



Title:

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Close Distance. Social Segregation in Trading Empires and Colonies

Social boundaries and cultural distinctions have always existed. The term segregation, however, immediately evokes the racist order of nineteenth-century colonial empires and their afterlives in the postcolonial world. Unlike such racist segregation, (early) modern urban segregation has not necessarily been linked to a colonial context in a strict sense, but is more generally associated with mass migration movements within a country. At first glance, an easy historical distinction between the two versions seems to be that early modern forms of segregation appeared to develop incrementally “from below,” while the nineteenth century saw more systematic and planned segregation emerge “from above.” However, when comparing early modern and late modern empires, one actually finds similarities in how mental distinctions materialized, and the sharp division between the two epochs begins to blur. In this special issue, we ask to what extent segregation has a long-term history in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

To analyze human agency in segregated societies we choose the concept of “close distance.” Making use of “close distance” as an analytical tool helps us to understand complex “unequal interactions” in concrete situations of (mostly urban and colonial) segregation without focusing immediately and exclusively on racist segregation, which would be the typical high colonial pattern. What is more, “close distance” allows us to analyze relationships between segregators and segregated that shifted over time, as these relationships were never static and could vary in their degree of closeness and distance. To some extent, relationships of “close distance” predate and are also found outside of truly segregated forms of (non-)coexistence. It is our aim to concentrate predominantly on the epistemic, cognitive and hermeneutic core of living next to each other, while partially ignoring and therefore only partially perceiving each other. Ignorance and misunderstanding are not only unidirectional processes directed from the rulers towards the ruled, but they involve both sides and go in both directions. Practices of distancing, mutual ignorance and segregation were re-produced on both sides. Thus, although many of the colonized and

¹ Text by both authors. Parts 1, 3-5 largely by CZ, part 2 largely by FW. English editing by Rebecca Van Hove and Mallory Hope.

underprivileged peoples suffered severely from segregation, our approach acknowledges their agency, and in certain cases also some responsibility for destructive choices made because of this agency. First, however, it is necessary to understand the current discussion in sociological theory on the concept of 'segregation', mostly applied to the context of present-day large urban agglomerations.

1. Analyzing and Measuring Segregation: Between Today and History

Looking at the wide range in recent sociological debates about all forms of racial, residential, cultural, socio-economic, gender and income segregation, only a limited number of them can be considered here for purposes of historicizing. Since the 1940s, the fields of sociology and urban planning have established and developed multiple mathematical models to measure segregation. Unlike simple diversity, which can be understood as variety within a given society, segregation was defined as the "unevenness of the distribution of [a society's] members across places or categories".² Most typically, quantitative methods have been used to analyze the unevenness with regard to the spatial distribution of 'races,' a category mid-century sociologists rarely called into question. The standard Duncan and Duncan dissimilarity index of 1955 served to quantify "the extent to which neighborhood-level racial compositions are more or less similar to the average racial composition for the entire metropolitan areas."³ This formula leads to a more abstract definition of measuring segregation as the ratio between a chosen value for a given smaller sub-area "a", and the same value for the entire area under investigation (e.g. the whole city or the nation) that contains "a".⁴ Although mathematical modelling and the accompanying multiplication of spatial and aspatial parameters are highly developed, such complex forms of sociological segregation analysis focused almost exclusively on the relationship between space and 'race,' the existence of which they took for granted (To a lesser extent, as second-rank categories, gender and

² M. J. White, "Segregation and Diversity Measures in Population Distribution", in: *Population Index* 52, 2 (1986), 198-221, 198.

³ O. D. and B. Duncan, "A methodological analysis of segregation indices", in: *American Sociological Review* 20 (1955), 210-217; C. J. Dawkins, "Measuring the Spatial Pattern of Residential Segregation", in: *Urban Studies* 41, 4 (2004), 833-851, 833.

⁴ P. Hennerdal / M. Meinild Nielsen, "A Multiscalar Approach for Identifying Clusters and Segregation Patterns That Avoids the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem", in: *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107, 3 (2017), 555-574, 556.

profession also entered the analysis). This approach is often determined by the nature of its sources as it tends to use ‘race’ indicators from census data for a given region.⁵

More qualitative, historical and relativizing approaches have since significantly improved the analysis of segregation, especially by asking the question whether urban segregation emerges from *de facto* processes on a micro-level (e.g. self-segregation of whites among other whites) or whether it is consciously planned, engineered and controlled by urban ‘designers’ and exists *de jure* before being implemented.⁶ This debate already points in a relativizing way to the relationship between perception and action through time. The simple mathematical ratio of the distribution of humans in two racially-determined sub-groups neglects the qualitative characteristics of urban spaces, as well as spatial patterns of historical segregation: a lesson learned from detailed analysis of historical cadaster-like maps, such as fire insurance maps in American cities of the 1880s. The researchers inserted the population numbers of particular streets and houses, drawn from the census data of the 1880s, in their respective locations on these maps, and this juxtaposition helped to bring to light different residential patterns (blacks concentrated in alleys in Washington, in backyards in Charleston in the 1880s etc.). Segregation was no simple spatial pattern of large black or white areas, but must “also be understood in terms of boundaries between people [...] even when they live in close proximity to one another”⁷, as they can be segregated by codes of behavior and invisible borders.

Nevertheless, physical space often remains the starting point and the seemingly solid category in sociological studies of residential patterns in cities. This approach also holds true for most of the historical research concerning those twentieth- and twenty-first-century Western cities whose spatial segregation patterns have little to do with a former colonial regime (though much to do with the perception of immigration from former and current colonial possessions).

Research concerning the US, and to a lesser extent the UK, usually stresses that patterns of urban segregation—such as separate China Towns, black, white and Hispanic residential zones—

⁵ S. F. Reardon / D. O’Sullivan, "Measures of Spatial Segregation", in: *Sociological Methodology* 34 (2004), 121-162; A. Grigoryeva / M. Ruef, "The Historical Demography of Racial Segregation", in: *American Sociological Review* 80, 4 (2015), 814-842; J. P. Latner, "Rethinking the Role of Racial Segregation in the American Foreclosure Crisis", in: *City & Community* 16, 4 (2017), 447-485.

⁶ T. McGrew, "The History of Residential Segregation in the United States, Title VIII, and the Homeownership Remedy", in: *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 77, 3-4 (2018), 1013-1048, 1015-1017.

