Introduction: The Making of World Society

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As a result of the emergence of global communicative connectivity the world has become more integrated than ever before. Movements of people, exchange of commodities, ideas and values have contributed to the increasing integration of the world as a whole and the fact that the world can not be thought of as a conglomerate of separate entities as it was before. Related to these observations, studying world society is a great challenge facing social scientists today, because the notion itself reinforces a perspective which understands the world as a single, comprehensive texture: World society encompasses the totality of social relationships linking the inhabitants of the Earth. Similar views of such a vision are suggested by notions such as *dependencia* (André Gunder Frank 1969), world system (Wallerstein 1974), global village (McLuhan 1968; McLuhan/Powers 1992), or world culture (Meyer 2005). Moreover, John Urry introduced the concept of global complexity, taking the "global" as a complex perspective for analysing social processes (Urry 2002). Ulrich Beck (2006) has developed the notion of cosmopolitanism in a context of growing worldwide accessible reference systems. A critical standpoint in regard to Urry's and Beck's approaches is expressed by Eleonore Kofman (2005), who has criticised these views on cosmopolitanism as too narrow in scope. According to her, they are directed towards politically and economically privileged groups, leaving aside considerations about others. She also criticises the optimistic view of cosmopolitans, arguing that independent cosmopolitan individuals or networks can also be perceived as a threat in the eyes of representatives of the nation-state. Finally, an approach to synchronic meanings of worldwide phenomena is offered by historians like Osterhammel and Petersson (2003), who have analysed the world society from a diachronic perspective.

This general shifting perspective brings a number of new challenges for social science research which necessitate rethinking the notion of society in more fundamental ways. In social sciences, but also in popular understanding, society usually refers to bounded, territorially localised entities, especially to those con-

fined by nation-states. The emphasis on world society, in contrast seeks to over-come this narrow perspective which, in times of mobility and border-crossing, can not be regarded any longer as the dominant conceptual framework for analys-ing and understanding society. This does not mean that the boundaries of nation-states have lost their relevance entirely, but the meanings and significance of na-tion-states as societal entities and, of their boundaries, is changing . This, in turn, bears important implications for identities and modes of belonging, as well as for the perspectives we need to apply while understanding and analysing social formations and society. This is the case, for instance, when we investigate mul-tiple border-crossing practices, forms of transnational or global togetherness and new forms of internet-mediated sociality between people living in different parts of the world.

One particular aspect of the discussion on new meanings of boundaries in the world society consists of investigating transnationalisation processes. We under-stand the crossing of territorial and symbolic boundaries, like those of nation-states, as an intrinsic aspect of today's characteristics of the global as such and thus, a constitutive element in the making of world society. In this introduction we wish to highlight a few aspects of the ongoing constitution of world society. Furthermore, we attempt to clarify some of our conceptual tools and relate them to other discourses and notions, such as globalisation. This leads us to a more clear-cut understanding of world society, less as an object of sociological theory, but rather as an analytical concept describing the "global situation" (Tsing 2000). Transnationalisation, as the second constitutive concept within the framework of this anthology, also requires some clarifications. The social sciences have pro-duced a multitude of empirical works related to various phenomena of transna-tionalisation during the last two decades, and based on these a great deal of con-ceptual work has been made. We attempt to narrow our focus in this discussion on its relationship with the notion of world society and intend to show some link-ages related in the following chapters.

World Society as a Framing Concept

World-system theory, which can perhaps be regarded as a predecessor of per-spectives on world society, dealt with the expansion of the capitalist economic system and categorised the opposition between centre and periphery. Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) and earlier Fernand Braudel (1949) developed approaches that linked various ways of thinking from social history, economy and the soci-ological tradition. Marxism and development theory have proceeded, using the approach of a world system, with influence on area studies. The global expansion of capitalism across national borders continued to be a central question of world-system theory. This was further developed and deepened by the pioneering works of mainly Latin American social scientists in the 1950´s and 1960´s. These schol-

ars developed the concept of *dependencia*, which later on was further elaborated and globally revealed by André Gunder Frank (1969) in his theory of *the development of underdevelopment*. This influential perspective is concerned with the phenomena of underdevelopment as a result of a greater degree of integration into global structures dominated by First World countries and thus studies the relationship between dependent accumulation and underdevelopment of the Third World.[1]

