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Power and Space: Understanding Spatial Refiguration through the Lens of the Regime

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Abstract

This paper explores the concept of the regime and its potential for understanding processes of spatial refiguration through four main steps. First, it sketches the landscape of regime-concepts across five research projects of the collaborative research center "Re-Figuration of Spaces" (CRC 1265) mainly concerned with this topic. Second, it identifies common ground among different approaches in these projects, emphasizing the centrality of diverse actors and their relationships, the asymmetry of power, and the dynamic nature of regimes that require constant maintenance and adaptation. Third, it uses conversations to delve into spatial regimes while focusing on how regimes shape research methodologies, the definition of refiguration, and the relationship between regimes and spatial change (including the role of conflicts and overflows). Finally, this paper synthesizes insights, highlighting the multifaceted nature of regime-induced spatial change, the importance of empirical examples, the utility of mapping and complexity reduction, and the concept of multiple spatialities. It concludes that the regime concept enriches theoretical frameworks and enhances the understanding and analysis of spatial dynamics.

Keywords: *regime, space, ordering, power*

1. Introduction

As Hess et al. (2018) recently argued, regime has become a catch-all concept. Historically, this term was applied in international relations to describe the increasingly noncentralized and networked character of governance (Keohane & Nye, 1977) as well as in comparative policy analysis to describe modes of governance applied in national policy frameworks – famously associated with Esping-Andersen's approach (1990, 1991, 1999). Its use has since multiplied, increasingly identifying regimes with institutional power structures as well as qualifying them as generative or constitutive of the social, following Foucault's work on regimes of truth (1978).

Trying to make sense of this richness, this working paper explores the concept of "regime" and its potential for the analysis of spatial orders within research projects of Pillar C at the collaborative research center (CRC) 1265 "Re-Figuration of Spaces." In Pillar C, five projects investigate a wide array of empirical cases from the sociospatial perspective of *circulation and order*. Subproject C01 analyzes conflicts and tensions in processes of macro-territorial border formation in the European Union, Mercosur, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. Subproject C05 delves into the urban microclimate planning regimes of Stuttgart and Fukuoka. Spatial stories in Afronovelas and the corresponding production regime are investigated by subproject C06. Subproject C07 explores spatial conflicts in the platform economy by utilizing Airbnb in various cities as a case study. Finally, subproject C08 analyzes architectures of asylum in Amman, Lagos, and Berlin.

Based on this broad range of empirical cases and data, we want to reflect on the concept of regime to shed light on how the increasing circulation of people, goods, knowledge, and technologies is connected to specific forms of social order. With this working paper, we want to document the status of our ongoing discussions on the relationship between regime and the refiguration of spaces.

Our paper proceeds in four steps: 1) All five projects of the CRC Pillar C outline their project-specific understandings and usages of the term "regime;" 2) we identify conceptual common ground for what we mean by "regime" across the five projects; 3) we delve into a multivocal conversation, confronting our different approaches and reflecting on the potential that the notion of *regime* holds to understanding the spatial figurations at work. Starting from the hypothesis that the relationship between regime and territory is challenged by the refiguration of spaces, we jointly explore different dimensions in terms of overflows, the plurality of regimes, void and deviant cases; and 4) we see the possibility of contributing to the regime debate from a sociospatial perspective, which allows us to go beyond symbolic and political dimensions by integrating the spatial–material dimension. In this fourth step, we attempt to provide a synthesis and conclusion for our exchanges.

2. Step 1: Sketching the landscape of the regime concept across Pillar C

The following section introduces the understandings and usages of the term regime from the perspective of each project in CRC Pillar C.

2.1 Subproject C01: Structure and overflow in migration and border regimes[1]

Subproject C01 investigates the governance of human mobility and borders in regional integration processes in three world regions: the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) in South America, the ECOWAS, and the European Union (EU). At the heart of its interests lie the conflicts and tensions that arise from such processes of "macroterritorial space-making." Looking at it from the perspective of the regime draws attention to the tensions and conflicts between the powerful (institutionalized and materialized) structures of regimes and the continuous resistance or "overflow" within them.

On a theoretical level, in subproject C01, we primarily draw on the rich conceptual debates that have evolved around *migration* (Pott et al., 2018), *mobility* (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013), or *border regimes* (Hess & Kasparek, 2010).[2] Against this backdrop, we conceptualize a (border or mobility) regime as comprising diverse actors (state and international institutions alongside businesses, civil society organizations, and migrants), infrastructures, and multi-level legal frameworks extending beneath, beyond, and across nation-states. These elements (re)produce

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[1] Subproject C01 is composed of Dorothea Biaback Anong, Steffen Mau, and Zoé Perko. The following paragraph was written by Dorothea Biaback Anong.
[2] For the sake of readability, in the following, I refer to "border regimes."

rules through (bordering) practices within a multiscalar negotiation space that maintains stability while simultaneously harboring tensions and conflicts.

A key aspect of the analytical potential of such a border-regime concept was introduced with the idea of the relative "autonomy of migration,"[3] which understands the movements, struggles, and resistance of people on the move as constitutive elements of a regime (Scheel, 2015; Tsianos & Karakayali, 2010). This practice-oriented conceptualization importantly avoids assuming "a systemic logic and coherence of migration and border regimes" (Scheel, 2018, p. 272). Instead, it highlights contradictions and tensions between competing interests and rationales within regimes, while recognizing how these systems are challenged by people's relatively autonomous movement.

"Relative" autonomy here means that although the (cross-border) movement of people can predate and shape the very creation of border regimes – as well as undermine or resist sets of regulations and control practices in existing ones – they are not independent of but are highly conditioned and coerced by the institutionalized and material power of control exerted by border regimes. In particular, legal orders and the materiality of territorial borders – although contingent and (re)produced by practices – are not arbitrary but path-dependent results of specific historical developments and past constellations. They can be considered as "condensations" of practices that develop power effects on their own and give stability to the regime in time.

Therefore, in the following, we reflect on the conflictual and reiterative negotiation process between the powerful structure of a regime and its continuous contestation or reinterpretation via actors' practices and "overflow" (or the "relative" autonomy of human mobility). This is exemplified by some insights into regional free movement and border development in the cases of ECOWAS and Mercosur.

First, in the analysis of territoriality and borders in the regions of Mercosur and ECOWAS, an intrinsic conflictual relationship between national and regional perspectives stands out: On the one hand, logics of national sovereignty and border control prevail in member-states' governmental institutions, with national borders being perceived as protective lines from potential threats from the outside and their control as the sovereign deed of a state. On the other hand, regional treaties stipulate a regional mobility space across national borders, and build on – as well as foster the creation of – a common regional identity.

However, while the spatial conflicting logics of regional free-movement frameworks and national sovereignty are a core aspect in debates on regional integration and border development in these two (and other) regional cases, from a regime perspective, an even more intriguing tension line has received little attention: the one between the formalization of free movement and national/regional border management and the informal, or autonomous movement of people across borders (particularly in border regions).

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[3] Coined by Yann Moulier Boutang as an analogy to the autonomy of the working class in Italian (post-)operaism (2004).

> In the border areas, there is free circulation. That is where Mercosur, in quotation marks, "works." There is free circulation of people, goods, money, and everything. Good and bad. Now the problem is the formalization of that; that is another thing. (Interview 21, Parliament of Mercosur, November 2022)

> [I: According to you, does this free movement of people exist?] "No." [I: Why not?] "No. […] We are not there yet; between the four member-states there are still border checkpoints […] It is clear that between cities on land borders […] the connection becomes much easier and there is no way to control the flow there […] there is no impediment to passing from one side to the other. In those cases, there is free circulation between the inhabitants of the cities, but this is not the rule. […it is] the question of informality, everything they can do informally they also do, outside the rules. (Interview 20, Working Group 18 on Border Integration, Mercosur, November 2022)

As these two citations from the Mercosur case show, while official free movement in the region is considered nonexistent due to the persistence of national border controls, the informal practices of people crossing borders daily make free movement a reality in areas such as border cities where state control and regional formalization of free movement fail. The autonomous movement of people across borders thus overrides national reticence and regional bureaucratic logic.

While, from the perspective of regional institutions and civil society organizations, these informal free movers are seen in a positive sense as pioneers of integration, in the ECOWAS case, this relationship is more conflictual.

> Within this region, we know that yes, we have border control, but still, we have a challenge of porosity, because that is how it is. And don't forget Africans, we are family people. The moment we intermarry, we become one. (Interview 30, Ministry of Interior, Refugee and Migration Unit, Nigeria, June 2023)

However, "border porosity" (i.e., the possibility for populations to cross borders without being stopped or controlled) is perceived as a major security threat, and strengthening intraregional borders by increasing infrastructure and control is an explicit aim of member-states and the regional integration process (see I37, ECOWAS Directorate for Free Movement; I30, Ministry of Interior, Nigeria; I35, National Agency against Trafficking (NAPTIP), Nigeria; I52, Air and Border Police, Senegal; I58, Migration Specialist, anonymous institution, Senegal). This is related to rising concerns regarding terrorism and banditry within the region (mostly in Sahel countries), where national border security measures are viewed as the main tools for preventing spillovers from neighboring countries.

However, like Mercosur, some regional and national governmental organizations (interestingly partly the same organizations that stress the importance of comprehensive national border control for security reasons) explicitly exclude informal cross-border movement in neighboring communities from "irregular migration" that has to be curbed (e.g., I37, ECOWAS Directorate for Free Movement; I30, Ministry of Interior, Nigeria; I45, Governmental Institution, Ghana).

Like the interview citation above, they stress the interconnectedness of communities separated by national borders, who perceive themselves as "one people" (I35, Governmental Institution, Ghana) or "one big family" (I37, ECOWAS Directorate for Free Movement) and whose daily exchanges and trade are perceived as positive, for example, in economic terms. This is surprising in so far as authorities' incapacity to control the cross-border movement of people in such highly integrated border towns and communities (e.g., where a border crosses a marketplace or family and social ties are so tight that border officials cannot distinguish between who belongs to which side of a border) is explicitly named as a security risk necessary to tackle.

The positive view of these informal (and uncontrolled!) cross-border movements is not least based on an active critique of the (post)colonial and artificial nature of the national borders in the region, which are shared by civil society actors as well as governmental institutions (I30, Ministry of Interior, Nigeria; I39, Governmental Institution, Ghana; I52, Air and Border Police, Senegal). The free movement of communities across these borders is understood as an expression and revitalization of precolonial free circulation as well as an expression of the ideal of Pan-African unity and, as such, an active, welcome decolonial practice.