⁷ J. R. Logan / M. J. Martinez, "The Spatial Scale and Spatial Configuration of Residential Settlement: Measuring Segregation in the Postbellum South", in: *American Journal of Sociology* 123, 4 (2018), 1161-1203, 1198.

are rather recent trends, while early nineteenth-century cities were far less spatially segregated.⁸ For modern cities, the type of populationist governmentality that relies on race-based censuses becomes an object of investigation itself, as urban planning of and against segregation can also be understood as a history of state simplifications, to put it in James Scott's words.⁹ What is more, the normative categories of race and ethnicity are relatively new categories in administrative contexts of several Western countries: the Race Relationship Acts in the UK only date from 1953, while a census asking for information on race/ethnicity was only introduced as late as 1991.¹⁰ The typical US forms ("Do you define yourself as a) White, b) Black, c) Asian, d) Hispanic...") date back already to 1960/70, but are neither as old as one might expect.¹¹

The emergence of these bureaucratic categories draws our attention to the difference between subjective self-perception and the allegedly objective classifications of scientific and state observers. This distinction brings a crucial hermeneutical problem to the fore, which is rooted in the fact that the basic data regularly used by sociologists was generated just by applying given schemes and patterns. Unlike sociologists, historians can unveil the processes of classification and categorization, as well as the historical contexts in which they took place. Already in 1880 the British General E. B. Johnson distinguished between "segregation of mind" and "segregation of the bodies" as two elements he understood politicians to be governed by and to realize in their administrative work.¹²

2. Going back in Time: The Production and Experience of Segregation in Colonial Contexts

Researchers who do not use standard maps drawn by cartographers but instead ask inhabitants to draw a 'mental segregation map' of their postcolonial city equally stress the subjectivity of racial, or similar, categories. This is particularly true for cities in former colonies. Asking people about

⁸ C. H. Nightingale, "Transnational Contexts of Early Twentieth-Century American Urban Segregation", in: *Journal of Social History* 39, 3 (2006), 667-702, 668 and 673.

⁹ M. T. Maly, *Beyond Segregation. Multiracial and Multiethnic Neighborhoods in the United States*, Philadelphia 2005, 9; J. C. Scott, *Seeing like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have failed*, Princeton 1998.

¹⁰ H. Thomas, *Race and Planning*, London, New York 2000.

¹¹ From 1960/70: M. Bhatnagar, "Identifying the Identified: The Census, Race, and the Myth of Self-Classification", in: *Texas Journal on Civil Liberties & Civil Rights* 13, 1 (2007), 85-116; K. Prewitt, "The Census Race Classification: Is It Doing Its Job?", in: *The Annals of the American Academy of Social Sciences* 677 (2018), 8-24.

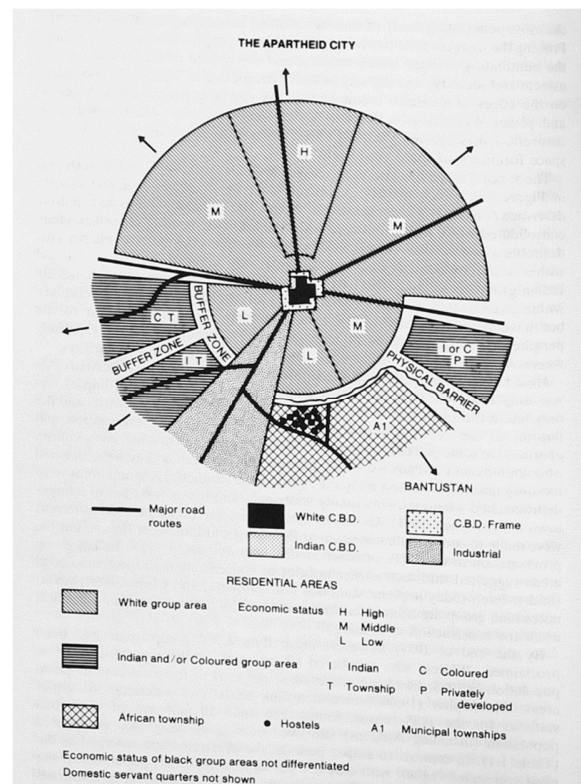
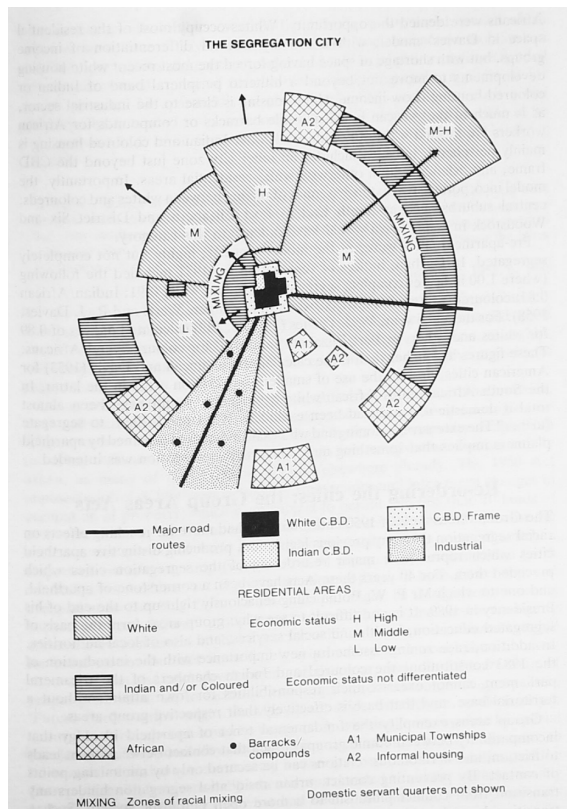
¹² J. W. Cell, "Anglo-Indian medical Theory and the Origins of Segregation in West Africa", in: *The American Historical Review* 91, 2 (1986), 307-335, 307.

their mental maps allows one to take a very different perspective on the same postcolonial city: it has the purpose of reconstructing the hidden colonial legacies in what remain today 'segregated cities'.¹³ However, the questions for inhabitants which aim at multiplying, sharpening, modifying and relativizing the standard approaches nonetheless still start from the bond between space and 'race'. Most histories of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial cities follow these prerogatives: since the 1970s and 1980s, research in this field has been guided—in parallel to the aforementioned development within contemporary sociological analysis—by the categories of race and ethnicity with regard to urban space.¹⁴ A typical early-1980s model created to explain South-African urban history in its transition from a nineteenth-century colonial state to the Apartheid society uses an ideal-type visualization of cities with two possible states:¹⁵ the 'incrementally' segregated city and the one which conforms to the racist norms of *apartheid* social engineering.

¹³ S. L. Smiley, "Mental maps, segregation, and everyday life in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania", in: *Journal of Cultural Geography* 30, 2 (2013), 215-244; S. G. Yeoh, "Creolized Utopias: Squatter Colonies and the Post-Colonial City in Malaysia", in: *Sojourn* 16, 1 (2001), 102-124.

