

Global Ningbo-observations on the sense of place and the 'spatial turn' in Global History

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First published 2021

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[Working Paper for the Ningbo International Studies Review, November 2020]

Word Count: 4253 words including footnotes

Ningbo prides itself as a unique “city of culture and a gateway to the world.”¹ City branding is very good at claiming that Ningbo’s rich historical past as a major port along the Maritime Silk Road and a global hub of intellectual, political, economic and trading relations make it stand out among all other Chinese cities.² By framing Ningbo as a location that connects the ‘international’ with the ‘local’, analytical approaches also foster the understanding of the city as a place in China yet without necessarily attributing its agency to a purely national framework.³ Cities intertwine local and international networks, they connect local Hinterlands with the wider world, and they give meaning on empirical local levels to relations of the domestic and the foreign, the national and the international.⁴ If we understand relations in cities and their outward looking connections as dimensions of action of a place, then the sense of place derives its potential meanings through positioning the global and international in the local.

¹ http://ningbo.chinadaily.com.cn/2018-06/06/c_239483.htm (last accessed 30 October 2020); *Ningbo China 2017 Information Brochure by the Information Office of Ningbo Municipal People’s Government*, Ningbo 2017, p. 6.

² S. Zhang, Wang, Y., Liu, N. and Loo, Y.M., “Ningbo City Branding and Public Diplomacy under the Belt and Road Initiative in China,” in: *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-020-00161-8>.

³ Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 2009, pp. 410, 422; see also Carola Hein (Ed.), *Port cities – dynamic landscapes and global networks*, Abingdon 2011.

⁴ Lasse Heerten, “Ankerpunkte der Verflechtung. Hafenstädte in der neueren Globalgeschichtsschreibung,” in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 43, 1 (2017), 146-175, pp. 147, 156; Matthias Middell, Katja Naumann, “Global history and the spatial turn: from the impact of area studies to the study of critical junctures of globalization,” in: *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), pp. 149-170, p. 155; Johannes Paulmann, “Regionen und Welten. Arenen und Akteure regionaler Weltbeziehungen seit dem 19. Jahrhundert,” in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 296 (2013), pp. 660-699, p. 660 and passim.

By doing so, both the international and the local reveal in relational approaches the dimension of changing international and global connections and the role of local actors over time.⁵

For the historian, the interesting perspectives on globalization in its historical dimensions are not necessarily meta-perspectives, abstract theories or presumed universal processes.⁶ Globalization, although established as a presentist theorem in the 1990s, has suggested an integrated understanding of global and international connections that empirically does not hold. This article argues on the contrary for conceptualising globalizations in the plural, not as a single coherent theorem. Global connections understood in the plural unfold different processes of globalizations in local contexts.⁷ The pluralization of globalization is not only a stylish quirkiness or a postmodern fashion, but it transforms one total world-spanning process that claims normative validity into a multitude of similar, yet different and differentiated processes of forging and changing connections that we can analyse empirically.⁸ By doing so, the perspective on the local or the national turns the analytical object from an assumed “other” into a relational complementary. One can claim that instead of analysing different categories in scales – the local, the national, the international and the global, a focus on connections and their analytical qualities offers deeper understandings of the sense of place as it emerges in differentiated webs of human connections in a local space in relation to long-distance connections.⁹ The following observations thus aim to address these questions by locating the

⁵ Jürgen Osterhammel, “Globalisierungen,” in: Idem, *Die Flughöhe der Adler. Historische Essays zur globalen Gegenwart*, Munich 2017, pp. 12-41, p. 21f.; A.G. Hopkins, “Introduction: Interactions between the Universal and the Local,” in: Idem, *Global History. Interactions between the Universal and the Local*, Basingstoke 2006, pp. 1-38, pp. 7-9; Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Doing Global History. An Introduction in 6 Concepts*, London 2020, pp. 47-49.

⁶ Osterhammel, “Globalisierungen,” p. 19f.; David Held/Anthony McGrew, *Globalization Theory: Approaches and Controversies*, Cambridge 2007, p. 6.

