p. 39). What was this message that equaled those famous groundbreaking paradigm shifts in science? Schleiermacher's theology has been called 'liberal' because it broke the dogmatic approach to questions about ethics and God. He attempted to connect the principle of human freedom (self-realization) with the idea of man as a social being. The purpose of man's moral quest was to find his/her authentic self which in essence would imply the appropriation of 'humanity' (Socness 2004). Encounters with other individuals would be essential in order to define one's personal shape (*Gestalt*) and contribution to humanity. Obviously this ethics of difference fits the organic concept of society employed by Mazzini. Similarly Schleiermacher defined God as something that should be experienced as a moving force behind reality rather than as object or person.

## **Globalization or Late Modernity**

- 6 In an interview with Dutch journalists the vice-president of the HiPhone telephone company, Zhang H (...)

21The conceptual framework applied in the historical sections allows us to discuss globalization in a way that differs from the technological ('space-time compression') or state related ('loss of sovereignty') reference scales. If we cannot avoid characterizing globalization as a relative position on a scale it should at least be done in a multidimensional way. For example control reflects globalization in three (interconnected) ways: the enormously increased power of private actors (persons, firms and non-governmental organizations), the enlarged scope for non-



juridical action and the virtualization of reality. Do these indicate dwindling political power? Not necessarily so. Non-juridical action of course covers the anti-systemic phenomenon of contemporary terrorism but also the ease with which intellectual or artistic property can be copied or stolen. Some states may tacitly tolerate or even encourage such practices with the argument that they have to make up arrears in economic development (China).<sup>6</sup> States may also use private actors in new ways even in making war. The role of private security firms in Iraq has become well-known from the atrocities allegedly committed by the American *Blackwater* security contractors (Luke 2007). Another example is the semi-military role that Israeli settlers are permitted to play in surveying, intimidating and ousting Palestinians on the West Bank (Weizman 2007). New means of communication offer governments a strong tool to depoliticize reality and sustain a 'virtual' democracy (Wilson 2005). However, individuals and social movements have access to similar means and may occasionally succeed in launching a counter-offensive.

22 These changes in control clearly interact with new forms of closure implemented by limitations on the access of persons and/or economic actors to areas. Chinese industrial zones in Africa sound like a development in this direction (Carmody and Hampwaye 2010). In cooperating with private actors, states (or state governments) can develop economic or residential zones that directly contribute to a state's political aims but that strictly speaking do not belong to its political space or regime. It means that activities or inhabitants are not entitled to the same rights and rules as those living in the core area although they may be economically dependent on it. This has happened with the Singapore-initiated industrial and residential estates on the neighboring Indonesian Riau islands which have been denied a transborder authority that could respond to demands of the local citizens (Grundy-Warr et al 1999, Bunnell et al. 2006). Such fringe developments with a democratic deficit arise from the needs of states to extend their power without compromising on sovereignty. The 'no man's land' of Guantanamo as an extra-territorial prison, was another (albeit quite extreme and perhaps unique) example. States may also gain direct access to services within another state (for example information about bank accounts, airline passenger lists and other private information) in the struggle against terror. Such developments have been presented as a shift from the democratic state to the security (or securitization of the) state (Tunander 2004). Another example of states interfering with the home policy of other states is the arrangement that the European Union has made with North-African states in order to stop illegal migration from Africa to Europe. This has induced policies in these neighboring states that, although protecting the territorial integrity of the EU, do not square with the human rights norms of the EU itself. The extraordinary renditions of terrorism suspects to torture centers outside the US during the war on terror involved a similar spatial strategy.

23 The pattern of closure that takes shape under globalization is one of strong political centers (state governments) exercising power not so much *on* other

states but *in* other states or on citizens of other states (like former nationals or the diaspora). This is not necessarily a source of international conflict (into which irredentist politics always ran) since penetration of another political space may be a mutual advantage of two states although the advantage may be quite unequal and a source of domestic conflict. In some ways the new territorial order shows some similarity with the classic imperial or colonial mode in causing spatial fragmentation and peripheral zones with shadowy regimes in terms of rights and rules. The pseudo-states that have been created after the demise of communist Europe (Kosovo, Trans-Dniester, Abkhazia and South-Ossetia) also fit this picture.