¹⁴ A. Lemon (ed.), *Homes Apart. South Africa's Segregated Cities*, Cape Town 1991; R. J. Ross / G. J. Telkamp (eds.), *Colonial Cities*, Dordrecht et al. 1985; D. K. Basu (ed.), *The Rise and Growth of the Colonial Port Cities in Asia*, Berkeley 1985; I. Banga (ed.), *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India (1700-1950)*, New Delhi 1992; B. Kollouglu / M. Toksöz (eds.), *Cities of the Mediterranean. From the Ottomans to the Present Day*, London 2010; C. Ducruet, "Asian Cities in the Global Maritime Network since the Late Nineteenth Century", in: G. Bracken (ed.), *Asian Cities: Colonial to Global*, Amsterdam UP 2015, 173-186; M. W. Swanson, "'The Asiatic Menace': Creating Segregation in Durban, 1870-1900", in: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 16, 3 (1983), 401-421; K. J. Anderson, "The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Category", in: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, 4 (1987), 580-598; J. Robinson: "'A perfect system of control'? State power and 'native locations' in South Africa", in: *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 8 (1989), 135-162; A. J. Christopher, "Spatial Variations in the Application of Residential Segregation in South African Cities", in: *Geoforum* 20, 3 (1989), 253-267; G. Baines, "The Origins of Urban Segregation: Local Government and the Residence of Africans in Port Elizabeth, c. 1835-1865", in: *South African Historical Journal* 22 (1990), 61-81; S. Chattopadhyay, "Boundaries: The Limits of 'White Town' in Colonial Calcutta", in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 59, 2 (2000), 154-179. A good bibliography on different forms of urban segregation in the contexts of former colonial development as related to the development of US cities can be found in C. H. Nightingale, "The Transnational Contexts of Early Twentieth-Century American Urban Segregation", in: *Journal of Social History* 39, 3 (2006), 667-702; T. B. Mar / P. Edmonds (eds.), *Making Space in Settler Colonies*, Palgrave 2010; for the Indian case where 'caste' as category eventually becomes more important than 'race' cf. the overview R. O'Hanlon, "Caste and its Histories in Colonial India: A reappraisal", in: *Modern Asian Studies* 51, 2 (2017), 432-461.

¹⁵ R. J. Davies: "The spatial formation of the South African city", in: *GeoJournal Supplementary Issue* 2 (1981), 59-72.



(J.C. Reid 1981: spatialized visual representation of an ideal-type segregated and an Apartheid city)

Historical research has tried to show the implicit spatial imaginary and the highly explicit spatial politics of deportation, separation, closure, and ghettoization. The nineteenth century saw a surge in urban planning, partly due to city growth increasing fast, which necessitated ‘artificial’ planning, in contrast to slower processes of development in early modern cities. Lately, historians increasingly tend to historicize the spatial concepts that implicitly or explicitly determined the mindsets of urban planners. Instead of producing ideal or real maps of segregated habitations *ex post facto* as visual aids to illustrate their arguments, historians turned descriptive as well as normative tools of zoning and zoned mapping into objects of study in their own right.¹⁶ In so doing, they followed post-Foucauldian trends. Unlike in the 1970s, the subjective perceptions of past actors and the frames of thought that ordered their minds became the center of interest.

¹⁶ On urban mapping, especially fire insurance mapping, historically one of the earliest contexts where risk classification (risks concerning the safety of houses, but also more generally of ‘more civilized neighborhoods’) was projected onto spatial repartitions and grids of city maps cf. e.g. C. Zwierlein, *Der gezähmte Prometheus. Feuer und Sicherheit zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Moderne*, Göttingen 2011 and revised English version, chapter F; for American cities see M. Tebeau, *Eating Smoke: Fire in Urban America, 1800-1950*, Baltimore 2003.

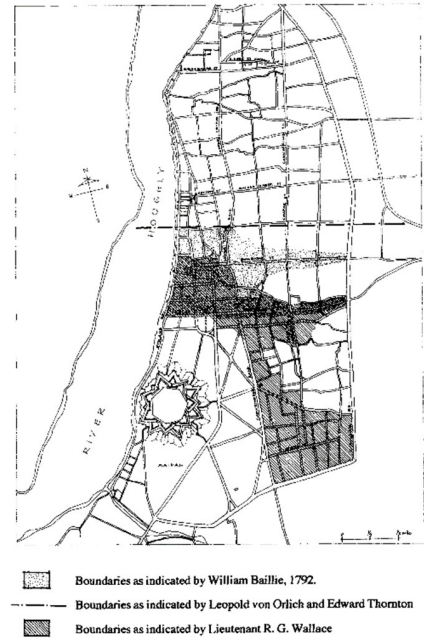


Figure 2 Map of Calcutta showing the boundaries of white town

Typical 'zoning' of white/native towns in a late nineteenth-century colonial setting: left is an original map, with red color [1872] used by British merchants to mark the "European part" of the town (London Metropolitan Archives); similar is the reconstruction by the urban historian Swati Chattopadyay (2000), based on sources from 1792 and from the first half of the nineteenth century.

It is well known that scientists, especially urban planners, demographers, geographers, hygienists, and anthropologists, have played an important role in developing segregationist expertise. Path-breaking studies on medical topography have shown how the power of medical topography present in urban planning and in administration shaped cities within the formal British Empire and its

larger spheres of influence.¹⁷ Harrison's "Sanitarian Utopia" in India stands out in this regard¹⁸, as does Yeoh's analysis of power relations in the urban environment of Singapore.¹⁹

A short reconsideration of the history of high colonial segregation is needed, which goes further back in time and shifts the focus away from solely urban situations. Africa can be considered the world region where the strongest forms of segregationist logics first emerged and were first applied during the nineteenth century, because it was here that the distance between colonizers and colonized was said to be insurmountable. The cultures of Europeans and Africans were supposedly so different that a colonial state could only be a segregated state. The fundamental distancing of Africans—not granting them a coeval status nor allowing them to live in the same 'period' of humankind's development as Western civilization, instead downgrading Africans to 'children' in the world's family of people—took place predominantly in the nineteenth century, as Fabian has stressed a long time ago – not only for Africans, but in general for the general bias of anthropological and colonial perception.²⁰ During the early modern period, the distinction between allegedly superior Europeans and the other remained ambiguous: the figure of the noble savage could still replace the cypher of the barbarian, while North African 'pirates' were more or less integrated into early modern international law and could even be perceived, at the end of the

¹⁷ R. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities*, 2nd. ed., London 2013; S. Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta. Modernity, nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, London 2005; M. Dossal, *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities: The Planning of Bombay City, 1845-1875*, Oxford 1991; P. Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis. Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*, Aldershot 2007; R. Home, "British colonial civic improvement in the early twentieth century: E. P. Richards in Madras, Calcutta, and Singapore", in: *Planning Perspectives* 31, 4 (2016), 635-644.

¹⁸ M. Harrison, "Towards a Sanitary Utopia? Professional Visions and Public Health in India, 1880-1914", in: *South Asia Research* 10, 1 (1990), 19-40; Id.: *Public health in British India: Anglo-Indian preventive medicine, 1859-1914*, Cambridge 1994; D. Arnold, *Colonizing the Body. State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*, Berkeley et al. 1993, who opens his book with an analysis of the late-eighteenth-/early-nineteenth-century emergence of 'medical topography' handbooks (Lind, Johnson), which guided discourses for improvement politics and town planning; cf. the later standard works, R. C. Sterndale, *Municipal Work in India; or, Hints on Sanitation - General Conservancy, and improvement in Municipalities, Towns, and Villages*, Calcutta 1881 and the many publications by W. J. Simpson (for Calcutta, Hongkong and other cities); H. Deacon, "Racial Segregation and Medical Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Cape Town", in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, 2 (1996), 287-308; M. Echenberg, *Plague Ports: The Global Urban Impact of Bubonic Plague, 1894-1901*, New York 2007; R. Peckham / D. Pomfret (eds.), *Imperial Contagions. Medicine, Hygiene, and Cultures of Planning in Asia*, Hong Kong 2013. For African realities see the already classical Maynard W. Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909," in: *The Journal of African History* 18, 3 (1977), 387-410 and Philip D. Curtin, "Medical Knowledge and Urban Planning in Tropical Africa," in: *The American Historical Review* 90, 3 (1985), 594-613.