⁷ The pluralization of globalization runs parallel to the discussions about normative ideal types of modernization. See Shmuel Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities”, in: *Daedalus* 129, (2000), pp. 1-29; Angelika Epple, “Globalisierung/en,” in: <https://docupedia.de/zg/Globalisierung> (last access 30 October 2020).

⁸ Osterhammel, “Globalisierungen,” p. 39.

⁹ Wenzlhuemer, *Doing Global History*, pp. 11, 20f. For the spatial turn more general see: E. Murray, *Geographies of Globalisation*, London/New York 2006; Harm J. de Blij, *The Power of Place: Geography, Destiny and Globalisation's Rough Landscape*, Oxford 2009.

international in the local in the past and present with a view towards Global Ningbo in the 19th and early 20th century.

It is safe to observe that Ningbo is a place in China. But it is much more than that. It is also a space of interactions between individuals and groups of people. This interactive space comprises many processes that we can identify from our theoretical understanding of multiple globalizations – interactions in the commercial and trading spheres, in the political sphere as a multitude of actions and repercussions of the forming imperial and national spaces upon international and trans-local connections, and in the social and cultural combinations of Chinese, local and international influences.¹⁰ In essence, globalizations happen in Ningbo through actors and their agency, their worldviews, ambitions and opportunities. By focusing on places, this contribution selects specific voices that reflect on the local to make sense of their agency in an international structure that they in turn shape.

On a local level, Ningbo has long been a centre of international interest rooted in the local actions and human webs, yet not of rich academic research.¹¹ Local agents have also forged international connections across the Asia Pacific area and beyond. Local agency aimed at shaping Chinese and transnational orders in trade and politics, but also in entrepreneurship and businesses since the late Tang dynasty, yet in different ways and with diverse aims. In order to understand global and international relations from a local perspective, we need to look for these actors to identify what they actually did, how they perceived and articulated their agency, and what were their aims in interacting beyond local and imperial/national boundaries.¹² In short,

¹⁰ Karin Knorr Cetian, “Microglobalization,” in: Ino Rossi (Ed.), *Frontiers of Globalization Research. Theoretical and Methodological Approaches*, New York 2008, pp. 65-92, p. 68.

¹¹ The literature on Chinese overseas communities is vast, but except for a study on Wenzhou a coherent analysis of Ningbo or Zhejiang is missing. See e.g. Adam McKewon, “Ethnographies of Chinese Transnationalism”, in: *Diaspora* 10,3 (2001), 341-360, 347.

¹² Wenzlhuemer, *Doing Global History*, p. 92f. The speaking about globalization or the establishment of long-distance connections as a self-reflective act of realization is also part of globalizing agency from a local perspective. Osterhammel, “Globalisierungen”, p. 21.

to understand global Ningbo, we need to analyse global players on the individual level to pursue and evaluate their impact. In return, Ningbo was also a focus of international interactions. Knowledge flowed into the city and its surroundings, centres of learning were established, local merchants interacted in the framework of the imperial systems of foreign trade with different Europeans. And Europeans, Americans and other “foreigners” developed agency in order to shape, change and foster trans-local relations with Ningbo to pursue causes and aims that were at times supportive and at other times not supportive of Ningbo’s development towards a modernising and modernised city.

The article picks two particularly well documented cases to illustrate the relational approach to different globalisations in a local place with differentiated social spaces. The emerging transnational networks of Ningbonese labourers and the accounts of travel reports by foreigners on a particular place like Ningbo offer us two specific processes of long-distance connections as differentiated segmental globalizations with which we can analyse the different intersections in a social space of foreign global, regional and local connections and agency in relation to the local community. Travel reports in particular generate views and perspectives on a place from the outside as they relate their own expectations and domestic social imaginaries to the perceived reality in local China.¹³ The creation of spaces of interaction and separation, of transnational or segregated local spheres, and the ways in which those forge the chances, possibilities and limits of foreign and local agency in a transforming town before and under the Treaty Port system provides a unique way to re-conceptualise ‘space’ and ‘place’ as analytical categories in transnational and local connections and individual agency.