The notion of world society was first introduced into the sociological debates by the Bielefeld system-theoretician Niklas Luhmann (1971), who assumed that under the condition of so called modernity, the world should be thought of as a system which transcends nation-states, stretching as a separate coordinated system (Wobbe 2000: 6).[2] In other words, the world can be conceived only as one irreducible entity, or social system. As such, this serves as a macro-sociological explanatory framework. According to Luhmann, world society is constituted by communication comprising all kinds of human interaction. Thinking of world society as a single social system which is not reducible to smaller geographical units (states, regions, locales) and which is constituted by communication, causes a number of difficulties for empirical research and theory building. This is because it remains incompatible with attempts to develop middle range theory based on empirical grounds.[3] Moreover, world society, as conceptualised in Luhmann's theory, is constituted solely through communication between *equalised* partners who are related to each other through inclusion, while the rest remain excluded (Kößler 2001: 24). This means also, that this approach cannot adequately capture the inequalities and asymmetries inside world society, which are, nevertheless, apparent and empirically evident, for example in regional disparities. These are crucial issues in development sociology and approaches to global social inequality. Luhmann's successor, Rudolf Stichweh (2000), tried to adapt this theoretical framework, paying attention to the obvious regional disparities, by introducing the idea of asynchrony (*Ungleichzeitigkeit*). However, this partial solution ignores the various modes of interrelatedness between the world's regions[4] (Kößler 2001: 25) since the disparities are frequently a direct result of global connectedness and integration into worldwide relations.

From our point of view, the notion of world society helps to depict interconnections between geographical and social subjects. We attempt to figure out hierarchies and power relations between different actors situated in distinct positions

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1 A good overview is provided by the volume "The Underdevelopment of Development" edited by Chew/Denemark (1996).
2 Almost simultaneously Peter Heintz (1973) referred to world society as well.
3 Herewith we refer to R.K. Merton's (1949) differentiation between theories of various range. The aim of empirically grounded research is not to develop an all-embracing theory of society, but to understand the various dimensions of society based on observable phenomena.
4 Hence, any analysis in terms of asynchrony falls back into the concept of backwardness.

at different scales. In their latest reflections on rescaling processes, Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar (forthcoming) analyse the positioning of localities within broader fields of power that are shaping opportunity structures, cultural politics, and pathways of migrants' local and transnational incorporation. We favour an understanding of world society inspired by the insights of system-theory and other macro perspectives, but which emphasise interrelatedness and rescaling processes. Social spaces, emerging between actors situated in different world regions and the localities therein, are constituted by differences in positions in power relations, possession of resources, and other general inequalities. In doing this, we also suppose that empirical perspectives on such issues will not lead us to a view of world society divided into territorial entities, such as nation-states. We rather envisage the world as a single global connectivity with a multitude of overlapping social spaces being continuously constructed and reconstructed.

Much literature on globalisation focuses on describing phenomena of worldwide mechanisms of diffusion, integration and shifting of boundaries, paying less attention to the notion of society and its characteristics under conditions of globality. In contrast, an approach focusing on world society helps to describe society under globalised conditions. Thereby, we follow Glick Schiller's (2005) lead in understanding globalisation as a myriad of cultural, social, political and economic processes that integrate the world into a single system of relationships and values: world society.

Moreover, we emphasise that world society, as an encompassing system and as an emergent reality, is created by the social actors involved: Their concrete interactions, negotiations, agency, struggles, conflicts and coalitions establish social space, which we regard as a constitutive element ordering society. This provides an opportunity to move away from macroscopic perspectives on world society, as it has been understood in some conventional approaches. Allowing us to analyse social processes at different levels and scales, however, this approach helps us to overcome the supposed gap between the macro-perspective of world society and social actors with an interaction approach. This also prevents us from applying a top-down perspective to the constitution of world society but instead to develop theoretical assumptions based on empirical, often ethnographic research on global or translocal phenomena.

Transnationalisation Processes Constituting World Society

Transnationalisation is one particular dimension contributing to the making of world society. Research on trans-border social formations such as transnational fields (for example: Glick Schiller/Basch/Szanton Blanc 1999) or social spaces (Faist 1998; Pries 1999) has contributed greatly to a shift in the understanding of society. Instead of clinging to a static 'container' concept of society, confined

within the borders of the nation states where social actors are located and bounded inside a national society, transnational perspectives pinpoint social relations crossing societies or cultures. Thereby they highlight the social phenomenon being located in at least two, or multiple localised social contexts, thus constituting pluri-local social formations. In contrast to older perspectives on migration which focused on migrants' incorporation and later assimilation in the destination countries (Park/Burgess 1921), transnational approaches analyse the situatedness of migrants inbetween different territorial states. Migrants' 'inbetween-ness', however, accentuates a condition in which social actors are involved simultaneously in more than a single place and highlights the ambivalence of many transnational social processes going on in the world. This ambivalence stands at the core of a process of redefining sociality in the sense of *Vergesellschaftung*. By having provided means of distance communication, through internet and cheap telephone calls (Vertovec 2004), new forms of virtual sociality emerge, as is shown in the articles of Heike Greschke and Urmila Goel in this book. This may raise intriguing questions about the role of present and virtual communication, and identity change. Transnational research, however, highlights migrants' delocalisation and the trans-border interaction, which can be conceptualised in terms of transnational social spaces or fields. Moreover, Glick Schiller/Basch/Szanton Blanc (1999: 76) argue that the tendency to use the adjective *transnational* has contributed to the emergence of a transnational anthropology, that analyses, among other things, transformations of the ways in which time and space is experienced and represented (cf. Harvey 1990). Central to this argument are not just shifting representations and contestations of the nation-state and of its boundaries, but the scrutiny of localities and other spatially constructed entities.