¹⁹ B. Yeoh, *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore*, Oxford 1996 (2003).

²⁰ J. Fabian: *Time and the Other. How Anthropology makes its Objects*, New York 1983.

eighteenth century, as Sparta-like states maintaining a discipline comparable to Roman republican virtue, which had been lost in luxurious Western European salons and courts.²¹ All this changed around the 1830s, when Africans were made invisible by modern international law: they were still inhabitants of their country, but the *terra nullius* doctrine nevertheless conceived of those regions as ‘unpossessed’ and therefore more or less free and open to European conquest, despite initial land-granting treaties between Europeans and Africans.²² This situation was therefore quite different from the discussion in the earliest international law concerning the Americas around 1520 or 1550.²³

Once they had excluded Africans from international law, Europeans developed ever more subtle forms of legal segregation within the colonies. The two best known forms of segregation are at opposite ends of the spectrum of strategies for keeping Europeans and the colonized separate, from the most concrete and the most abstract methods. The most concrete version of segregation is *apartheid*, which is the most material and the most radical manifestation of segregation visible in everyday life. The most abstract form was racist theory that shaped the duality of colonial law. *Apartheid* laws built on this imagined distance, though, contrary to expectations, *apartheid* theorists rarely referred to racial theories.²⁴ All colonial administrations treated native affairs as a

²¹ C. Zwierlein, "Conversiones, révolutions, guerres civiles: De Bodin au droit international dans la Méditerranée du XVIIIe siècle", in: *Il pensiero politico* 49, 3 (2016), 383-416.

²² On the emergence of a nineteenth-century international law based on the division of the world's population in three spheres of civilized, barbaric, and savage peoples (and similar repartitions) cf. e.g. H. Steiger, "From the International Law of Christianity to the International Law of the World Citizen – Reflections on the Formation of the Epochs of the History of International Law", in: *Journal of the History of International Law* 3 (2001), 180-193; for the Ottoman Empire, whose much debated integration into the system played the role of an epistemically focusing challenge for this new order cf. D. Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914*, Princeton, 2011; for a legal historian's perspective on the acquisition of the German colonies cf. R. Schlottau, *Deutsche Kolonialrechtspflege. Strafrecht und Strafmacht in den deutschen Schutzgebieten 1884 bis 1914*, Frankfurt/M et al., 2007, 26-87; for the transformation of European 'liberal' imperial thought in that period cf. J. Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: the rise of imperial liberalism in Britain and France*, Princeton, 2005; J. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria*. Ithaca 2011; the Roman legal term *res nullius*, important for early modern international maritime law, often gets confounded with the nineteenth-century *terra nullius* doctrine, cf. Lauren Benton / Benjamin Straumann: *Acquiring Empire by Law: From Roman Doctrine to Early Modern Practice*, in: *Law and History Review* 28, 1 (2010), 1-38.

²³ F. de Vitoria, *Political Writings*, ed. A. Pagden / J. Lawrance, Cambridge 1991; N. Brieskorn / G. Stiening (eds.), *Francisco de Vitorias 'De Indis' in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2011, L. Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*, Philadelphia 1949.

²⁴ See in general on *apartheid*: S. Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919–36*, London 1989; W. Beinart / S. Dubow (eds.), *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, London 1995; P. Maylam, "Explaining the Apartheid City"; C. Marx, "Hendrik Verwoerd and the Leipzig School of Psychology in 1926", in: *Historia* 58 (2013) 2, 91-118, 117.

separate field of colonial policy.²⁵ Like other colonies, South Africa ran most of its segregationist laws under the label of native affairs,²⁶ and portrayed them as a chance for “native” Xhosa, Zulu or Sotho groups to protect their own customs and cultures.²⁷ These laws were not primarily segregationist but often had similar effects.²⁸ Another, equally implicit but less-studied form of segregation is fiscal in nature, which ensured that Europeans did not have to pay taxes for “native affairs.” It was based on the colonialist justification that “the separate taxation of natives under a poll-tax system is of course a common incident in African territories, and is based on fiscal rather than racial considerations.”²⁹ More familiar are restrictions on the mobility of African workers through pass laws, bans on mixed marriages, separate education, and segregated every-day life. This process of segregationist legislation had many origins, but legal dualism illustrates best the ambiguities of segregation.³⁰ While the South African way into *apartheid* is widely known, popular culture has paid less attention to historical studies on segregation in other colonial contexts.³¹ They worked according to much more subtle logics, such as the codification of customary law, which should apply to the “natives” only and which emphasizes the difference

²⁵ See for apartheid: C. Marx, “Hendrik Verwoerd and the Leipzig School of Psychology in 1926”, in: *Historia* 58 (2013) 2, 91-118, 117; J. Robinson, *The Power of Apartheid: State, Power, and Space in South African Cities*, Oxford 1996; I. Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*, Berkeley, 1997.

²⁶ D. Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation: native policy in colonial Natal, 1845-1910*, Oxford 1973.

²⁷ J. Miller, *An African Volk: The Apartheid Regime and Its Search for Survival*, Oxford 2016, 8.

²⁸ See for example the Natives Land Act of 1913: W. Beinart and P. Delius, “The Historical Context and Legacy of the Natives Land Act of 1913”, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40 (2014) 4, 667–688; H. M. Feinberg, and A. Horn, “South African Territorial Segregation: New Data on African Farm Purchases, 1913–1936”, in: *The Journal of African History* 50 (2009) 1, 41–60.

²⁹ Hailey, *African Survey*, 378.

³⁰ On the general origins of segregation: R. Davenport, *The Beginnings of Urban Segregation in South Africa* Grahamstown 1971; A. J. Christopher, “From Flint to Soweto: Reflections on the Colonial Origins of the Apartheid City”, in: *Area*, 15 (1983) 2, 145-149; G. Baines, “The Origins of Urban Segregation: Local Government and the Residence of Africans in Port Elizabeth, c. 1835-1865”, in: *South African Historical Journal*, 22 (1990), 61-81; C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, “De la ville en Afrique noire”, in: *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 61 (2006) 5, 1087-1119.