Thus, the autonomous movement of border dwellers in both regions undermines the formal regime of borders and free-movement frameworks; this creates spaces for free movement (and challenging statal bordering practices, which, in turn, try to react to and formalize these movements). However, this does not mean that (nation-state) borders do not matter for these populations or free movement in the regions in general. On the contrary, for nonborder resident movers who do not "look like locals" (in the ECOWAS case; I38, Nile University, Nigeria), or who are denied entry because they are classified as potential "fake tourists" at Argentinian borders in the Mercosur case, state borders prove hard and exclusionary frontiers. Also, access to the civil and social rights of informal or formally moving individuals remains intrinsically territorial because it continues to be regulated mostly by nation-states' authorities (while in parts being transferred to the macroterritorial level).

Returning to "macroterritorial space-making" and our conceptualization of regime: Formal spatial regimes (as institutionalized state borders) have a strong effect on the territoriality of peoples' lives, restricting their citizens' right to certain spaces and limiting their possibilities to move by controls and material barriers. On the other hand, these formal territorial demarcations and borders are challenged and reinterpreted by the overflow of (the relatively autonomous) informal movement of people who, thus, claim and create their own local spaces of free movement as well as actively participate in the process of macroterritorial space-making.

Therefore, we contend that regimes create space via social practices while operating on and within established spatial categories (Pott et al., 2018). Similar to the legal frameworks and material structures previously discussed, spatial units and categories may be constructed and contingent; however, once established, these territorial or spatial designations exert powerful effects that resist deconstruction. We propose an epistemological balancing act, recognizing the socially constructed nature of space, including the production of borders and space through

(de/bordering) practices in the analysis – in particular, the overflow of the autonomy of migration as a constitutive element of the regime – without trivializing the material existence of spaces that are manifested in infrastructures and enforced by powerful actors.

2.2 Subproject C05: The temporal regime is plowable[4]

Subproject C05 takes an unusual route to examining the Anthropocene—and/or Capitalocene, Thermocene, Plantationocene, Anglocene, etc. Whereas the analysis of the Anthropocene has centered on great historical processes (e.g., colonialism, global financialization, wars, cars, suburbanization) measured by energy consumption and CO_2 emissions, we examine the application of urban climatology in urban planning to counter overheating (a phenomenon that is later called urban heat islands and heatwaves) in the City of Stuttgart. Stuttgarter climatologists have conducted visual-physicochemical-cartographic experiments and measurements since 1938 to identify precisely from, through, and where cold and fresh air flow. Urban planners used this knowledge to identify and designate areas that are forbidden from being built (*Tabuflächen*). They became expert witnesses of wind with this knowledge.

Climatological knowledge has proliferated and circulated. Laypeople could read reports, pamphlets, and newspaper articles about urban climatology, and in the late 90s, they had access to wind models distributed on CDs sold by the municipality. Thereafter, they taught themselves the different wind corridors that crisscrossed the city and used the knowledge to claim that an area should be forbidden from being built. Laypeople effectively became autodidact witnesses.

Imagine an atmospheric river. Suppose legal personhood is formulated fundamentally for protection. In this case, urban climatologists and concerned citizens in Stuttgart have advocated for the Right of Nature avant la lettre. More specifically, the right of cool, fresh-air supplies and the protected routes and spatial trajectories through which they should flow unobstructed. Thinking of the legal personhood of winds and qualifying/confirming their existence are, however, less intuitive and straightforward than when the objects are entities such as rivers, forests, or mountains. Like noise or heat, wind is less an entity and more an intensity. It typically remains invisible to human eyes. It is not that bounded or isolable. Instead, it passes, permeates, collides, and may be inhaled, exhaled, harnessed, and released along its way. The nonhuman actor is a force with variation.

To date, debates about wind routes are about *where, what*, and *how* to build. One camp argues that there are indeed certain areas that are taboo to be built on at all. Another camp argues that construction is possible as long as it meets multiple conditions, such as the height of the buildings, the construction materials, the predominantly existing wind directions, the shape of existing urban spaces, and so on, including the interaction of these factors. What has been missing from these debates is *when* to build, *when* not to build, and *when* to unbuild – while

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[4] Subproject C05 is composed of Ignacio Farías, Indrawan Prabaharyaka, and Margherita Tess. The following paragraph was written by Indrawan Prabaharyaka.

simultaneously taking into account the fugitive and less-objectual character of wind. This contribution unfolds from this problematization: Where, what, and how to build depend on when to build. And not the other way around. One needs to first find out the existing temporal regimes to know about the when.

Two recent analytical observations kickstart these deliberations. First, whereas almost all eyes on the Anthropocene for the last two decades have been mostly on the problematic figure of the *Anthropos* as well as its derivates (e.g., the Great Acceleration, planetary stewardship, etc.) and its alternative readings (e.g., Capitalocene, Plantianocene, Thermocene, Anglocene, etc.), the other half of the term, the suffix "cene," seems to be mostly squeaky clean. It is not. The suffix implies a homogenous time, uniform and commensurable, excluding the heterogeneity of diverse temporal regimes. The second observation concerns the debate on the extent to which law actually does fold space-time. This is an important debate because it offers an entry point for measuring the immediate material–ecological effects of law through the creation, disturbance, stabilization, and erasure (the folding) of time and space.

The following questions came into view from the two analytical observations:

- What are the varieties of these temporal regimes that we can empirically observe?
- How do legal techniques constitute these regimes?
- In what ways do these legal techniques vis-à-vis these regimes actually fold space?

In one part of our project, we empirically focused on the case of the Schutzgemeinschaft Rohrer Weg in Stuttgart. From 27 June 2022 to 23 July 2003, Ursula Minges, Ruth Frank, Heinz Kipfer, Kurt Braun, Norbert Michel, Hannelore Wagner, and residents who lived around the collective garden (*Streuobstwiese*) at Rohrer Weg had collected more than 5000 signatures from their neighbors. They hoped that, with these signatures, they could prevent future construction projects in the remaining green areas in their surroundings. There is a complex background behind this hope.

There is a long administrative tradition in Stuttgart, at least since the postwar reconstruction period, of ordering and classifying spaces according to the projected years to realize construction projects. The categories are called time grades (Zeitstufen). There are four-time grades, and the higher the grade, the later the construction projects will be realized. An area with Time Grade 1, for example, is intended be built sooner than another area with Time Grade 3. On 18 February 2002, the national conservative faction, the CDU Party (Christian Democratic Union), proposed Land Use Planning 2010, in which the time grade of certain areas would be reclassified.

The site of Rohrer Weg was allocated Time Grade 2 in that proposal, meaning that the construction projects in that area could be realized within 6 years. This proposal set a series of advocacy events in motion: signature collections, talks with local and federal politicians, and the official registration *of Schutzgemeinschaft Rohrer Weg e.V.* In a pamphlet from 2003, the founders of the citizen action group cited statements from official documents arguing that the garden has an irreplaceable climatic function: It produces fresh air, and it is part of the route

through which the air flows to the lower part of the city and cools it down. Their efforts were fruitful. In 2005, the president of *Regierungspräsidium* Stuttgart applied to recategorize the approximately 10-hectare garden as a Protected Landscape Area.

The garden was calm for a while. But only for a while. Three landowners sued the city and filed a lawsuit to the Stuttgarter Administrative Court around a year later. Despite the lobbies, the Schutzgemeinschaft was lost. Chainsaws fell the trees on the snowy field along Udamstraße in 2010. Seven houses would eventually be built there. When I met Norbert Michel in March 2023, he explained what he called "the judicial trick" that made way for the construction project. The District of Möhringen became part of the city only in 1956, and building plans in the postwar period were never decided in public. The city council members decided among themselves where and what could be built – including some houses where the members of the Schutzgemeinschaft live. The landowners' lawyer then drafted an argument that, since the plans were not decided in public, they retroactively became invalid.

The plans became invalid until the last valid reference stood, a decision made on the eve of the Second World War, the *Führererlass*, a direct instruction of Adolf Hitler. The fine grains of the story cannot be told in detail. This involved a judicial review at the higher court at Mannheim. The mayor of Stuttgart, who intends to appeal against the court decision, had to ask for the agreement of the city council members because of the high cost of the case.

Gisela Abt, a former city council member, told me that she had attended the decisive meeting, and the voting result was very thin, with only one vote difference. Also, the voting was not about the seven houses but for a permit for all areas mentioned in the Führererlass. The construction of the seven houses was, in the end, a political compromise. However, it clearly shows the unfolding of the microclimate regime.

2.3 Subproject C06: Regime and repertoire of production[5]

Subproject C06 investigates the production of spatial stories in West African soap operas, that is, the variation of stories about the world made in these series. The interest of the project was to hypothesize the existence of different production regimes, which would unfold as spatial figurations: a) a first regime of translocal production, developed historically, which is subject to the exclusive technical and financial tutelage of France through public support for cultural cooperation (Caillé & Forest, 2019) and which functions as a relic of the colonial era (Ndoye, 2019); b) a second regime of local/regional production currently taking shape, built around an emerging intra-regional market following the Nollywood model (Haynes, 2007), where West African production companies create fiction specifically for West African audiences through a regionalization process; c) a third, emerging regime of global production, which is defined by the involvement of Western private media corporations (particularly online platforms) seeking to reach a Pan-African audience through the co-production of African fiction.

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[5] Subproject C06 is composed of Séverine Marguin and Daddy Dibinga. The following paragraph was written by Séverine Marguin.

We want to begin this project sketch with an anecdote from the field trip, which became a critical juncture in our understanding of the sector. Back in December 2023, we went to Dakar to observe different film sets and interview production teams. We visited several production firms, each central or constitutive of the three different production regimes. We were especially in contact with Marodi Production, the leader of the local/regional market, which has produced most of the very successful series over the past 10 years (such as Maîtresse d'un homme marié, Pod et Marichou, Karma, etc.).