24 If there is truth in the observation that the world enters a control-closure dynamics the logical question that ensues from our conceptual tool is: what has happened to identity then? According to many authors, ours is the age of identity politics. The capability of people to (re)define themselves has enormously increased thanks to the use of modern media and the empowerment conferred by transnational social movements like the ecological and human rights movements or a religious revival current (Salafism, Pentecostalism, Shamanism). On the global level the territorial division of identities has been associated with a coming 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington 1993). Yet the inevitable conclusion about late-modern identity is that it has broken away from *territorial* and particularly *national* identity.

25 Identity has become truly borderless as the originator of the clash of civilizations thesis has acknowledged as well. This does not mean that identity has lost all territorial footing; it only manifests itself on a scale that is not based on the state. This however is not in the same way true for the geography of power and control that remains focused on a heartland. Boosting or playing on identity turns out to be more destructive than productive for political regimes in a globalizing world. One of the reasons is the multicultural character of states that either never experienced the national unification process of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe (as China) or have been shaped by massive migration streams (Singapore). The other reason is the economic or infrastructural dependence on ethnically different states in and outside a region (recent history of Australia). What may appear as a politically induced clash of civilizations is rather an attempt of authorities to suppress expressions of identity deemed disruptive of society like the Chinese burial habits in Singapore (Kong and Yeoh 2003) or the *burqa* in France.

26 Admittedly there are many cases in which territorial identity seems to be alive and kicking: the new assertiveness of regions within member states of the EU, secessionist movements in post-communist Europe, India and Africa, new forms of authoritarian or popular nationalism against the hegemony of a world power (US) or a global force (neoliberalism), etc. It would be contempt of facts to dispose of such cases as mere remnants of a vanishing world. Yet, one may also observe that where such territorial identities persevere, they seek the umbrella of



an inter-governmental bloc (EU, Mercosur) or regional power (Russia). In the course of time such configurations adopt a control-closure shell that is stronger than the sets of rules that have united countries in trade blocs although they show a similar restraint in urging cultural homogenization. What might be the logic behind such a development? It can be seen as a risk-minimizing strategy that springs from the late-modern condition described as 'disorganized capitalism' (Offe 1985). A recent trend in disorganized capitalism like the financial crisis and several types of ecological set-back have returned the awareness that we cannot do without a political environment that sustains trust and provides the means to soften material shocks. Although the failures of political organizations in handling crises and creating equality are obvious and manifold there is no viable alternative here. Iceland's wish to become a member of the EU – notwithstanding strong nationalist reflexes in the opposite direction – is an example.

27 According to our conceptual model, shocks caused by the current territorial change would stem from the activation of the closure principle which under the conditions of High-Modernity was reduced to the tacit role of national citizenship. The more Late-Modern obligations and interests of the state cross national boundaries and escape democratic control, the more citizens get confused about the political centers that determine their future. At the same time obligations of the state that were always linked with citizenship tend to be restricted. This is a signal for a new spiritual reorientation that draws individual empowerment from non-political sources.

28 Recent events in the world have not yet revealed the germs of a new religion. It may very well be among us but something remaining invisible like Christianity in the first century CE. We do observe, however, new religious expressions within the major world-religions that fit the theological shift associated with modernity suggested above. Yves Lambert has described modernity as a 'new axial age' (a historical period that completely transforms our ways of thinking and organizing) that is still crystallizing in the field of religion. He lists the most significant features as (a) this-worldliness, (b) self-spirituality, (c) dehierarchization and dedualization, (d) parascientificity, (e) pluralistic, relativistic, fluctuating, seeking faiths, and (f) loose network-type organizations (Lambert 1999, p. 321). Together these designations fit Late-Modernity rather than 19<sup>th</sup> century High Modernity because religious practice remained dominated by institutions and hierarchical authority until the 1960s. The success of charismatic religious movements like Pentecostalism (in the Global South) is rooted in its appeal to persons who suffer from a disorganization of their social life (anomie) and who find in the Pentecostal community a kind of surrogate extended family but also the emotional experience and joy that signify the prospect of a new life (Miller and Yamamori 2007: 22-25). The fragmentized space and non-descript identities of the modern city is the model of the Pentecostal working space rather than the territorial parish model of traditional rural Catholicism (Fer 2007). These believers attempt to transcend a loosening or fragmenting territorial solidarity (citizenship) by means of a spiritual community. According to Fer, Pentecostal communities

may also engage in a revaluation of territory by exorcizing bad “territorial spirits” of the past (Fer 2007, p. 204-5).