³¹ C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, “Racial and Social Zoning in African Cities from Colonization to Post-independence”, in: E. Boagerts and R. Raben (eds.), *Beyond Empire and Nation: The Decolonization of African and Asian societies, 1930s-1970s*, Leiden 2012, 267-286, 269.

between European legal systems and a separate “native law.”³² Thus, the instruments of practical segregation were manifold, even though they had a similar theoretical purpose.³³

When in the 1930s Lord Hailey compiled for the British government the comprehensive and authoritative *African Survey*, with the help of several scientists,³⁴ the term ‘segregation’ hardly appeared in the resulting 1837-pages long comparative study on colonial policies. Segregation only appeared prominently with regard to South-African *apartheid* rules, which suggests that at that time the term was still very narrowly applied to the most rigid forms of racial segregation policies.³⁵ Yet, all throughout Hailey’s book the reader encounters various forms of imposed inequality, willful exclusion, segregationist policies and border drawing between races. In many instances, Hailey even dismissed these policies. Although his list of *de facto* segregation tools is not exhaustive, it is quite long. Among the implicitly described practices of segregation are:

Legal segregation (where the prohibition of mixed marriages is a prominent element), segregation also of forms of punishment in penal law

Segregation following the borders of political power enactment (direct, indirect rule, Native Policy)

Hygienic segregation and public sanitation

Economic and labor segregation in chambers of commerce, trade unions, etc.

Forms of segregation concerning rights and access to property

Segregation concerning education, culture and science

Segregation concerning access to food, water, other resources, as well as transport and communication

³² R. Roberts and K. Mann, *Law in Colonial Africa*, London 1998; E. Saada, “The Empire of Law: Dignity, Prestige, and Domination in the ‘Colonial Situation’”, in: *French Politics, Culture & Society* 20 (2002), 2, 98-120, 108; M. Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The colonial experience in Malawi and Zambia*, Cambridge 1985; F. Wagner, *Colonial Internationalism: How Colonial Experts Reshaped Colonialism*, forthcoming 2020; C. Zwielerlein, “Übersetzungen ohne Original: Die Erfassung des Rechts der ‘Naturvölker’ per Fragebogen in den deutschen Kolonien 1907-1914,” in: *Zeitschrift für Neuere Rechtsgeschichte* 34 (2012) 219–72.

³³ See for example: J. Tischler, “Education and the Agrarian Question In South Africa, C. 1900–40”, in *The Journal of African History* 57 (2016) 2, 251–70.

³⁴ Cf. H. Tilley, *Africa as a living laboratory. Empire, development, and the problem of scientific knowledge, 1870-1950*, Chicago UP 2011.

³⁵ "It must be recognized that, so long as the principle of segregation is accepted in South Africa as regulating relations between the European and other races, Asiatics will share with Africans some of the disabilities which this policy imposes." (*African Survey. A study of problems arising in Africa South of the Sahara*, ed. Lord Hailey, Oxford et al. 1938, 1644). Cf. above n. 15.

Forms of fiscal and financial segregation (concerning taxes and the access to private and public financial services)³⁶

Originating in the racist imagination of Europeans, all of those types and subtypes of segregation existed in varying degrees in all colonies, between Europeans and “natives”, between “natives” and non-European immigrants (e.g. Indians in Eastern Africa) but also among the “natives” (e.g. so-called Bantus and Hamites). In many cases, these forms of segregation had a spatial dimension, though this was a manifestation, rather than the origin, of an underlying logic that took on more diverse forms of “color bars.” Starting in the 1890s, legal segregation became explicit in colonial discourses, which owed much to the new disciplines of tropical medicine and anthropology.³⁷ While biological determinism and Social Darwinism provided the most outspoken explanations of (scientific) racist distinction in the age of high imperialism, colonizers and anthropologists preferred more subtle and seemingly more humane justifications of segregation. Public health and the “sanitation syndrome” were among them, but also cultural relativism, respect for legal diversity, the specific needs of native lifestyles, and self-government loomed large in pro-segregationist discourses of the early twentieth century. Even *apartheid* theorists, Saul Dubow has shown, rarely asserted outright biological theories of superiority. Instead, they were more likely to argue along the lines of cultural relativism and a preservationist “native” policy. *Apartheid*, a term which became popular in the 1930s, then described the legal implementation of this cultural relativism, a preservationist native policy, which had existed long before that period.

As early as 1938, Hailey’s aforementioned African Survey defined the purpose of segregation, which was to preserve “the standards of European civilization by reducing the contacts of the two races to the minimum which the economic system necessitates.”³⁸ It is exactly Hailey’s final remark that hints at the fact that even in South Africa a total segregation was impossible, because the predominantly white South African economy needed African workers and

³⁶ This is our terminology, summarizing the forms of inequality, and legal and practical situations described in the *African Survey* which is taken as a contemporary, descriptive source to trace historically deductive and inductive reasoning.

³⁷ For the South African case see: P. Maylam, “Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography”, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21 (1995) 1, 19-38, 23. Concerning the role of anthropology see: R. J. Gordon and A. D. Spiegel. “Southern Africa Revisited”, in: *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22, (1993) 1, 83–105; in general: E. Sibeud, “A Useless Colonial Science?: Practicing Anthropology in the French Colonial Empire, circa 1880–1960”, in: *Current Anthropology* 53 (2012) 5, S83-S94; Idem, “La loi, le droit et l’indigène”, in: *Droits* 43 (2006) 1, 165-190; A. Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, Chicago 2001.

³⁸ Hailey, *African Survey*, 671.

had to ensure their access to the plants and mines.³⁹ While this paradox of segregation and participation in the economy has been widely discussed, it has never done so under the wider context of close distance that allow to analyze it in a long-term perspective.

In equal measure, the close distance approach enables us to ask for the perspective of Africans, their conceptualization of difference and their attitudes towards segregation. Recently, historians have dared to ask the question whether European notions of difference relied and built on pre-existing similar African concepts. Authors such as Mahmood Mamdani argued that the concept of race had been absent from African thinking before the 1920s.⁴⁰ Bruce Hall, instead, has claimed that predominantly Muslim concepts of African difference had a long history, and that they came close to racial distinctions made by the colonial state.⁴¹ The debate remains inconclusive, although the scientific racism of Europeans was without a doubt exceptional, and even “Islam did not have its Gobineau.”⁴² More recent literature has advocated for specific case studies in order to get closer to African concepts of difference and otherness, and has often implicitly made use of notions of “closeness and distance” to do so.⁴³

3. The Deep Roots of Segregation in Early Modern History?

This short look at recent research on sociological concepts of segregation, late nineteenth- and twentieth-century forms of residential patterns of urban segregation and the structures of racist forms of separation in European nineteenth-century colonies, has illustrated that scholars more and more tend to ask questions about the patterns and shapes of perception that lead to segregationist policies, as well as forms of living together in such communities. Some even stress the paradox that *apartheid* systems often rest on a foundation other than racist theories. If one turns then to the challenges of writing the longer-term history of “close distance” and examines how forms of

³⁹ D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid, 1948–1961*, New York, 1991, 90; A. Lichtenstein, “Making Apartheid Work: African Trade Unions and the 1953 Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act in South Africa”, in: *Journal of African History*, 46(2005), 293–314

⁴⁰ M. Mamdani, “When Does a Settler Become a Native? The Colonial Roots of Citizenship”, in: *Pretexts: studies in writing and culture* 7 (1998)2, 249-258: Swahili-speakers in East and Central Africa described the Europeans first simply as people who restlessly wander around - a classification referring to their ‘white’ skin was at first absent.