We went to their main office several times, which was staged as a protected space:

> Marodi is located in Hann Marisses, next to the zoological and botanical gardens. It is on a sandy street in a large two-story house. Two guards are seated in front of the entrance. When we arrive, a young man is behind the reception table, overloaded with electronic equipment: computer, camera, video camera, in a salad of cables. He pays us no attention. The receptionist, Mariétou, asks us to wait on synthetic leather sofas. The entrance and reception areas are dark and solemn. The leather sofas are imposing and ostentatious signs of wealth. We waited about ten minutes before the CEO arrived. He was off for a trip to Saly (a seaside resort an hour south of Dakar). He asks us to follow him to the first floor. He's an imposing man, middle-aged (about 55), dressed in black. His eyes are open as if he's on watch, like a lion on the prowl. We wait a few more minutes in some armchairs on the first-floor landing, facing paper statues of the series heroes. Then he asks us to follow him. We cross the meeting room, where two scenarists are working on the next episode of Karma, and enter his office. [… a couple of days later] We are back at Marodi; we are allowed to sit by the scenarists working on the scenarios. We witness how the CEO comes into the room, enters his office, and locks the door from the inside. At this moment, I notice that the door to the CEO's office is fortified: it is padded – probably to prevent any acoustic leakage. It has an imposing lock and even has a bell on the side so that when the CEO is inside, he can hear the requests. (ethnographic notes of Séverine Marguin, Dakar, December 2022, own translation).

Our ethnographic visits reinforced our feeling of Marodi as an impenetrable fortress from the outside – which somehow fits with this idea of the local companies trying to develop a business model for themselves and raising a new market segment that they operate completely independently.

What happened next took us completely by surprise. We were desperately trying to contact the head of Canal+'s Senegalese channel, Sunu Yeuf. The day he finally gave us an appointment, he kindly asked us to come and meet him at… Marodi. We found him there with Marodi CEO but also three further employees of Canal+ Afrique, including the directress of channel A+ (Canal+'s Ivorian channel, the historic and most powerful African channel of Canal+, sitting in Abidjan), all sitting around the big table in the meeting room. It really felt like an intrusion or even an invasion of media concern within the fortress of Marodi. After that, the production teams confirmed to us that Marodi intends to work increasingly with Canal+ from 2023 onwards. This led us to reconsider our first hypothesis about the coexistence of the three production regimes, as stated at the beginning of the text. Building on this field finding, we have continued to look for porosity between the hypothesized regimes. We realized that this porosity was effective.

At the level of production firms, experience with different types of funding depends on the specific series. Indeed, Marodi used self-funding and advertisement selling for the production of Maitresse d'un homme marié or Karma. But it funded the series Idoles with the investment of Canal+. They have not so far used any state or foreign public money. As for Keewu Production, they began their first production, C'est la Vie!, with the funding of the NGO Riad in the area of the health sensibilization project in which the French Agency for Development participated as well. For their next project, Terranga, they began a collaboration with Canal+, which invested in the making of this new series. Among the individual actors as well, who are circulating between the different modes: within the same firm, depending on the framing of the production but also between different production firms. One stage director (Regie), whom we met on the film set at Marodi, shared his long experience as a film technician at a French firm based in Dakar, La Prod Sympa before he changed to Marodi.

Initially, we assumed a distinction between the three regimes according to the degree of translocalization of the production team, the financial participation of private and public production capital, and the possibilities of distribution (national television channels, online platforms, etc.). With this hypothesis, we assumed that each production firm would belong to one specific regime. Initially, we conceptualized production regimes according to distinct spatial arrangements (various forms of translocalization – subregional, translocal, or global). However, the demonstrated versatility of production firms operating across multiple domains reintroduces complexity: local companies like Marodi collaborate with global entities like Canal+, which simultaneously partner with translocal operations such as Keewu Production.

What we propose is to slip in other levels in the analysis: instead of talking of several production regimes to which the production firm would (have to) belong, we consider the French-speaking Westafrican Afronovela industry as one production regime – distinctive from others such as English-Speaking Nollywood, the Central and South American Telenovelas, the U.S.-American soap operas, the South Korean k-dramas, the Turkish Dizi, etc. This level of analysis puts in the foreground the social structuration of language for the scope of these different competing industries on the global level – which are each building a respective production regime.

Our theoretical concept of a production regime encompasses a constellation of public and private actors deployed in different territories and acting on different scales who negotiate, impose, struggle over, or undergo a set of rules, norms, and beliefs conducive to the regulation of the regime (Dubois, 2015; Rius-Ulldemolins & Pizzi, 2021). Pursuing a critical analysis of the emerging French-speaking Westafrican Afronovela industry, the concept of regime allows us to a) underline the dynamic and shifting character of a sector in the process of institutionalization, which is b) traversed by value conflicts and highly asymmetric power relations between c) public, private, and civil society actors of different sizes. It also makes it possible to think about d) multiple spatialities (local, regional, translocal, global, and continental) beyond the national framework.

To understand variations within one regime, we want to introduce the concept of repertoire, which might allow us to draw attention to contradictions and tensions between different

interests and rationales within the regime (as stated in other words by subproject C01). French political scientist Pascale Laborier defined repertoire as:

> [T]he logic of the constitution of discourses and practices, more precisely what Michel de Certeau defines as the 'lexicon of our practices', i.e., the constitution of models and hypotheses making it possible to analyze 'ways of doing' based on 'ways of speaking.' The repertoire here refers to the constitution of a set of theories, arguments, and doctrines, gradually forming a lexicon in which the actors represent the legitimacy of [their] intervention in cultural matters as well as the modalities of this intervention. It, therefore, makes it possible to deal at the same time with the question of legitimate definitions of culture and the normative dimension that these definitions contain. (Laborier, 1996, p. 116, own translation)

Repertoires of production therefore constitute the fundamental schemes through which actors in the production of the Afronovelas series create, produce, shoot, invent, operate, evaluate, judge, qualify, and decide on situations.

We do think our triadic preliminary spatial arrangements (local-subregional, translocal, global) might still apply not as distinguishable regimes but as specific repertoires within a regime (according to degree of translocalization of a production team, financial participation of private and public capital, and possibilities for distribution, i.e., spatial projection of an audience). Thus, actors distinguish work done by invoking normative issues in terms of quality and professionalism – always according to the projected audience. What also differs is what they consider an appropriate temporality in terms of the pace and responsiveness of production. This process of distinguishing repertoires within the regime has to be analyzed in relation to the colonial heritage and the Western cinematographic conceptions that are imposed, rejected, and renegotiated in light of a West African culture of series production.

2.4 Subproject C07: Regime, fields, and spatial figures[6]

Spatial logics and conflicts in the platform economy are the focal points of investigations in subproject C07. Using case studies of Airbnb in various cities, we aimed to understand how the proliferation of digital platforms unfolds worldwide in different local contexts. Airbnb has become a key player in the tourism sector. With their platform, the company is introducing new ways for people to look for and access places they want or need to go to. When choosing where to spend the night, guests are no longer limited to hotel rooms. Everyone with a spare room or flat can invite travelers to their homes as hosts via Airbnb.

The platform is introducing new patterns of spatial circulation and, thus, is challenging the tourism sectors' established social order. The local consequences of these new patterns of spatial circulation are much discussed – ranging from residents complaining about nuisance and garbage, civil initiatives criticizing changing neighborhood characteristics or the

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[6] Subproject C07 is composed of Christina Hecht, Stefan Kirchner, and Simon Pohl. The following paragraph was written by Christina Hecht and Stefan Kirchner.

displacement of long-term residents due to rising rents, or traditional hospitality businesses demanding a level playing field regarding health and safety regulation as well as taxation issues (Aguilera et al., 2021; Rozena & Lees, 2021; Alrawadieh et al., 2020; Richards et al., 2019; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018; Guttentag, 2017).

Against this backdrop, the question of how order is challenged, adapted, and re-installed becomes salient. We conducted qualitative interviews with various stakeholders – NGOs and civil initiatives, incumbent tourism businesses, and regulators – to shed light on this question. Coming from economic and neo-institutional sociology, we conceptualize *regime* and *field* as two sides of a coin. Each side enables us to focus on a specific aspect of how economic action is coordinated and how it is embedded in societal relations.

Breaking down the elaborations from part one of this working paper even further, we utilize the notion of *regime* as a concept. The regime focuses our attention on abstract roles and the generalized rules that enable relational patterns among roles. In a regime, these sets of rules

> […] stipulate expected behavior and 'ruling out' behavior deemed to be undesirable. A regime is legitimate in the sense and to the extent that the expectations it represents are enforced by the society in which it is embedded. Regimes involve rule makers and rule-takers, the former setting and modifying, often in conflict and competition, the rules with which the latter are expected to comply. (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, pp. 12ff)

This version of the regime extends Max Weber's historic conception of a "Herrschaftsverband" (Weber, 1972, pp. 122–176). In more current understandings of social order (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011), within a regime makers of rules essentially can be conceptualized as establishing and enabling organization as a decided order of enforced (monitored and sanctioned) formal rules.

In their dynamic regime concept, Streeck and Thelen (2005, p. 8) argued that regimes are usually subject to incremental change, which may add up to profound shifts, highlighting the enactment and enforcement of formal rules. Focusing on the relation of rules and actions enables them to shed light on how regimes "are translated into behavior" (p. 11) and how these actions "in practice" might diverge from the rules a regime consists of "in theory." The explicit rules with which rule makers aim to channel rule-takers' behavior will never be all-encompassing, and neither will the enforcement of them. This is why rule-takers exhibit logics of action to interpret, undermine, and contest formal rules. This dynamic relationship between formal rules and logics of action already indicates that action within a regime does not occur in an abstract social sphere. Rather, regimes come about as they are inhabited by specific sets of actors that shape and realize the regime through their specific social relationships.

To emphasize the social relationships that underlie a regime, we propose drawing on the concept of *field* to investigate how regimes continuously evolve and unfold. In fields, specific actors draw on rules (including rules on roles) to coordinate while simultaneously contesting them in struggles for dominance. Following Fligstein and McAdam (2012), fields can be defined as

> […] mesolevel social order in which actors (who can be individual or collective) are attuned to and interact with one another based on shared (which is not to say consensual) understandings about the purposes of the field, relationships to others in the field (including who has power and why), and the rules governing legitimate action in the field. (p. 9)

The actions of specific actors, their varying endowments with relevant resources, and how they relate to each other are the key focus when investigating fields. The field concept guides researchers to look at where the interpretation of rules and roles is actually happening, and how this interpretation is a contested issue among actors.