¹³ For the concept see Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Durham/NC 2004, p. 23.

Ningbo gained a prominent status in the scientific and travel writings of one of the most famous travellers of China in the 19th century, Ferdinand von Richthofen.¹⁴ The German geologist who coined the modern concept of “Silk Road” as a transitory corridor for development, an Imperial Highway from Berlin to Beijing, travelled the Qing Empire extensively in the 1860s and 1870s and left a rich legacy of travel diaries and publications.¹⁵ His observations on Ningbo are of particular interest to the understanding of the local and the international. Richthofen brought a rich experience in geographical and cultural imaginations to the descriptions and depictions of places. His background and experiences in the Prussian lands (Richthofen was Silesian by birth and studied in Breslau and Berlin), his travels in China and Japan as a member of the Prussian Expedition to the Far East under Count Eulenburg in 1860 and 1861, and his work as mining prospector in California and the American West from 1863 to 1868 all contributed to shaping his space of experience.¹⁶

Richthofen was a reflected traveller. He criticised the typical “globetrotter” of the 19th century who “entertain at each place [...] the same stereotypical programme and expect a standardised experience” and would only produce repetitive superficial descriptions of the treaty ports and major cities in China and Japan.¹⁷ However, he could not quite escape an equally instrumentalising perspective on the places he visited, as his observations of Ningbo also reflected his own intentions towards the potential use of the city for a German audience. Ningbo immediately struck him as ‘different’ from his former experiences in China. In comparing

¹⁴ The most prominent research on Richthofen is still: Jürgen Osterhammel, “Forschungsreise und Kolonialprogramm. Ferdinand von Richthofen und die Erschließung Chinas im 19. Jahrhundert”, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 69,1 (1987), pp. 150-195. See also Ute Wardenga, “Ferdinand von Richthofen als Erforscher Chinas”, in: *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 13 (1990), pp. 141-155; Shellen Wu, „The Search for Coal in the Age of Empires: Ferdinand von Richthofen's Odyssey in China, 1860-1920“, in: *The American Historical Review* 119, 2 (2014), pp. 339-363.

¹⁵ See e.g. Christian Mueller, “The Invention of the Silk Road – how to legitimise the BRI with a historical myth,” in: *Asia Dialogue* (2019), <https://theasiadialogue.com/2019/02/01/the-invention-of-the-silk-road-how-to-legitimise-the-bri-with-a-historical-myth/> (last access 30 October 2020).

¹⁶ *North China Herald*, 14 November 1868, p. 557.

¹⁷ Ferdinand von Richthofen, *China. Ergebnisse eigener Reisen und darauf gegründeter Studien, Vol. I: Einleitender Theil*, Berlin 1877, p. 717.

Ningbo in international terms, he described it in July 1868 as “totally Japanese and not Chinese.”¹⁸ Why would a traveller in 1868 make such a statement? Inherently applying a standard of what he perceived as general traits of different civilizations, Richthofen assumed that the natural setting and the human interactions in Ningbo suggested a closer familiarity with the old trading partner of the city across the sea than with other regions in the Qing Empire. In praising Ningbo, he continued: “The cleanliness of the streets, the precision in the style of the houses, the plentifulness of temples with groves, the pretty burial sites on the hills, the kind gentleness of its people, the diligence in agriculture – all this is totally Japanese and not Chinese.”¹⁹