⁴¹ Bruce S. Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960*, New York 2011.

⁴² J. Hunwick, “The Same But Different: Approaches to Slavery and the African Diaspora in the Lands of Islam,” in: *Saharan Studies Association Newsletter* 7 (1999), 2-4 quoted in: M. Perry, “Perceptions Of Race In The Arab World”, <http://inhouse.lau.edu.lb/bima/papers/Perry.pdf>, Last Access 18.12.2018.

⁴³ F. Cooper, *Colonialism in question: Theory, knowledge, history*, Berkeley 2005.

segregation first emerged, there is reason to doubt whether the immediate and exclusive focus on spatiality and, evidently, the still more limited duality of space/race, are helpful. Keeping these as focal points of the discussion may mislead historians into drawing a ‘nineteenth-centurized’ image of early modern world, and may also be a limited approach to history of the modern colonial world.

If we go back to the early modern period we see historians unearth more subtle interactions in processes of migration, settlement and agglomeration, as well as in strategic politics of deportation, separation, exclusion and ghettoization—though, indeed, at first glance, we can find seemingly similar problems and relationships between ‘race’ and ‘space’ also in early colonial Mexico, the early colonial Philippines, India under Company rule, Dutch Indonesia⁴⁴ and European merchant settlements under foreign lordship, such as in the Ottoman Empire. Although the methods of empirical studies that rely on pictures that represent the mind-maps of a city’s inhabitants are not available to early-modern historians, we could instead try to adopt similar approaches used by sociologists and nineteenth-century historians who concentrate on the subjective spatial aspects of coexistence in those places. However, to focus on and search for such parallels runs the risk of projecting dominant themes and questions from the later period back on to the former, constructing ‘not-yet-completely’ or ‘already-quite-modern’ narratives and potentially confounding isomorphic with homologous situations.

For many settlements in the world, religion and the semantically broad premodern notion of ‘nation’ (*natio*) were more important than the precursors of ‘race’ markers in defining social groups and the implicit and normatively explicit rules that kept distance between them.⁴⁵ Many

⁴⁴ P. Mitter, "Early British Port Cities of India: Their Planning and Architecture ca. 1640-1757", in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 45, 2 (1986), 95-114; P. A. Roche, "Caste and the British Merchant Government in Madras, 1639-1749", in: *Durba Ghosh: Colonial Copanions: Bibis, Begums, and concubines of the British in North India, 1760-1830*, PhD UC Berkeley 2000; F. Hasan, "Indigenous Cooperation and the Birth of a Colonial City: Calcutta, c. 1698-1750", in: *Modern Asian Studies* 26, 1 (1992), 65-82; S. M. Neild, "Colonial Urbanism: The Development of Madras City in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", in: *Modern Asian Studies* 13, 2 (1979), 217-246; J. J. Brenning, "Chief Merchants and the European Enclaves of Seventeenth-Century Coromandel", in: *Modern Asian Studies* 11, 3 (1977), 321-340; P. J. Marshall, "White Town of Calcutta under the Rule of the East India Company", in: *Modern Asian Studies* 34, 2 (2000), 307-331; Id., "British Society in India under the East India Company", in: *Modern Asian Studies* 31, 1 (1997), 89-108.

⁴⁵ R. Raben, "Cities and the slave trade in early-modern Southeast Asia", in: P. Bommgaard / D. Kooiman / H. Schulte Nordholt (eds.), *Linking Destinies. Trade, towns and kin in Asian history*, Leiden 2008, 119-140.; G. J. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen. De Verenigde Oost-Indische compagnie en de bevolking van Ambon 1656-1696*, Dordrecht 1987; Id., "A city of migrants: Kota Ambon at the end of the seventeenth century", in: *Indonesia* 51 (1991), 105-132; F. Broeze (ed.), *Brides of the sea: Port cities of Asia from the 16th-20th centuries*, Kensington 1989; H. Sutherland, "The Makassar Malays: Adaptation and identity, c. 1660-1790", in: *Journal of Southeast Asian*

groups moved around and settled in new places not only because of mercantile interests and goals, but for reasons of religious intolerance and because they had been forced to leave their former homes. Sometimes both elements and goals overlapped. Arriving at new places of settlement, cultural, cognitive and physical distancing rarely occurred primarily on the basis of skin color and concepts of race, especially in already well-inhabited environments with their own highly-developed administrative, religious and cultural practices. European merchants trading in foreign parts of the world first of all also separated themselves from the Europeans of other nations abroad, not only from the local inhabitants and ethnic groups.⁴⁶

Physical spatial forms of separation (such as quarters enclosed by walls and gates, etc.) certainly were used in some early-modern contexts, as the Venetian *ghetto* demonstrates,⁴⁷ or European forts within multiethnic colonial settlements. However, this was not a dominant pattern that we observe in most cities; if we speak of ‘state simplifications’, it is striking that at least in French, Italian and British sources, administrators usually recorded excluded or privileged religious, ethnic, or mercantile groups by copying lists of names or numbers of households or people, instead of by making maps. This suggests that Western Europeans often lived to some extent intermixed with and dispersed among the other inhabitants of the cities in question. Counterexamples for this might be found in European colonies in the Atlantic and Pacific where settlements did indeed start to build clear separations of areas; nonetheless, it is not helpful to start with the notion of spatial separation as a guiding principle.

In the age of high imperialism the civilizing mission, in both its Christian and secular form, loomed large on colonizers’ agendas.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, religion and denominations according to different confessions were not prominent topics in surveys commissioned by the colonial state, such as in the above example (Hailey’s famous African survey), and neither did religion and denomination drive segregation in nineteenth- and twentieth-century empires. However, for earlier

Studies 32-3 (2001), 397-421; A. Reid, "The Structure of Cities in Southeast Asia, Fifteenth to Seventeenth Centuries", in: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 11, 2 (1980), 235-250.

⁴⁶ C. Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns. The French and the British in the Mediterranean, 1650-1750*, Cambridge 2016, 117-184.

⁴⁷ B. Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the inquisition of Venice 1550-1670*, London 1998; B. C. I. Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice, 1382-1797*, Aldershot 2003; S. G. Pugliese, *The most ancient of minorities. The Jews of Italy*, Westport 2002; S. Berg, *Il ghetto di Venezia. Das erste jüdische Ghetto in Europa*, Frankfurt/M 1996; L. Manino (ed.), *Italia Judaica. Gli ebrei nello Stato pontificio fino al Ghetto (1555)*, Rome 1998.

⁴⁸ Osterhammel, Barth, *The Civilizing Mission*.

forms of colonialism and in Europeans' other interactions with people abroad, religion might have been the most important factor justifying segregation, through the close link between spiritual practice and spatiality. Religious difference was expressed everywhere: it was in the practices of preaching, in gestures, in the amulets worn by people, borne by the body through circumcision and other signs, it was in thoughts and beliefs—it created divisions between spaces but also in all other dimensions of coexistence and cohabitation.