Based on the elaborations above, we posit that both concepts enable us to investigate social order from a dynamic and relational perspective and as a precondition for coordination among actors engaged in complex (economic) interactions. As two sides of a coin, each concept invites us to take a slightly different perspective. While we focus on abstract patterns of rules and abstract roles with regime analysis, field analysis leans toward dynamic processes of contestation among individual actors. Combining the two approaches to social order investigations, we assume that every established regime constitutes a field with abstract roles and rules that may draw from regulative, normative, and cultural–cognitive pillars of social order (Scott, 2001). From this understanding, the field concept provides a more agile starting point for our empirical analysis. We understand that fields represent the concrete social spheres in which regimes are negotiated by specific actors and their relations to each other. Regimes, in turn, capture the abstract rules and roles that many established fields exhibit and that can be observed in and compared across fields.

How do spatial figures (Löw, 2023; Löw & Knoblauch, 2021) come into the equation? Here, we posit that any field, and thus any regime, must establish some kind of spatial reference to coordinate activities. Depending on the specific issues and objects of a field, spatial references might be highly salient or might only seem of marginal importance. In many cases, physical space exhibits a taken-for-granted status, as actors might treat the "where in the world" of their actions as a given part of everyday routines. Hence, as we argued recently (Hecht & Kirchner, 2023), conceptually we propose to treat the logics of spatial figures with institutional logics (Friedland & Alford, 1991). We argue that the logics of place, territorial, network, and trajectorial space can be analytically situated on a similar level of conceptual abstraction as other societal-level systems of matter and meaning, such as the capitalist market or the democratic state (pp. 248ff). Both spatial logics and institutional logics provide actors with templates to make sense of how social relations can come together – with the spatial figures addressing the relevance of physical space.

The different logics of the spatial figures – just as institutional logics – serve as a reservoir field actors can access, especially in times of contestation. In fact, due to the taken-for-granted nature of spatial reference, conflicts might be one of the few situations in which actors explicitly reference spatial logics that guide and legitimate their actions. With their conflicting references to different logics, actors can argue about how specific rules and roles should be designed. In doing so, they put forward their preferred understanding of how interaction in the field should

be ordered (cf. Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 11). Analyzing these references enables us to investigate how actors position themselves in the field and toward each other.

We can now illustrate the relevance of the field and regime with their spatial references using the interviews we conducted with different stakeholders on Airbnb in subproject C07. The following example illustrates how a politician and an activist from a civil initiative reason about Airbnb in Cape Town. When asked about their relationship with Airbnb, the politician, formerly part of the provincial government, described it as a "very, very important" and "healthy partnership; it works, and they're approachable."

They continue to reason that Airbnb wasn't

> just an international company that comes in here [...] and then walks out with the profit. [...] it works within a law, the local law, the provincial and the national law because they see the benefit of that. They would not want to operate in a lawless place or a lawless space because it wouldn't benefit them, either. (Interview 10 in Cape Town, March 2023)

This statement stands in stark contrast with the elaborations of a civil initiative actor to whom we posed the same question:

> [To them, Airbnb] feels like something amorphous, removed. It's not an entity where you can kind of engage. I don't know. [...] Because of the way that it operates, and the way that the platform operates, it's far away. I mean, I think it's another kind of 'we don't care. We're just here to make money.' I have never thought of engaging with Airbnb. (Interview 01 in Cape Town, March 2023)

These quotes reveal the relationships between different actors within the field. While the spatial references between the politician and Airbnb align, the civil initiative actor does not even perceive the platform company as an actor they can reach out to. Therefore, we conclude that analyzing references to spatial logics is a promising avenue for investigating fields in times of turmoil. Furthermore, the politicians' references to different levels of governance "in here" – South Africa – point toward the abstract regime that sets the stage for individual actors to interact and coordinate within fields.

There may be regimes beyond the South African state at play here. For example, in the international field of tourism, Capetonian regulators aim to position "their" city. As field boundaries tend to be blurry, and actors can be part of various overlapping fields, there is a need to incorporate the layered nature of regimes into empirical analysis. Lastly, some regimes seem to correspond to a dominant spatial logic, as is the case for territorial states, whereas other regimes, such as narcotic networks, flourish because of their spatial dispersion in a mesh of locations.

Field, regime, and spatial figures thus represent overlapping and complementary concepts, which makes theorizing and empirically working with them even more exciting. In concert, they provided us in subproject C07 with excellent tools to investigate how social order is contested after Airbnb entered the tourism sector.

2.5 Subproject C08: Questions of scale in the regimes of re/production of refuge[7]

Subproject C08 "Architectures of Asylum" focuses on the dynamically developing systems of order and the actors re/producing spaces of refuge, and the conflicts and negotiation processes associated with them. Urban refugees, civil society actors, city administrations, governments, and international agencies involved in the concrete planning and production processes of refuge spaces are the main players in such processes.

Contextually, as participants in the Pillar C debate, we employed the analytical perspective of regimes and regime-building processes to address the implications of the regime for the spacing practices of the investigated subjects. We posit the hypothesis of the conflictual encounter between different spatial figures (place, network space, territorial space, trajectorial space) and their interrelationship with political, legal, and technical factors as well as specific spatial logics that are constitutive of spaces of refuge.

Specifically, the analyses of place and territory in the case studies rest on the processes of planning and building associated with local regimes of refuge space production and their upscale offshoots. The places made for and made by urban refugees[8] in our research (locations) are understood as critical zones where regime-building processes can be detected, observed, measured, and analyzed. We grapple with these places of urban refugees' emplacement as objects of study by looking at them doubly: as "deep spaces" that we disarticulate with localized transects[9] that insert them within situated urban contexts and as nodes in the wider matrix of the humanitarian economy and refugee management regimes, often global in reach.

We realize that there is an uncomfortable obvious divergence in scalar scope deriving from such duplicity, and we try to investigate these entities on different scales by asking what the negotiation processes are that shape the planning and physical–material production of places of refuge. On the one hand, we have a micro-dimension study of dwelling practices and spatial knowledge at the individual shelter level, and emplacement negotiations at the "community" scale – that is, a group of urban refugees sticking together for different reasons. On the other hand, we deal with the meso- and macro-levels of urban planning policies and city administration politico-technical regimes, with the implication of political and economic networks spanning beyond the limits of the singular cities.

Additionally, humanitarian aid and international development actors' involvement in designing, advising, and recommending refugee policies is one such example of an actor under analysis whose reach is arguably planetary. Thus, our study required working along different scalar

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[7] Subproject C08 is composed of Qusay Amer, Francesca Ceola, and Philipp Misselwitz. The following paragraph was written by Francesca Ceola and Qusay Amer.

[8] In the widest sense of the term: The project's premise is a surpassing of socio-legal categories of refugee, asylum seeker, forcibly displaced person, marginalized economic migrant, to cite the most popular ones. We often adopt the expression of urban refugee to make reference both to the personal histories of (forced) displacement that are common denominators to the main subjects of our research, and to the condition of urban living whose rules and workings they have to negotiate.

[9] A methodological approach to look systematically at a landscape by gathering measurements and observations in a "standardized" mode.

magnitudes and capturing spatial processes that originate and affect simultaneously at different scales— what we define as scalar processes.

Before turning to scalar processes, we observe in the production and unmaking of regimes of refugee spacing that it is worthwhile to linger on the meanings of *scale*. A basic Google Scholar search of scale reveals how much it is of concern to geographical studies as it is to "natural" sciences, such as physics, climatology, biology, and ecology. While for the latter, it is implicitly a fundamental concern for questions of modeling (Levin, 1992; Lovejoy, 2023), in geography and social-spatial disciplines, scale has only until recently – talking in the order of three decades – taken to the stage in epistemic debates, unlike the much more popular "space" and "place".

Perhaps the most influential take-on scale was proposed by Neil Smith and the social scientific circles around him. In his and Marston's words:

> [S]cale is a produced societal metric that differentiates space; it is not space *per se*. Yet 'geographical scale' is not simply a 'hierarchically ordered system' placed over preexisting space, however much that hierarchical ordering may itself be fluid. Rather the production of scale is integral to the production of space, all the way down. Scaled social processes pupate specific productions of space, while the production of space generates distinct structures of geographical scale. The process is highly fluid and dynamic, its social authorship broad-based (Marston & Smith, 2001, pp. 615f.).

In conversation and often contrast with flat ontologies' proposals of scales as spatial imaginaries rather than ontological categories, from Smith, we get a set menu of (socially re/produced) scales, mostly nested: regional, supranational, national, urban, household, and body (Jones et al., 2017). As metrics, scales draw the contours and sketch the magnitude of socio-cultural, political, and economic processes, but they are in no way fixed (Swyngedouw, 2004). Critical spatial theories devote a great deal of writing about the politics of scale and the power relations embedded, perpetuated, and amplified in scalar re/productions – both in terms of domination and subordination, but also insurgent contestation, as in the case of social movements "local" in origin but planetary in reach.

Smith articulated the possibilities of *scale jumping* to attend to "the reinvention of place at a different scale" (1996, p. 72) and *scale bending*, whereby "entrenched assumptions about what kinds of social activities fit properly at which scales are being systematically challenged and upset" (Smith, 2004, p. 193). However, these are just two possible scalar processes; they are not inherent to every scalar relationship; rather, we observe that fluidity governs combinations of different scalar processes and relationships. In the subsequent paragraphs, we will refer to some instances from our empirical studies in Berlin, Amman, and Lagos that illustrate an attempt at scale jumping and the inertia of scales' hierarchy – what we refer to as *nestedness*.

Scalar dynamics unfold palpably in the discursive construction and material implementation of "shelter provision" for refugees and asylum seekers in Berlin. As Steigemann and Misselwitz (2021) posited regarding the Berlin refugee accommodation system:

> This means making oneself at home in refugee accommodation centers as a permanent process of negotiation between the refugees' potential for action on the one hand and the existing norms and rules, the normative and physically structuring order, and the forms of (materialized) control on the other – the omnipresent care and control regimes with their disciplining, regulating, and controlling impulses. (translation by the author)

The city-state-level administration of Berlin designs construction standards and assigns tenders for the building and running of localized shelter structures, where shelter operators, as individuals and as companies, have to negotiate with neighborhood socioeconomic contexts. Here developers also deal with the specific constraints of the buildings or land plot allocations where shelters are to be accommodated in or built on. The case of Tempelhof Hangar is telling in this sense: As a legally protected historic monument, strict regulations complicate the construction of refugee shelters inside it and of the infrastructures supporting them. If the local and the urban are evidently implicated in this instance, the presence of urban refugees (migrants in general and mobile human actors in the widest sense) necessarily brings into play broader plural scales of social and cultural factors that determine the planning and organization of space within the local shelter scale.