In contrast to systemic world society perspectives, transnational approaches are rather process-oriented and actor-centred. They are often based on multi-situated or global ethnography (Burawoy et al. 2000), sometimes even on long-term empirical research. One of the commonalities transnationalisation perspectives have with world society approaches is that it presupposes a view of society detached from specific locations, regions, or states. It forms an encouraging and productive starting point that enables the researcher to avoid the pitfalls of a "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer/Glick Schiller 2002) consisting of a narrow analytical focus on nation-states. Some of the authors prefer to speak of translocalisation processes (see, among many others, the contributions of Gudrun Lachenmann, Monika Salzbrunn, Eva Gerharz and Gilberto Rescher in this volume). Geographical entities, constitutive of social formation and belonging are not necessarily constructed as nation-states, occupying a clearly demarcated territory. Disputed territories in countries with ethnic conflict for example, can be a much more meaningful reference producing subjective and collective feelings of belongingness among their (virtual) neighbourhoods (Appadurai 1995) than the nation-state. Moreover even in relation to social processes and phenomena which cross borders, the attachment to a specific locality can frequently be found

to prevail over that owed to a nation-state. It has been pointed out that locality also can be an important concept for representing society (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2005). Localities can, like nation-states, be meaningful geographical spaces with great symbolical value and they serve, in some cases, as the crucial locus of social identification. In contexts of migration and transnationalisation, it can be observed how localities are constructed as localised and virtual neighbourhoods. The local is thus something to be created, organised and reproduced in social and phenomenological terms (Appadurai 1995).

Accordingly, observing transnationalisation and translocalisation processes constitutes an important research avenue for understanding the dynamics constituting world society. In contrast to the obvious macro-determinacy, inherent in conventional world society approaches, the perspective oriented towards 'the making of world society', is more oriented to the empirically observable features of the 'global situation'. This perspective facilitates the taking into account of the processes of interaction which, in the end, constitute macroscopic phenomena.

Finally, one has to acknowledge that the growing global interconnectedness indeed implies homogenising tendencies or decreasing diversity, as was proposed by Ritzer (1992) with his metaphor 'McDonaldisation of the World'. But at the same time, it reinforces global interconnectedness and complexity, to look at the diversification of world views which drives us towards an attempt to research and understand empirically the emergence of the world society. A plurality of theoretical and research views on world society, we hope, contributes, and brings us closer to grasping the dynamics of its constitution. With this book, we attempt to bring together some major perspectives, hoping to instigate further discussion and open new venues for future research.

The papers included in this book deal with a variety of, mainly empirically grounded, perspectives on transnational processes that are constitutive of world society. Most papers were presented at a conference organised by four former members of the research training group "World Concepts and Global Structural Patterns" in the Department of Sociology, in Bielefeld in November 24-25, 2005. This conference aimed at gathering contributions on the relationship between concepts of world society and transnationalisation from a cross-disciplinary perspective. The chapters greatly vary in terms of their themes, approaches, methodologies and styles but we believe that the diversity of our book's topics provides a fruitful basis for the further research on how world society can be analysed from an empirical perspective, and conceptualised from such a perspective.

Structure of the Book

This book is structured into five sections: an introductory part and four major topics around which various empirically informed contributions are centred. The first section focuses on the discussion of general questions concerning theory and

methodology in the papers of Thomas Faist, Gudrun Lachenmann and Monika Salzbrunn. Thomas Faist critically analyses the state of affairs in migration research in the English and German literature and raises several questions concerning transnationalism and development: First, how has academic and policy thinking on "development" cast the role of transnational social formations and non-state organisations? Secondly, in what ways are the activities of transnational cliques, groups and organisations, which embody some of the community principles, complementary or incompatible with those of other institutions functioning according to the logics of states and markets? Gudrun Lachenmann focuses on methodological challenges deriving from attempts to conceptualize the interrelatedness of global and local dimensions and exemplifies these by referring to recent research on gender and Islam. She draws the connection between globalisation and localisation, in the sense of empirically grounding globalisation theories, and elaborates new venues for doing transcultural research and conceptualising global flows and landscapes in a translocal way. Lachenmann highlights the centrality of agency, relationality and dynamics which need to be unravelled when analysing the constitution of social spaces, knowledge, structuring and networking. She is doing this analysis emphasising the role of gender. Finally, she argues that globalisation is constituted through new forms of organisation and epistemic communities with the development world as a global knowledge framework. Monika Salzbrunn discusses and compares theoretical concepts of world society, transnationalisation and migratory fields with a focus on German, Anglo-Saxon and French debates. Entangled as well as parallel and isolated tracks lead to similar conclusions in contemporary research on migration, transnationalism and urban rescaling processes. Festive events in a context of migration provide examples of how to overcome the initial intellectual divergences by means of a focus which links transnationalisation with urban rescaling processes.