4. Focusing the epistemic core: “Close Distance”

For the contexts of early modern as well as high modern precolonial, colonial and postcolonial encounters between Europeans and others abroad—not to speak of all non-European influences and immigrations—we therefore here propose to focus mostly on the epistemic ‘core’ of the relationships or non-relationships, on the hermeneutical negotiations and understandings/misunderstandings found at the fluid and invisible borders between those who were already there and those who arrived. Trying to grasp the period from precolonial to high colonial times, Pratt probably felt similar discomfort with the use of terms too strongly reified in historical research concerning the encounter of Europeans and “natives” and the establishment of colonial orders. She therefore coined the term ‘contact zones’ for the earlier period. This term again, however, starts out from spatial movement: thinking in and with regard to a “zone”, a region.⁴⁹

To modify this, we choose the metaphor of “close distance”, without claiming that this is a new all-encompassing theoretical approach. Modestly and tentatively, the notion first draws attention to the fluid cognitive dimension of what segregation is: “distance” can refer to physical space, but it is also far more open to cognitive forms of distance; and “closeness” aims to draw attention to the fact that both the processing and enacting of separation and difference, from the early to the late period of colonialization, may have nothing to do with how far away or how close together people actually live.

A long-term history of segregation as a history of forms of close distance is therefore not restrained to the history of mapping and urban planning, focused solely on legal norms of enforcing residential separations. Instead, its object can (and indeed must) be found in every form of

⁴⁹ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, New York 1998.

historical communication. The heuristic premise is to always look, from one side, at moments of particular closeness, pronounced interaction, and mixed and seemingly hybrid mergings between Europeans and their counterparts, contrasted, on the other hand, by a second direction of investigation which looks at the elements, levels, and epistemic forms of how distance was consciously or unconsciously performed or simply active in those encounters. Such a second 'check', or second heuristic direction, which asks after conscious and unconscious forms of distance, often probably relativizes what had been eventually reified as distinctions between social groups and borders between segregated populations. It detects gaps and any potential lack of mutual understanding, as well as how interlocutors matched or misinterpreted each other's words, codes, rituals and gestures. The result is a finer-grained picture, which avoids narratives of postcolonial hybridism and of reified racial segregation as if these were given, fixed forms.

The perception and communication itself are therefore central to our interest. This leads us to interrogate the epistemologies of our subjects, as one of the key elements that causes as well as re-produces distance is ignorance, which can be understood as gaps of knowledge about and between the one and 'the other'. Ignorance itself has a multiform shape and character, as was already well known by medieval scholastics, who systematically unfolded the term.⁵⁰ Enlightenment philosophers and twentieth-century sociologists added to this the empiricist concepts of ignorance, as well as the functional analysis of ignorance and ignoring. It is not incidental that the recent sociology of racial discourses has begun to return to the notions of ignorance and ignoring as the sometimes hidden, but powerful core of what has even been coined the "ignorance contract" within racial relationships.⁵¹ If this is the case for the most 'hardest' form of segregation, it should apply even better to the other categories of segregation active within societies, between religious and scientific communities, and in the arenas of culture, education, property management, labor etc.

⁵⁰ *Nescientia/scientia; privatio scientiae; ignorantia voluntaris/involuntaris; ignorantia voluntaris directa, indirecta, per negligentiam contingens voluntaria, ignorantia per accidens*: K. Hedwig, "Agere ex ignorantia. Über die Unwissenheit im praktischen Wissen bei Thomas von Aquin", in: I. Craemer-Ruegenberg / A. Speer (eds.), *Scientia und ars im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, Berlin, New York 1994, vol. 1, 482-498.

⁵¹ C. W. Mills, *The racial contract*, Ithaca, NY 1997, 18; M. Steyn, "The ignorance contract: recollections of apartheid childhoods and the construction of epistemologies of ignorance", in: *Identities. Global Studies in Culture and Power* 19, 1 (2012), 8-25.

Denying someone or something full participation in society is the active and ideological form of ignoring: by extension, this leads to excluding people, making them invisible to parts of society or to society as a whole, even exiling or imprisoning them, is in the end the strongest form of ignoring them. The above-mentioned process of making ‘non-civilized’ people invisible on the world map of international law is first of all an astounding action of actively ‘ignoring them’ on different levels of interaction and communication, by introducing the cognitive condition of a hierarchy of peoples and societies that allegedly belong to different states of humankind’s historical development. But this is merely the very strongest form of ignorance. Other conscious forms of not caring about and ignoring languages, problems, or necessities of a religious practice, for example, are less prohibitive. And other forms of ignorance simply occur unconsciously. Unconscious forms of ignorance nonetheless shape social interaction, cohabitation and coexistence. The sociological as well as philosophical literature on ‘ignorance’ is large, from Thomas Aquinas to John Locke and Blaise Pascal, from Georg Simmel and Roger Merton to John Proctor and Londa Schiebinger. In contrast, a history of ignorance and ignoring is just beginning to emerge, and the concept is still rarely employed to approach a central theme like the history of ‘segregation’.⁵² For the latter purpose, what is necessary are more precise questions of how social borders and the reproduction of cognitive, social and physical distance between people can be understood as a function of forms of ignoring.

With regard to the nineteenth and the twentieth century, it might be equally stimulating to set aside the idea of *racist* segregation for a moment and to think about colonial situations in terms of (close) distance instead. The added epistemological value of the concept of distance is that it can account for the agency of colonized peoples. Unlike segregation, which Europeans allegedly imposed on the “passive” colonized population, distance was a reality that both Europeans and the indigenous populations could create and use. The latter distanced themselves in many ways from Europeans, by fleeing repression, by disobeying their orders, by refusing to adopt European habits, but also by simply ignoring them.⁵³ Indigenous actors could also reduce the distance between

⁵² Some of these problems and a good portion of the literature is discussed in C. Zwierlein, "Towards a History of Ignorance", in: Id. (ed.), *The Dark Side of Knowledge. Histories of Ignorance, 1400-1800*, Leiden, Boston 2016, 1-47.

⁵³ B. N. Lawrance / E. L. Osborn / R. L. Roberts (Hg.), *Intermediaries, interpreters, and clerks: African employees in the making of colonial Africa*, Madison, Wis. 2006; A. Eckert, *Herrschen und Verwalten: Afrikanische Bürokraten, staatliche Ordnung und Politik in Tanzania, 1920-1970*, München 2007; D. R. Peterson / E. Hunter / S.

themselves and Europeans under some conditions. With the twentieth century advancing, many Indians, Indonesians, West Africans and others participated in the systems of indirect rule that Europeans had established. Quite a few worked in the colonial administrations. Trade with Europeans continued, not only to the benefit of the latter; the cocoa producers of the British Gold Coast illustrate the success of African entrepreneurs under colonial rule. Both urban spaces and parts of the countryside became contact zones, giving the colonized population some opportunities to use closeness and distance to empower themselves and their likes. Analyzing these situations as a *jeu d'échelles* between closeness and distance provides us with a more nuanced picture of colonial power relations that goes beyond simplifying dichotomies. What is more, these categories allow us to examine how the indigenous populations conceptualized distance and difference, although they did not think in terms of race. As race was very much a European and Eurocentric category, it is important to ask whether non-Europeans equally took an essentialized otherness for granted or whether they expected varying degrees of distance and closeness.