Steigemann and Misselwitz (2021) emphasized how refugees provisionally rely on and invoke their own pre-displacement urban and spatial experiences and the knowledge generated from them, bridging translocally across geographies. At the same time, the agglomeration into shelters of urban refugees from disparate geographies requires (or so the designers and operators of the shelters seem to predicate) the design of segregated female/male spaces for the prevention and reduction of sexual harassment but not a designed mechanism or proposal for the prevention of inter-ethnic conflicts.

These prescribed design standards force four individuals – grouped solely by binary gender categories despite their profound differences – into standardized 12 m² container spaces, the uniform prefabricated units that Berlin's municipal government distributes to various shelter operators. Although the local operators that deal with the frustration and complaints of the refugees inhabiting the containers realize the constriction and unsustainability of dwelling conditions in the predefined containers' dimensions, the scalar politics that position them in relation to their delegator – the state office for refugee affairs – does not allow room for negotiating dwelling design standards.

As was reported in the first phase of the subproject, it is in this and similar uneasy interfaces of friction that the regime of refuge spaces is detected – where un/written or un/spoken rules determine the shapes, functions, and legal status of spaces and the possible ranges of compromise. The scalar contrast between the city-politics scale and shelter politics scale embodies an administrative inertia that is inscribed in the nestedness – the hierarchization – of the structural constraints of the "smaller" into the "larger."

In Amman, a strict hierarchization of scalar actors also constitutes constellations that produce refuge spaces in the urban context. The hierarchical construct rests on the economic vectors that connect 1. donor states with 2. humanitarian and development delegates active in Jordan

that spend money via specific agreements with 3. Jordanian governors who bridge with 4. local Jordanian community-based organizations that partner with 5. urban refugee groups. At every interface, erosion of original funds occurs; thus, urban refugees attempt *scale jumping* so that sums closer to the original fund can be transferred to local refugee spaces and/or empowerment projects.

Specifically, the national plays a role, dearly protected, as a necessary middle point in the financial circulation of aid funds for the constitution of spaces *for* refugees; it also serves international donors as a "reliable" reference point for the distribution of aid to locally "trustworthy" actors. Channeling funds *necessarily* through Jordanian local community-based organizations before the development reaches the refugee groups also serves the Jordanian national development agenda by supporting low-income Jordanian nationals alongside refugees with the funds destined for refugees. Thus, development funds have become a contested object of desire that is accessed orthodoxically by the majority of Syrian refugees.

Other refugee minority groups, often invisibilized as their numbers are significantly lower than those of Syrian refugees, attempt to scale jump by getting in contact with funders directly, because waiting for normal procedures has often left them out of the funding streams. We have also observed scale jumping in courtrooms, where Jordanian "hosts" of refugees with strong connections to powerful national families can bypass, divert, or halt legal processes, while refugees lacking such social connections cannot leverage the national scale to assist them in legal disputes.

The "power" of such social groups with national reach (the "powerful families") is constituted by of the means and capacity to exert pressure across the national territory. Spatial scaling practices can make the difference in capacties to push against formal structures determining spacing agency. Thus, while we have recorded attempts at scale jumping of the refugee groups, they have clashed against the inertia of scalar nestedness that constrains local activities aspiring to supra/national reach, as they have had to engage with nationally powerful social groups (powerful families, in the specific case our team has encountered) that cannot be bypassed. The politics of scale thus materialize quite vividly, reminding us that an uneven constellation of powers cannot be underestimated.

The third insight emerges from Lagos – the largest urban center in Nigeria and West Africa and the third Nigerian city to sign the Cities with Refugees Declaration – which attracts thousands of people experiencing varying degrees of forced displacement on a daily basis. The Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) states that three refugee camps are operative within the state for the accommodation, recuperation, and social (re-)integration of international refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). However, the very definition of IDPs that LASEMA adopts as the premise for its work overlooks national internal displacement. By conveniently defining internal displacement as internal to Lagos State, their IDP definition thus applies only to Lagosian *urban evictees* – that is, forcibly displaced by urban development and extreme flooding occurrences. It does not account for *national IDPs* from other states of the country – millions of them just in Lagos State, according to our research.

Thus, the state-driven production of refugee accommodation maintains a calculated distance from the question of urban refugee spaces. This distance is an absolute divide, separating the state politics scale from the lived spaces of urban refugees – that is, IDPs who resort to extremely localized material availabilities, economic opportunities, and land tenure possibilities regulated at traditional governance structure levels. The latter in particular call into question powers and traditional authority relations that span across space, time, and ethnicity, thus bending the relevance of definitions of "local" and re(con)figuring the implicit and explicit regulatory and customary confines of what spatial productions are im/possible for urban refugees to access or create. The scale in this case is a description of the disconnect between state and local dimensions. It does not do nor show us processes, yet it does hint at the poor governance and discrepancy between policies governing national and state territories and the material conditions of localized refuge spaces, essentially evidencing loose regime workings. On the other hand, poor state governance allows for refugees' spatial practices to happen in unforeseen and instructive ways – invoking transcalar and translocal relations to traditional authorities far away, as well as economic affordances and legal land rights originated and legitimized elsewhere to secure their (precarious) stabilities in a city that is failing to recognize them.

The main apparent fact we are confronted with is that while refugee response regimes are widely discussed and understood as necessarily involving (if not centered around) nation-states, which operate and often exert regulatory and implementing impulses for the production of spaces of refuge, a multiplicity of scales are actually mobilized. Moreover, scalar differences matter as a scale is not just a fractal multiplication of magnitude; it generates and enhances the making of different and plural sociospatial productions. Thus, a reflection on the salience and consequent politics of scale helps us relate to regime-building processes and their reach.

3. Step 2: Looking for common ground

After having explicated the understandings and usages of the term regime across subprojects of the CRC pillar C, we can now start looking for common ground. A first common feature of the different approaches to regimes is the centrality of the actors and the relationships between them. It is the relationship between a variety of actors and the social relationships and activities between these actors that constitute a regime – nonhumans, objects, devices, etc. – without which a regime cannot operate and be maintained.

A first shared assumption is that the regime concept opens up the analysis for actors beyond and beneath the state, including international institutions and private and civil society actors. Thereby, it focuses on power structures and relations without being state-centric. Another shared assumption is that these different actors do not meet as equals among equals in a regime. The resources that are relevant in a regime are distributed unevenly among them, which leads to asymmetrical relations of power.

In an attempt to further retrace the constitutive elements of regime systems, additional transversal elements recur across the research projects. Broadly, most projects recognize

regimes as palimpsests that rest on pillars of regulative, normative, cognitive, discursive, and spatial–material orders that are at work in a sphere of interrelated and mutually aware actors (i.e., our contribution). These orders tend to benefit the powerful actors in a regime, thus "affirming and enforcing" a hierarchy of roles and statuses (C08).

All subprojects share an interest in the question of how actors simultaneously contest social order in their struggles for dominance (C06; C07; Fligstein, 2001). The rules, rationales and scripts at play in a regime may be implicitly but not necessarily unanimously shared and accepted. Powerful actors in a regime can thrive on the "capacity to redefine ontologies" (C05) by influencing what is taken for granted in this social sphere. In this sense, regimes seem to be far from monolithic. They are instead dynamic systems in which processes of negotiation, struggle, and creativity continuously contest and destabilize established conditions. (C01, C05, C06, C08). Yet regimes' malleable structure is understood to be set to elastically change, adapt, or repair and incorporate or successfully confront contestation and reinsert it within its system. Thus, regimes are fragile and require constant maintenance. This fragility becomes poignant in times of clashes and emergencies when actors have to (quickly) repair a regime in conflictual processes.

All the subprojects indeed raise the question of dynamics over time, recognizing that the normative and social orders are not arbitrary but have a history/genealogy, presented from a range of angles. On the one hand, there seems to be an emphasis on the historical developments and past constellations that irremediably extend their imprints on the legal, social, and economic orders expressed in the present regime forms (C01; C07). On the other hand, rather than identifying path dependency, C06 emphasizes how established regimes go through a phase of transition that produces the following regime system by the unsettling and refiguration of certain conditions, an episodic occurrence they refer to as a critical juncture.

Between one critical juncture and the following, C08 recognizes the processes of regime formation and consolidation. However, the regime's operational flexibility permits these processes to unfold undetected, as they disguise themselves to conceal this critical turning point. Alternatively, a chronological succession of historical phases is altogether irrelevant if the heuristics of regimes are seen as a mode for the simplification and streamlining of historical trajectories into sets of more or less coherent, simultaneous, and combating phases (C05).

The aspects we elaborated on so far constitute our point of departure to make the "catch-all concept" of regime more tangible. We find common ground in the idea that regimes encompass an order that rests upon legal, normative, discursive, cultural, and spatial–material pillars and scripts. These create a field of tension for different actors to interact within a regime. Focusing on actors, their (hierarchical) relationships, and the (contested, fragile) order at work between them enables us to investigate in a nuanced way what makes up a regime in our empirical cases. Here, we are all convinced that putting forward the sociospatial lens on regime can help us understand these questions. In the next section, we set up a conversation about spatial regime, in which we relate the notion of regime to the heuristic of refiguration and focus especially on spatial figures and multiple spatialities.

4. Step 3: A conversation about spatial regimes

This common ground should not hide the broad heterogeneity of our approaches, which was not easy to bridge to further elaborate on our thoughts on regime and space. For this task, we decided to employ a unique method of exchange: To pursue the discussion constructively, we decided to use a specific textual mode: the *written conversation*,[10] that we organize through our project management platform, Basecamp. By using the everyday digital tool, we could maintain a casual form of expression while including images and references to each other.

We could also locate the discussion in a specific place and come back to it at any convenient moment – allowing long periods of silence between the posts that fit the different work stages of each subproject. This has significantly lowered the inhibition threshold and made the conversation quite colorful, yet it still follows a narrative thread. This reflection on our collaborative work and thinking processes ties into the ongoing epistemological discussion within the group about how the concept of regime shapes our research methodologies and functions as a conceptual tool to guide and structure our fieldwork.