The second part of the book presents the works of Besim Can Zirh, Michael Janoschka, and Germana D'Ottavio on transnationalisation and migration. The contributions focus on new forms of political participation and identity formation in transnational contexts. Zirh analyses the evolution of the ways in which Alevi political participation has evolved in Turkey and Germany. He argues that the Euro-Alevis can be comprehended as a nascent transnational community that has emerged as a result of diasporisation of Alevis in relation to global transformations and changes in Turkish and German socio-political contexts. Janoschka inquires into the democratic participation of Northern Europeans in Spain. His paper provides a conceptual analysis of how transnational political practices and identity politics can be evaluated as an expression of European citizenship. Germana D'Ottavio looks at transnational mobility of Polish migrant women working in Italy. While the first two contributions explicitly address issues of political involvement among migrants, this article deals with changing identities and concepts of self among migrant women. It shows how Polish migrants organize

transnational motherhood and demonstrates that mobility strategies are interconnected in transnational spaces. Migrant women use their agency within these spaces to create particular arrangements that allow them to achieve their goals in emigration and immigration societies.

The third part includes papers concerned with the linkage between translocalisation and development. Eva Gerharz shows the multiple forms of translocalisation of the Tamil Diaspora in respect to the reconstruction process which was initiated in Northern Sri Lanka after the Ceasefire of 2002. Her paper investigates the evolution of translocal spaces which are constituted through intensifying interaction between different actors and which are becoming increasingly relevant for post-conflict reconstruction. She argues that development, as a local endeavour, is constituted through translocal interactions. Based on an empirically grounded analysis, Gerharz shows how translocalisation processes lead to the re-negotiation of Tamil identity and development. Parting from everyday forms of translocality in rural Mexico, Gilberto Rescher analyses the transformation of rural indigenous communities that have become transnationalised in a way that reflects the flexibility of the particular rules and customs governing life in their villages. This process is discussed with respect to the renegotiation of local citizenship into transnational citizenship and the transformation of gender relations inside the transnationalised communities. Applying a focus on the communities of origin and herein the important position of women in the construction and maintenance of transnational social spaces, Rescher shows how social change is continuously negotiated and how it relates to broader transformations in the field of politics and development. He stresses the ambivalent outcomes of this process which show that in contrast to certain visions transnationalisation can not be understood per se as exclusively fostering processes of democratisation, emancipation and development, but indicate that such processes have to be studied in their totality.

The fourth part deals with networks and hubs in world society. Stephanie Herings contribution analyses the construction of Singapore as a financial center of South-East Asia. Starting with the assumption that finance is the most abstract and disembedded branch in global economy, often regarded as the vanguard of globalisation, Hering argues for the image of globality as constituting and contributing to the making of financial sites. The references to the specific locality proves indispensable for the rhetoric of globalisation – contrary to a naive perception of globalisation as a worldwide levelling of local and regional differences. She highlights the strategic use of rhetorics of local specifics and cultural distinctiveness as a transnational practice. Further on, Alexandra Lindenthal deals with networks of organisations specialised in the management of hazardous chemicals. Lindenthal asks in how far do corporations, which are involved in global production processes, handle hazardous chemicals across national or supranational territories and thereby contribute to the protection of health and environment.

The last part deals with the ways in which Information Technology changes the ways in which identity is conceptualised in different migration contexts. Magdalena Nowicka analyses how proximity and distance play a crucial role in the ways in which highly qualified mobile workers communicate with their families and friends. She argues that in networks, distance is not always metric, and that the interplay of proximity and distance influences the patterns of social inclusion and exclusion. Heike Greschke looks at the significance of co-presence and internet communication in the case of Paraguayan migrants living in different parts of the world. She shows that national identity can be regarded as a functional pattern of social organisation and structuring within global public spheres. Urmila Goel looks at the ways in which the second-generation Indians in Germany construct their identity through the mediation of an internet portal. She shows in detail how, why and with what consequences the transnational space theinder.net is positioned in national categories and at the same time remains a transnational space.

In her afterword, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka draws a conclusion about the empirically based reflections about the making of world society through transnational practices. Moreover, she critically discusses the scope of the transnationalisation paradigm in the world society project.

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