In continuing to consider close distance, one cannot but refer to the emergence of anthropology as the most important colonial science in the late nineteenth century. Anthropologists pretended to establish a closeness to colonized peoples, which aimed at knowing them completely (mostly in order to rule them adequately). Seen from their point of view, ignorance was unacceptable.⁵⁴ Participant observation was used to establish a close distance which enabled the anthropologist to know the participants and to objectively analyze them at the same time. However, anthropologists were keen to know every little detail, they often exaggerated these details' meaning by pronouncing what they observed traditions or customs, misinterpreting such practices.

5. What about 'Power'?

By focusing on the epistemic core, on ignoring, ignorance and misunderstanding, we might risk overlooking the dimensions of 'power'. Despite the 'agency' historians rightfully attribute to the

Newell (eds.), *African print cultures: Newspapers and their publics in the twentieth century. African perspectives*, Ann Arbor 2016.

⁵⁴ Wagner, *How Cooperation Among Experts Reshaped Colonialism*; E. Sibeud, *Une science impériale pour l'Afrique? La construction des savoirs africanistes en France, 1878-1930*, Paris 2002; P. Singaravélou, *Professor l'Empire. Les 'sciences coloniales' en France sous la IIIe République*, Paris 2011; U. Schaper, *Koloniale Verhandlungen. Gerichtsbarkeit, Verwaltung und Herrschaft in Kamerun 1884-1916*, Frankfurt, New York 2012, 67-86; F. Brahm, *Wissenschaft und Dekolonisation. Paradigmentwechsel und institutioneller Wandel in der akademischen Beschäftigung mit Afrika in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1930-1970*, Stuttgart 2010; Zwierlein, "Übersetzungen ohne Original".

colonized, the colonizers were still enforcing their laws, their views, their forms and ideas of segregation and shaping daily realities in the zones under their control from the early colonial to the late colonial periods.

While accepting this as a serious objection, this is not the place to discuss the whole range of theories of ‘power’ from Weberian to Foucauldian approaches within the context of colonial and post-colonial discourse.⁵⁵ We tend to stress rather a different point of view here. Taking for granted that power is always present and exercised within the many contexts covered here from early modern to post-colonial times, the question is more how types and forms of close distance were differently combined with and implicitly active within relationships between a given set of persons or groups (say, ‘natives’ and ‘Europeans’) on a scale from more or less symmetrical to highly asymmetrical forms of interaction.

Neither full symmetry nor full asymmetry existed in reality, and even for the allegedly ‘smoother’ forms of colonial rule, the so-called ‘indirect rule’, questions remain about the degree of coercion in indirect and direct forms of coercion. Frederick Cooper, for example, observed that colonizers in the early twentieth century used “indirect” governmental strategies of ruling through census, cadaster and classification of the population. At the same time, however, quite “direct” and violent techniques such as “flogging, collective punishment of villages..., penal sanctions for contract violations” lingered. The continued use of violent coercion thus disproves the Foucauldian theory that governmental forms of rule replaced direct forms of rule.⁵⁶ Further, colonial elites’ own understandings of how they were governing might differ. Sometimes, indirect rule was enacted as part of an explicit ideology within the British Empire; sometimes it was a practice within a system that understood itself in fact as ‘direct rule’. Elements of the early modern Spanish rule in the conquered territories of Latin America were seldom described or understood as ‘indirect rule’ by the conquerors, but a post-factum historical analysis might put the interaction of the Spanish with the former Inca elite in Peru and elements of the *encomienda* system on equal terms with the later British forms. Historians convinced of cliometrical forms of aggregating data and measuring such historical relationships have developed methods to quantify colonial intensity. The question of how ‘direct’ was the rule, how oppressive a new regime was, how ‘foreign’ was the power was

⁵⁵ F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 142-144.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

that was exercised upon and within a colonial society can be expressed as an arithmetic value (somewhere between 0,2 and 1,75 on an open scale) measuring indicators such as 'stateness' and the ratio of customary law used in court cases to magistrate court cases and several other factors. One might take that as a value for the power, assuming always an asymmetrical relationship as starting point.⁵⁷

However, if we look at the representants of early modern trading empires arriving anew on the coast of India or in Indonesia, or even if we look at nineteenth century ports in China prior to and after the Treaty Port agreements, the relationship between 'Western foreigners' and the subjects of the indigenous ruling classes were complex. Certainly asymmetries were not always in favor of the Western traders, whom we could not accurately term 'colonizers' for long periods in India, China and for the Ottoman Empire. We are used to thinking of these Europeans as proto-colonial, but they were seeing and analyzing their environment with 'colonial eyes' in not-yet-colonial situations where they were not the superior in terms of political power. The character of asymmetry/symmetry can be also an imaginative and subjective one, though the Mughal, Chinese or Ottomans remained (more or less) safe in power as rulers of the land or most of it for centuries. Interactions among Europeans and natives of their host societies in these regions and earlier colonial settings could not be simply integrated into the above-mentioned model for measuring power asymmetry and degrees of indirect and direct rule.

Yet, many of the forms of segregation and segregational phenomena that we describe here as living at close distance were practiced in those earlier, more ambiguous situations and under conditions one might at first glance define as rather symmetric forms of interaction. The most interesting question may be to see how forms of close distance and segregation emerged first in early modern factories of trade and ports, where Europeans' and local rulers' relationship was relatively symmetric, and then how processes of creating social distance transformed into similar or seemingly similar forms still used and practiced in later periods characterized by far more strongly asymmetrical relationships. Perhaps sociologists quicker in constructing typologies would differentiate between types of economic, cultural, linguistic, religious, scientific and political communication; would ascribe to each of those levels of communication a degree of (a)symmetry;

⁵⁷ John Gerring, Daniel Ziblatt, Johann van Gorp, Julián Arévalo, "An institutional Theory of direct and indirect Rule", *World Politics* 63, 3 (2011), 377-433.

would relate this factor then with forms and degrees of ignorance, of 'real or loose' coupling and thus understanding. By that, perhaps, one could achieve a descriptive framework for the relationship between a) the types and themes of communication; b) the degree of 'power' and relational (a)symmetry; and c) the forms of 'close distance' being the epistemic and most malleable core of segregationist behavior. In what follows, we remain more modest, addressing rather by way of hermeneutical-descriptive method two settings, neither with a clear-cut asymmetrical character, where close distance was created. Early modern and late colonial or post-colonial societies might perhaps be the best backdrops for first approaching these problems carefully and prudently, before analyzing situations of more direct, violent interaction.