Séverine Marguin: To initiate our final joint dialog on spatial regimes, we must address several complex questions. These inquiries will help deepen our understanding of how the concept of a regime can elucidate the refiguration of spaces. First, we must agree on a common definition of refiguration. I suggest sticking to the main idea that the concept of refiguration tries to understand the radical refiguration of people's relationships to their spaces, which can no longer simply be understood as globalization, glocalization, or transnationalization. Rather, the concept of a refiguration of spaces seeks to capture the tensions of these spatial transformation processes (e.g., between de-bordering and rebordering) but also between centralization and peripheralization, between localization and translocalization, etc., and to understand what this means for the processual social reordering at work. In light of this, I might reformulate my initial question around our concept of regime a bit more precisely: How does the concept of regime relate to spatial change? What dimensions of spatial conflicts and struggles can the regime concept point to?

Christina Hecht: The first thought that came to my mind when reading your questions is that processes of change and transformation, even though invoking pictures of grand-scale processes, are always connected to actors trying to push them forward or impede them. And of course, they do so in a social context where some kind of order is in place already → this is what we want to grasp with the concepts of regime and field in tandem – which both require (shared) spatial references to enable coordination between actors (see section 2.4 in this paper). Regime, field, and spatial figures lead our perspective toward social contests where refiguration is happening.

I think the relationship between regime and spatial change depends on your perspective or the research design in which you implement the concept. From a cross-cutting perspective (as I

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[10] Similar approaches and formats can be found, for example, in Whetten & Godfrey's (1998) *Identity in Organizations: Building theory through conversations* or various chapters in Apelt et al.'s (2020) *Handbuch Organisationssoziologie,* that put scholars from organizational and economic/educational/gender/sociology into dialog.

employ it when conducting interviews with stakeholders at one point in time, or maybe a document analysis for another point in time), it can lead our attention to the spatial references that are "problematic," contested, consensual, simply at work, taken for granted within a regime/field at this point. This may seem static, as with cross-cutting designs, we cannot witness change *as such*. But what I think we are looking at is "change (or stability) in the making." In longitudinal designs, we can employ the concepts to compare the spatial references that hold regimes/fields together at different points in time – and maybe more directly grasp stability and change.

For me, spatial conflicts and struggles are the drivers of refiguration. Aren't they? I cannot think of a less clumsy formulation, but maybe you get what I mean when I say that spatial conflicts revolve around the contested question of "how to refigure?" (even if, of course, actors engaged in these struggles may never pose this question directly...). My intuition would be that dominant spatial references within a regime/field hint toward relations of power, heavily contested spatial references toward relations of power in flux (manifest spatial conflicts?), and more silently contested spatial references toward latent spatial conflicts.

Still, what puzzles me is that, in the end, the CRC argues that refiguration **is** (also) a grand-scale development. Can we also grasp this using the concept of regime? I have sidestepped this question by retreating somewhat to specific social contexts, which in my mind are situated at the meso/micro level.

Indrawan Prabaharyaka: I honestly have a hard time finding the most effective and to-the-point response to our drafts and the conversations we have had so far. I'm afraid that I might give a fluffy response, and it makes our collective work too wild and not going somewhere meaningful.

Another problem is that I'm used to my ethnographic habit and have the tendency to begin from the empirical, what I partially know and experience. Yet I've been tempted to comment on the general theoretical tendency in our drafts (as well as in the CRC in general, perhaps) of looking at regime as institutional things – rules, norms, roles, etc. It is not that this tendency is wrong; it is insufficient. I'll give you some empirical stories as an example.

In Stuttgart, I observed some interesting moments in the urbanistic microclimate regime (an attempt to translate *städtebauliche Mikroklimaregime*) in the 2000s. Jürgen Baumüller, a former leader of the Urban Climatology Section for almost three decades, was replaced by Ulrich Reuter in 2007. In 2009, the Green Party won the communal election for the first time after more than four decades of the dominance of the Christian Democratic Union. If one considers using a regime in the conventional-institutional sense of the term (e.g., rules & organizations) as an analytical device, then such a regime change in that period would be associated with the changing rulers, be it in the sense of a person or an organization. But such a conventional use of regime misses out on the fact that *the rules and rulers change precisely not despite but due to the overflows* of protests in that period; some years before the communal election, there was a plan to allocate new lands to be built, and some were intersecting the wind corridors, triggering the disappointment of the citizens who live along the routes.

Another overflow came from the lawsuits against the City of Stuttgart, again related to the clashes between construction projects and aeroroutes. Finally, there was a scientific controversy in which the expertise of the Urban Climatology Section was disputed. Overall, regime-as-institution is less helpful in understanding a city's microclimate urbanism and ongoing spatial changes than regime-as-sensor-of-overflows.

Regime, in this regard, can be used as a sensor-of-overflows, which can function well to indicate spatial conflicts and changes. In the stories I mentioned above, there is a clash between two spatial figures, territory (human settlement, as exemplified by the term *Siedlungsdruck*) against route (through which air flows and circulates). This conflict is latent for most of the time and manifests only at certain moments around the election, for example. However, it should not be misunderstood simply as the dominance of a conventional political-party regime. Indeed, it has something to do with that, and in the end, it is the politicians who make the final decisions (like the canceled construction project plan in the district of Bad Cannstatt). But there are overflows of people, frustration, climatological knowledge, expertise, and so on that continuously threaten the regime in the conventional sense of the term.

Finally, there are some heavy words related to the refiguration of spaces I would like to address, but I don't think I can: globalization, glocalization, transnationalization, de- and rebordering, centralization, peripheralization, localization, translocalization… It's because I haven't found the most fitting concept for what I have observed in Stuttgart. It's like this: when some citizens protest against construction projects (the last one being the protest of the Renter Association against the demolition of social housing in October 2023), the outcomes of their protests are mostly invisible, void. We can only see that the same buildings remain in the same spot. Or perhaps we can feel the cool and fresh air during the summer.

The result of spatial "changes" is tranquil, gentle, and unnoticed in the background. Yet these changes might be what we desperately need in the onslaught of our ongoing planetary crisis, climate breakdown, loss of biodiversity, immense pollution, and how they impinge on our all-too-human lives. What are the concepts that can capture such a refiguration of space? Degrowth? Post-development? Anti-Anthropocene/ Capitalocene? I'm still unsure. Regarding these changes, there might be the rise of geo-social or ecological classes, like what Nikolaj Schultz has written, and like what I have observed from my interlocutors in Stuttgart. I guess there is a need to revalue the meaning of voidness in the social studies of space in general.

Christina Hecht: I think you are absolutely right with your call, not only to look at the people/organizations in institutionally powerful positions. This is why we want to look at regimes in tandem with the fields in C07. Whereas regimes might be more about abstract roles and rules, fields always guide us toward the specific actors that perceive each other as relevant and their dynamic interactions and relations (with the roles and rules of a regime somehow setting the stage on which they are acting). This, of course, includes actors beyond politicians in power and dynamics beyond institutions. For example, civil initiatives, NGOs, and academics – given they are perceived as relevant in the sense that they can "get through" with their actions toward other actors who then, in turn, consider them when acting themselves. In this sense, I somehow feel that our perspectives may be more alike than we think. The topic of the void is good food

for thought. I just thought about the heat maps of Airbnb listings, which my colleagues do with quantitative data. Where those listings actually do not cluster or densify in a city may also include information about the regime Airbnb is part of.

Francesca Ceola: I certainly empathize with the idea of a regime as a sensor, and not so much of evident and necessarily tangible spatial changes. The spatial refiguration, which is relevant for the refugee accommodation "management" regime that we detect in Lagos, for instance, is not encased in institutional narratives and planning policies. It is the contrast, or contradiction, between what unfolds spatially–materially against the narratives and the socioeconomic and political interests packaged around them that evidences a disconnect. This, in turn, serves as an entry point for describing the regime's workings. It is in these cleavages—where the tangible and lived space of urban refugees in the city grind against what is being discursively packaged and heralded as humanitarian and/or urban planning (by humans for humans, let us stay for now in an anthropocentric range)—that we seek theory building on processes of spatial refiguration.

Engaging with the CRC vocabulary, we see how *territories* are relevant heuristics for describing what emerges from empirical observations. Often, networks accurately capture 1. interactions across space between political, civic, economic, and refugee actors and 2. the mobility of refugee planning policies across *places*. These emerging figurations are brought together by big words, such as trans/local/nationalization and glocalization, capturing at once the transcalar and simultaneously scalarly precise processes I have tried to illustrate in my text (à appendix). But when I try to imagine how the regimes' constellations and mechanisms could be represented diagrammatically, I get the impression that a messy space – one that I imagine with the shapes of Deleuzian/Guattarian assemblages with escaping shards and de/re/territorializations happening on non-necessarily linear timescales – might come close to a meaningful representation of regime. This helps us navigate, but not necessarily retell, regimes as engines of spatial change. And in that, I think lies the utility of regimes as sensors; as notions and lenses, they are not going to answer our attempts at spatial refiguration, but they point us at where spatial changes are churning.

I also like to think of this with the work of Mark Lombardi: thinking through regimes or fantasizing on their representation for analysis, but also for dissemination, can be quite enthralling investigative work. But it is the part of the work when connections – and the concealment of them – are made evident. What such connections actually mean is an/other intellectual endeavor.

Dorothea Biaback Anong: What seems to me a silver lining in our discussions is that taking the idea of regime (or our distinctive ideas of regimes!) as a starting point is super helpful to think about spatial change and how it comes about. I guess, like some of you as well, in this sense, I am particularly intrigued by the idea of overflow and resistance.

However, I resonate a lot with Christina's mention of "change (or stability) in the making," as it points us toward not only thinking about change, but also about how the stability of certain norms, and structures (including material and potentially violent spatial artifacts like borders) comes about and is maintained through continuous social action. To put it differently: to not look at "stability" as the unquestioned and invisible norm and "change" as the deviation that

needs to be explained, but to understand both as active processes. I think precisely because regime "sounds like" institutions and powers, it is a great term to use to spark interest in the "structure" side of the coin. This might also speak to unease about thinking about regimes as somehow fixed institutions and norms, thinking about them as in production and negotiation just as well as the change, thus not in opposition to but as part of the same process as overflow and resistance.