29 Today the escape from a confusing territorial order is not compensated anymore by taking refuge in a transcendental God. ‘This-worldliness’ (immanence) remains in full force and value which may still focus on territories by investing them with a sacred quality. In the era of globalization, however, the holy land is not merely a delimited national-religious space. As in the case of Israel or Jerusalem, a sacred land may become the plaything of deterritorialized religious movements consisting of diasporas and believers from other nations. Deterritorialization is also the background of Islamic neo-fundamentalism boosted by the experience of Muslim migrants in Western countries who have to sort out their encounters with other migrants practising Islam in an unknown cultural guise (Roy 2004). Notwithstanding their attempts to transcend such ‘earthly’ (cultural) differences by searching for a pure Islam these neo-fundamentalists keep an eye on material and political practices as a natural extension of their belief.

## **Conclusion: geopolitical, territorial and spiritual change**

30 This article is an answer to the new demand for rethinking the concept of territory. As Stuart Elden recently remarked, standard references to territory have typically neglected the historical dimension and ‘the conditions of possibility of [a territorial] configuration are assumed rather than examined’ (Elden 2010, p. 800). A surge of publications on this question is on the way. This article particularly deals with the historical dimension but also with the spiritual conditions that in a way extend a territorial configuration, make it acceptable or legitimate to (new classes of) people.

31 Changes in political space may have effects similar to the ‘severe groundshaking’ that people experience during earthquakes. Spatial movement, either by the subject as migrant or by a center of power, is a deeply disturbing experience which demands compensation guided by an intellectual or spiritual compass. As we look at our own time the possible loss of hegemony of the West (or the US) may become a disturbing geopolitical experience but the territorial changes discussed in this article are actually about something else. The concept of territorial shock was introduced to describe the consequence of a reordering of control (authority), identity (rights and legitimacy) and closure (relations between inside and outside). I have recognized such reordering in the rise of Empires, the modern State in two stages and the Late Modern period (Globalization). Opinions may differ about the depth of each of these changes. Some authors rather consider (undifferentiated) Modernity as a new ‘axial age’

(Lambert 1999). The distinction of these territorial transformations does not imply a rigid model of development that should apply to all parts of the world. It was rather intended as a study in the dynamics of a territorial evolution that occurred most complexly and well documented in Europe and in the Middle-Eastern and Mediterranean civilizations to which Europe owes so much. It is the mechanism of change that should interest us rather than a developmental scheme with predetermined stages. Europe is highlighted because it emerged in the past millennium as a laboratory of territorial change (Gottmann 1970).

- 7 Nonrepresentational theory is concerned with practices and the open character of any situation in w (...)

32The approach followed in these pages will be confusing for the one who looks forward to a model of territorial order as a kind of map or maps on different scales. From this point of view the approach may appear 'nonrepresentational' although not directly in the way meant by Nigel Thrift and others.<sup>7</sup> The emphasis in this article has been on key principles in territorial change rather than on resulting 'structures'. Therefore conclusions about the dynamics of control, identity and closure may seem to contradict the active or passive role of such principles in a territorial model of nested 'administrative' units (scales). For example the territorial passivity of identity attributed to the Imperial and Global territorial orders does not exclude vital territorial identities on lower scales (vassal states or tribes). This may even be functional for the stability of the overarching imperial order particularly because cultural difference sets spatial limits to conspiracies. Likewise control systems at the local level guarantee the social stability of the Early-Modern state but the principles that ensure its existence and shape were defined as identity(-politics) and closure (war). There are two arguments for focusing on a particular combination of territorial principles and its implicit scale as the nexus of an epochal territorial order: first because this nexus is the most obvious source of re-territorialization and second because it is mirrored by a cultural or civilization change explained by 'territorial shock'.