On a slightly different note, Christina's mention that regimes or fields are created by actors that "perceive" each other as relevant made me think of the relational concept of space put forward by Martina Löw, and how we could think of "regime" then as the specific ensemble of social actions and norms (institutionalized or not) that create meaningful relationships between objects, people, etc. and thereby establish spaces. The thus established borders and boundaries of these spaces (set up and "governed" by regimes) are then continuously challenged by social practices (overflows, which can be protests, but also everyday practices that reinterpret these norms in slightly differing ways, processes that might be rather invisible, as Indrawan has suggested).

As in C01 we have a comparative research design, comparing three processes of macroterritorialization or, more precisely, free-movement regimes. I am trying to think about how our thoughts on "regime" can be made useful to compare different regimes. To me in particular, the idea of regimes as the "ensemble" of social norms and practices that make certain spatial references significant and meaningful in one context/or in one regime, while not in others, seems to be useful, but I'm not sure what you think about that.

I stumbled upon this illustration of "regime" and the interaction between structure/hegemony and social practices (see Figure I) in Glynos and Howarth's (2007, p. 105), which I found interesting for our discussion, particularly the idea of "public contestation" (overflow, resistance, etc.) and "absorption" (maintenance of stability?) in it.
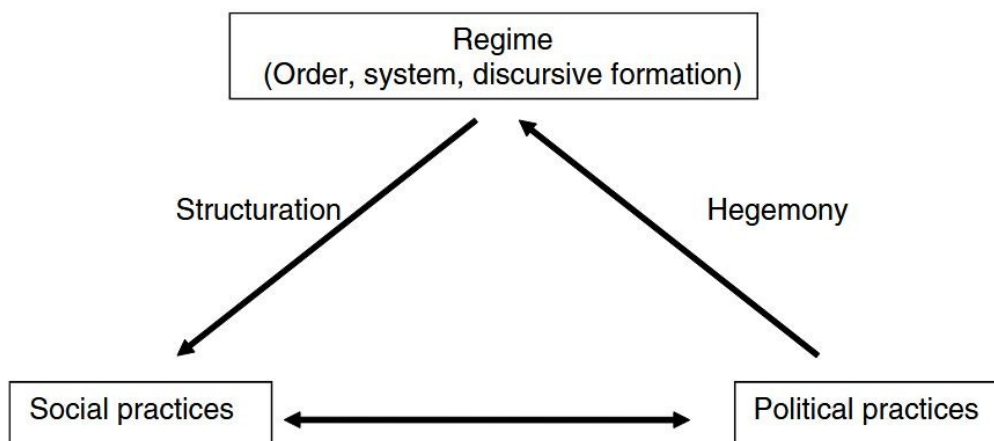

Fig. I: A simplified model of practices and regimes. Glynos, & Howarth, 2007, p. 105.

Séverine Marguin: As an attempt to move in the direction of a final point, I'm posting a last comment in which I come back to some commonalities that strike me while rereading our discussion thread.

First, I would say that we are all keen to think about change and *stability* in a relationally contingent way (i.e., in the making or as active processes). The concept of a regime helps to capture the ambiguity of something that is on the verge of becoming institutionalized but that is constantly subject to overflows. The regime becomes a conceptual sensor-of-overflows.

It's not quite clear yet what the nature of these overflows is: overflows of people, frustration, climatological knowledge, expertise, or overflows of practices... What I would find interesting is to spatialize these overflows and the boundaries that they are overcoming. What kind of shape do they take? Can we identify specific spatial figurations of overflows here?

Second, I find very interesting the idea that the regime is constructed along specific (and possibly conflictual) spatial knowledge – imaginations, practices, assemblages of different actors – and because of this entanglement of knowledge (Pillar A), practices (Pillar B), and structuration (Pillar C), it is very close to the concept of figuration. In your reflections, I found the striking images of void, concealment, and messiness particularly productive. But then comes the immediate question: How can we analytically map such a disorder unfolding through scales and times? In C06, we are testing a protocol for complexity reduction in which we focus on a single object (in our case, a series) and draw its entanglement with all the actors we can think of. The idea, then, is to superimpose the different mappings produced to arrive at a more complex synthesis. We're starting with three series, exemplary of the three main repertoires. These are clearly agents of stability, but we want to continue with three subsequent series, which are each located in the gray zone between two repertoires, and which may be exemplary of overflow dynamics. We hope, then, to link these possible spatial figurations with the question of power dynamics: for me, it brings us back to the question of (partial) stability, where some of the regime's powerful actors succeed in even partially stratifying certain portions, routes, or knots of the regime, and then the disruptive forces creating other constellations.

Christina Hecht: After our chat on the relationship between regime and other CRC concepts, I picked one and looked it up in the CRC's glossary: *multiple spatialities*. Knoblauch & Löw's (2021) text is also helpful, but for now, I'll stick to the more condensed version in the glossary. The glossary defines multiple spatialities as

> spatial differences, variations, and divergences that result from differently situated social references [GER: unterschiedlich gelagerten gesellschaftlichen Bezugsproblemen] in which the refiguration takes place. [...] [T]hese are by no means only predicated upon politically or economically differentiated macroregions but are also linked to different references to scale or system logics (the economy, media, education, art, etc.). Multiple spatialities can be investigated on different levels (knowledge, action, institution, and circulation) and are connected with corresponding regimes. (CRC 1265, n.d.)

For me, this last sentence was really an aha moment! The concept of regime can guide us in conducting comparative research (as indicated by Dorothea) and thus help us shed light on multiple spatialities. For example, in my dissertation, the emergence of Airbnb is the reference problem ("Bezugsproblem"): somehow a common denominator for the case studies on Berlin and Cape Town. Using stakeholder interviews, I collected knowledge about how these actors make sense of Airbnb. Within the case studies, I used this data to reconstruct the field around Airbnb (as you know, field and regime are tied together for C07). This is where spatial figures become relevant: examining which spatial figures actors reference, and how they do so, illuminates their relationships within the field. In the comparative part, I (hopefully) will answer the question of whether/how/to which extent the dominant references to spatial figures differ (or converge) in Berlin and Cape Town – and here we arrive at multiple spatialities again.

Séverine Marguin: Thanks, Christina, for restarting the discussion. I would like to share some thoughts about the relationship between multiple spatialities and regime. For me, the concept of multiple spatialities allows us to take seriously the positionality and perspectivity of actors constituting specific spaces – how one contributes to one (spatial) phenomenon from one specific position, and this obviously goes for both the investigated actors and our gaze as researchers. This is what I understand by the "situated social references" (i.e., the situatedness of the actors within a regime).

In our project about the Afronovelas, this can be investigated on two specific levels. For example, in several small cases, we examined the relationship between multiple spatial stories and the position of story producers within the regime. Take the example of the staging of the metropolis of Dakar. A comparison of the series shows that the spatial variations and divergences in the fictionalization of the Senegalese metropolis compete with each other through the staging of a local urban 'authenticity.' We identified how closely these fictional spaces' significance connects to the producers' spatial knowledge and imagination, which reflects their position within power structures – or, put differently, how narratives about Dakar (specific discursive spatial representations) mirror the particular spatial perspective of producers (especially those from France or Senegal).

At the level of the regime itself, we are trying to understand how the spread of stories (which is the basic issue in any audiovisual sector) is imagined, practiced, and orchestrated by the various actors in the Afronovelas regime. Here, I'd like to take the conversation back to the debate we had at the CRC retreat on the close relationship between regime and territory, which is being called into question by the refiguration of spaces. Thus far, our empirical work shows how each production repertoire (i.e., a specific group of actors within the regime with a specific set of values) has sought out a particular audience territory following its own infrastructural and linguistic strategies. Indeed, digitalization (with the introduction of the internet) and decolonization (with the reassertion of vernacular languages) have led to the superimposition of multiscalar audience territories (metropolitan digital audience, alongside a subregional vernacular audience crossing inherited colonial linguistic boundaries, alongside a dispersed diasporic audience, and so on).

Francesca Ceola: From our perspective, the idea of multiple spatialities is a way of framing the simultaneous yet differently declined relationships of governance, power, and economic interests that entangle to produce, maintain, or transform spaces of refuge. That is, plural governance systems calibrated on different power geometries and moved by different economic agendas are at work simultaneously regarding the geographically selected spaces of refuge that our studies address. Thus, for us, multiple spatialities are the string that pulls together the spatial dimensions with the constellations of actors and agents, and it helps us understand why spaces of refuge in the making by presumably comparable regimes turn out to be so different. Of course, a lot more stands in the equation – social, cultural, political contexts, individual, and collective histories of displacement, individual and collective affordabilities and alliances, to name some. Multiple spatialities, in this sense, help us grasp how divergent situations materialize from the same ingredients.

Specifically, the figures of territory ("national" and regional when seen from institutional regime-building actors' perspectives) and network emerge very clearly in our analysis of the regimes of production of refugee accommodation spaces. Territorial (national, especially) spaces and the regulations that validate them are cut across by circuits and circulations of refugee, humanitarian, and developmentalist policies, economic flows, and "collaborations." The conflict-bearing process here is not, per se, the fact that these circuits "cut across" territorial constructs. Rather, they are vectors of geopolitical interests and agendas from elsewhere, from territories such as the EU that, in the process of maintaining and/or securitizing their own refugee management regime, externalize functions (e.g., refugee management and containment) elsewhere in the guise of humanitarianism.

As we tried to exemplify in the discussion on scale, scalarity, transcalarity, and the politics around scale are consistently at work in the production of refugee spaces' regimes. They form the mold on which the sociospatial processes that we identify as regime building operate. These processes, however, are not only institutional operations. The urban refugee populations we examine produce and transform spaces and sociospatial relationships that are partially ingrained within the refugee spaces production regime's logics but also escape it. These relations present us with heterogeneous, multiform, and multi-sited relations between human refugee actors and city spaces, and agents that – going by the regime logic embraced this far – might be looked at as antiregime. However, we wonder if using the same concept – although its own anti-thesis – does not have the effect of equating processes and the agents involved in them in dangerously homogenizing terms, by positing them on the same grounds.

Indrawan Prabaharyaka: I aim to connect our subproject C05 perspective to both (1) the concept of "multiplicity" and (2) "spatialities," exploring potential links with our ongoing discussions about regimes.

First, on the multiple, which implies different elements that constitute diversity/plurality. There are always deviants, parts that do not fit the whole, and categories that confuse classification. A regime in this regard can be, and historically has been, a standardizing tool to create a sense of identity and unity, hence stabilizing. These deviants can thus be a specific focus of a regime because they are very sensitive to overflows and are by default unclassifiable.

Second, on spatialities. Once these deviants are identified, one can look at how they challenge the available apparatus of spatial analysis. Take the four ideal types of space we have discussed so far. The unclassifiable necessitates a fifth, perhaps a sixth, ideal type or more if we want to begin to understand them and really embrace the excess – the overflows in multiple spatialities.

Two empirical examples: In Stuttgart, although it seems straightforward to tell the spatial story as clashes between fresh-air corridors (route) and human settlements (territory), it is hard to classify heat as one of the four types. There is a territorial metaphor for urban heat islands. There is also a trajectorial metaphor for aeroroutes. But heat is, in reality, constantly fleeting, radiating, conducting, and convecting simultaneously. Another example is my colleagues' study of little climates on the interface between our skins and our clothes. What are they? Any of the four types seems limited in analyzing the multiple spatialities in the very space near our bodies.

In sum, the dance between parts and the whole of a regime can be productively used in spatial analysis when those who escape the existing classification system are seriously considered. The immediate consequence is that the regime requires the ecological sensitivity of the term. However, with a note, ecology is not only in the sense of connections of things but also detachments, separations, inequalities, and asymmetries, like what the deviants experience.

5. Step 4: Synthesizing the conversation and concluding: Understanding spatial transformations through the lens of the regime

This paper first introduced understandings of regimes across the five projects in Pillar C and then identified common ground among various approaches to regimes, focusing on the centrality of diverse actors and their relationships, the asymmetrical distribution of power, and the dynamic, constantly maintained nature of regimes. Our third step involved a written online conversation on spatial regimes using the chat function of an online platform to facilitate flexible and reflective dialog. Building on project-specific perspectives, common ground, and conversations on the regime concept, we can now synthesize our major insights and attempt to formulate a preliminary conclusion for this exchange:

We understand spatially anchored regimes as regulatory systems that are always imbued with power and that organize circulation in and between spaces, as well as new forms of order and circulation through which established regimes are challenged, reshaped, or abolished. We focus on the active role of state and nonstate as well as economic, civil society, and nonhuman actors who create and maintain regimes or who continuously and dynamically question regimes in constellations of power and processes of contestation. Bringing it back to the social theoretical framework of the CRC, we understand regime as a heuristic for conceptualizing the dimension of power within figuration (i.e., within the interplay between knowledge, practices, and structures).

Our shared understanding of regimes acknowledges the broad heterogeneity in methodologies while finding common ground in examining how regimes influence and reflect changes in spatial orderings. Despite the diverse approaches, a common thread is the effort to bridge these

differences to elaborate on the concepts of regime and space. Our discussions invite us to continuous epistemological reflections on how the concept of regime shapes our research methodologies and, thereby, how we define refiguration. By understanding the role of regime as a conceptual device, we aim to elucidate how it influences our understanding of fieldwork and spatial changes. This reflection is crucial in grounding our analyses and ensuring that our approaches remain sensitive to the complexities of spatial phenomena. Refiguration is understood as a substantial transformation in people's relationships with spaces. This transformation goes beyond traditional notions of globalization or transnationalization, aiming instead to capture the tensions inherent in processes of spatial change. Refiguration addresses the dynamics between debordering and rebordering, centralization, peripheralization, and other such dichotomies, providing a nuanced lens through which to view social reorderings. For the understanding of spatial transformations through the lens of regime, our conversations produced several key insights, both theoretical and methodological:

Theoretical insights:

The relationship between regime and spatial change is multifaceted. Regimes play a crucial role in stabilizing or transforming social orders, highlighting problematic or contested spatial references. This duality enables researchers to examine both stability and change, recognizing that these are active processes rather than static states. In doing so, regimes help identify and analyze the social contexts and power dynamics at play.

Spatial conflicts and struggles are key drivers of refiguration. These conflicts reflect underlying power relations and dynamic interactions within regimes. By examining these conflicts, researchers can gain insights into the forces shaping spatial refiguration. Manifest conflicts indicate areas where power relations are in flux, while latent tensions suggest ongoing, less visible struggles.

Relational and contingent processes are seen as central to both change and stability. The concept of regime helps capture this dynamic by being sensitive to overflows and resistance while also recognizing the continuous production and maintenance of norms and structures. This perspective encourages a holistic understanding of spatial phenomena, considering both stability and change as part of an ongoing process.

Empirical examples and overflows illustrate how regime analysis can extend and transcend traditional institutional frameworks. Narratives from Stuttgart and Lagos highlight the importance of overflows – protests, knowledge disputes, and other forms of resistance – that challenge and redefine spatial figurations. Such overflows underscore the dynamic nature of spatial figurations, often revealing hidden processes of change.

The inclusion of nonhuman actors and materiality is also crucial in regime analysis. This inclusion acknowledges the complexity and multidimensionality of spatial transformations while ensuring that analyses are comprehensive and reflective of the real-world dynamics at play.

Methodological insights:

Mapping and complexity reduction offer tools to understand these complex interactions. Spatializing overflows and mapping their dynamics can help researchers capture the multifaceted nature of regimes and their spatial implications. Techniques such as focusing on specific objects and superimposing different mappings aim to simplify complexity without losing the richness of the phenomena under study.

The concept of multiple spatialities is crucial for capturing the diverse and situated perspectives of actors within regimes. It allows researchers to analyze how different spatial references and practices coexist and interact, reflecting the positionality of both the investigated actors and the researchers themselves. This multiplicity highlights the various scales and logics that shape spatial transformations.

Comparative research is enhanced by the framework of regimes. This approach allows for the examination of multiple spatialities across different contexts. By comparing how regimes manifest and operate in varied settings, researchers can uncover commonalities and divergences, thereby enhancing our understanding of spatial transformations. From these insights, we can engage in a discussion about the term regime and its potential for researching space. We would like to highlight several aspects that gained salience in our exchanges and might prove valuable beyond the five subprojects that work together within the CRC's Pillar C.

The concept of a regime inherently involves notions of power and domination, encompassing both formal governance structures and everyday routines. This political dimension is essential for understanding how regimes operate within various social and spatial contexts. By examining regimes through this lens, we can better grasp the intricate power dynamics that underpin social orders and spatial arrangements. Regimes consist of both negotiated parts, which are flexible and subject to change, and more rigid elements, which are stable and enforce order. This duality allows us to analyze the dynamic interplay between stability and transformation within regimes. Negotiated elements reflect the ongoing adaptations and adjustments made by actors within the regime, while rigid parts represent the established norms and rules that provide structure and predictability. Understanding this balance is crucial for comprehending how regimes maintain stability while accommodating change.

The regime concept provides a framework for both explaining and describing social and spatial phenomena. It helps elucidate the underlying mechanisms and power relations that drive spatial transformations while also offering a descriptive lens to capture the complexity of these processes. By using regimes as an analytical tool, researchers can move beyond surface-level observations to uncover the deeper forces at play in shaping social and spatial realities. The regime concept adds a critical dimension to the understanding of refiguration. While built infrastructure and other elements play a role in spatial transformations, regimes encompass the broader social, political, and economic contexts that shape and are shaped by these changes. This distinction clarifies that infrastructure alone does not constitute a regime. Instead, regimes provide the overarching framework within which infrastructural and other changes occur, highlighting the interconnectedness of various factors influencing spatial refiguration.

During our writing process, we worked with several implicit definitions of "regime" and held varying views on its analytical utility. Our paper thus provides a conceptual starting point. Across our subprojects and discussions, we found the regime concept offers a comprehensive framework for examining power dynamics, conflicts, and transformations. From our discussions and the different usages of regimes across the projects, we can speculate that regimes or their parts exhibit varying degrees of fluidity ranging from fluid and adaptable to rigid and entrenched. Understanding this spectrum helps in analyzing how regimes respond to pressures and transformations. More fluid regimes are likely to be more responsive to change and innovation, while more rigid regimes may resist change and seek to maintain the status quo. This variability in rigidity provides a framework for examining the flexibility and resilience of regimes in the face of external challenges and internal conflicts.

The varying degrees of fluidity connect well to our shared understanding of the centrality of actors and their relationships. This focus on actors provides a nuanced understanding of how power and influence are distributed and exercised within regimes. By analyzing various actors' roles and interactions, researchers can uncover how regimes are sustained and refigured. Understanding the purpose of regimes for actors helps clarify their roles in social and spatial processes, highlighting their importance in maintaining coherence and order.

Regimes are not limited to formal rules or cases of high rigidity; they also encompass fluid everyday practices, overflows, negotiations, conflicts, misunderstandings, and eventual decay. Hence, our perspective can highlight how conflicts arise from the clashing of different regimes, their underlying principles, and their inherent inconsistencies. By examining these regime conflicts, researchers can gain insights into how regimes are challenged and reshaped over time. Understanding the role of everyday practices in maintaining or contesting regimes provides a more nuanced view of social and spatial dynamics.

In summary, our analysis of regimes and spatial refiguration demonstrates that regimes are complex, dynamic systems defined by interactions between institutions, governance, everyday practices, and knowledge production—constituting the power within the figuration. They are central to understanding how processes of spatial refiguration occur and are powerfully shaped. By focusing on the centrality of actors and negotiated versus rigid elements within regimes and on interactions, conflicts, and overflows, we can gain deeper insights into the processes that shape our social and spatial realities. This approach enhances theoretical frameworks and provides practical tools for analyzing and responding to the dynamic nature of spatial change. Therefore, the concept of a regime offers a powerful tool for understanding processes of spatial refiguration.

On a practical note, for scientific exchanges, we would like to highlight our method for conducting a written online conversion to bridge divergent understandings and integrate them into a joint perspective. Utilizing platform functions, such as chats for conversations, allows for a structured yet flexible exchange of ideas. This method facilitates deep reflection and enables participants to revisit and refine their thoughts, thereby fostering a vibrant and narrative-driven dialog.

Our written conversations, as documented in this working paper, explored how the concept of regime has shaped research methodologies, defined refiguration as the transformation of people's relationships to spaces, and examined the relationship between regimes and spatial change, highlighting the importance of spatial conflicts and overflows. Therefore, we see great potential in employing this method in research groups or scientific contexts in which participants aim to integrate multiple perspectives yet face difficulties in bridging highly divergent sets of disciplinary, methodological, or epistemological footings.

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