33Geopolitical and territorial changes are closely related. As the discussion of the impact of the Middle-Eastern and Roman empires on weak tribes in their peripheries made clear, shocks may emanate from a geopolitical threat (Arab tribes against Sassanid and Byzantine Empires) rather than from an internal change. However, the resulting change in Arabia was a territorial and geopolitical shift as well. In Judaea the territorial change had already been settled by the Roman conquest and the Christian movement was a way to strike back by conquering the Empire morally but without imminent territorial or geopolitical consequences. The same pertains to later territorial shocks on European soil although the Reformation fed back to the dynamics of state formation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (*cuius regio, eius religio*). Our standard model of interpretation is that coping with shock ends in spiritual rather than territorial change (which after all is the incentive).

34 According to the proposed model of territorial epochs the territorial shock of Globalization or Late Modernity, would somehow be related to the erosion of closure as the High-Modern guarantee of personal security in the shape of citizenship. Indeed, changing forms of control like privatization, extraterritoriality and secret operations by governments (shadow government or shadow economy) have affected democratic accountability and the value of citizenship but this is particularly a Western territorial shock. A new social vulnerability, recently accentuated by the financial crisis, tempts political managers into actions that are opaque partly because they are not coterminous with the familiar political space. The state is not a secure 'gated' community, nor is the celebrated post-Fordist escape from the overregulated welfare state a real liberation in the face of financial and environmental risks. Unlike the previous epoch the new control-closure dynamics cannot be identified largely with the scale of states. It is related to new supranational and international bodies and to neo-imperial constructions like vassal states and special (economic) zones that refuse access to certain actors or activities. Asian states seem more equipped (mentally and institutionally) to play the control-closure game than Western states and this will produce another example of the link between geopolitical and territorial change.

35 It is too early to say anything about the spiritual reaction to the territorial shock of globalization. From the charismatic Christian movements to eco-religion, contemporary spiritual renewal is first aimed at compensating the security that secular citizenship is unable to give. It means a strong reorientation from the body of the state to the body of the person: the training of the senses, ways to dress and eating habits. Second, it offers a way to distance oneself from the patterns of greed that are often blamed for global crises. Today's risks can only be circumvented by adopting different ways of life. However, this spiritual change will not necessarily change the geographies of power that unfold in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

36 **Table 1.** The dynamics of territorial change

□ [Agrandir Original \(png, 15k\)](#)  
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## Notes

1 In this respect I deviate from the way war seems to be treated in the philosophical discourse of Deleuze and Guattari where 'the war machine' is essentially a deterritorializing device that creates a smooth space (*espace lisse*) allowing new differentiation and rules (Deleuze and Guattari 1980).

2 See the work of a research group about the Akkadian Empire existing in the 3rd millennium B.C. [http://leilan.yale.edu/works/akkadian\\_empire/index.html](http://leilan.yale.edu/works/akkadian_empire/index.html)

3 Thus the dynamics that characterize 'imperial territoriality' is located in the control category because Empires suffer from limitations in bridging distance and in the closure category because a stable framework for dealing with other powers is lacking. An almost caricatural example of the latter are the messages between imperial rulers like Pope Innocent IV and the Mongol ruler Möngke Khan (a descendant of Genghis Khan), handed down from the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. These messages contained high-flown demands to submit to the sender without allusions to a future compromise (Voegelin 1940-41, p. 39).

4 Based on paintings that were identified in other pictures showing city council meetings in the town hall of Regensburg (Germany).

5 The 'unification' of Germany did not only join but also divide the German speaking nation. The creation of new national states out of the former Austrian-Hungarian state was motivated by the wish of the victors of the First World War to create buffer states between Germany and Russia and the principle of ethnic (linguistic) purity was either forged (creation of Yugoslavia) or opportunistically overruled.

6 In an interview with Dutch journalists the vice-president of the HiPhone telephone company, Zhang Haizhen called copying a patriotic action, "a duty for any Chinese firm" (M Garschagen and O. Garschagen, Namaak is vaderlandslievende plicht, *NRC-Handelsblad* 7/11/2009).

7 Nonrepresentational theory is concerned with practices and the open character of any situation in which actors create ('perform') new forms and behavior. Although I deliberately choose to define territorial order in terms of the tools acquired in a certain period rather than on necessary forms, this article has hardly dealt with the 'little things' (Thrift 2000): the way how a microphysics of power results from the play of officials, things and bodies.

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