Richthofen, although repeating to some extent earlier European appraisals of the comparative high standard of Ningbo, intentionally described the city to set it apart from other centres like Shanghai, Peking and Canton.²⁰ His understanding of the local in the international shows a methodological approach of implicit comparisons across spaces and cultures under an assumed standard of civilization.²¹ For him and many of his contemporaries the world thus became understandable in levels and hierarchies of human behaviour and their agency to shape local settings according to their will and might irrespective of political borders.²² It is an approach that runs counter to our understanding of 19th century nationalism, although the yardstick of ‘civilisation’ brings in prejudices of national cultures and regional civilisations through the backdoor. Being a geologist, Richthofen argued that the natural physical geography, the given land and sea connections, and secluding natural barriers and borders like mountain ridges influenced the behaviour of people much more than assumed political or economic boundaries

¹⁸ Ferdinand von Richthofen, *Tagebücher aus China*, Ernst Tiessen (ed.), Berlin 1907, Vol. I, p. 38.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Charles Gutzlaff, *Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China, in 1831, 1832, and 1833 [...]*, London, 1834, p. 242; Georg Smith, *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China [...]*, New York 1857 (1st Edn., London 1847), p. 196; Richthofen, *Tagebücher*, p. 37f.

²¹ Osterhammel, „Forschungsreise“, pp. 172, 174f.

²² Ferdinand von Richthofen, *China. Ergebnisse eigener Reisen und darauf gegründeter Studien, Vol. III: Das südliche China*, E. Tiessen (ed.), Berlin 1912, p. 636; Osterhammel, „Forschungsreise“, p. 177.

and borders.²³ Ultimately, he believed that economic opportunities such as the “Silk Road” derived naturally from geological predispositions so that human agency would be channelled by geological opportunity.²⁴

Richthofen further praised Ningbo as a centre of trade and entrepreneurship. In fact, he identified resilience and search for opportunities to forge businesses as a key character trait of the Ningbonese.²⁵ By Ningbo, Richthofen meant not only a confined legal space, the place of the city itself. Highlighting the influx of vast capital into the local network of merchants from the connected towns in Ningbo’s hinterland, Richthofen further constructed Ningbo as a space of connected places, so that the perception of Ningbo included human webs of influential families from its surrounding smaller towns, notably Cixi to the Northeast.²⁶ The financial resources for investment in new trade opportunities in Shanghai and overseas was vital. In observing the decline of importance of Ningbo overseas trade with the Philippines and Japan since the 17th century and the loss of the status as key commission port between Southern China and the Northern ports in Shandong and Tientsin, Richthofen concluded that the Treaty Port system and the forceful opening of the Qing Empire to foreign powers had a mixed effect on Ningbo. While it had led to a decline of traditional trade connections, it also set free new creative potential among the Ningbonese.²⁷ “The influence that the Ningpo [sic!] people have gained in Shanghai is very peculiar and noteworthy.”²⁸ He claimed that Ningbonese had taken over the Sampan business and controlled the Coolie business in Shanghai. The small and

²³ Richthofen, *China* III, pp. 636-38.

²⁴ Ferdinand von Richthofen, „Ueber den natürlichsten Weg für eine Eisenbahnverbindung zwischen China und Europa“, in: *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, I (1874), pp. 115-126; Idem, “Ueber die centralasiatischen Seidenstrassen bis zum 2. Jahrhundert n.Chr.“, in: *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, IV,5 (1877), pp. 96-122.

²⁵ Richthofen, *Tagebücher*, II, p. 6.

²⁶ Richthofen, *Tagebücher*, II, p. 7.

²⁷ Richthofen, *Tagebücher*, II, pp. 6-7; „Ferdinand von Richthofen’s Aufenthalt in Japan. Aus seinen Tagebüchern des zweiten Aufenthalts in Japan, 1870/71“, in: *Mitteilungen des Ferdinand-von Richthofen-Tages* 1912, Berlin 1912, p. 157.

²⁸ Richthofen, *Tagebücher*, II, p. 6.

“Cheap Jack” trade as well as large parts of the commodity trade seemingly fell into the hands of Ningbo merchants. Thus, Richthofen concluded, “the Shanghai people cannot compete with the [Ningbo people] in almost any business or direction.”²⁹

While occupying key businesses in a trans-local fashion within the Qing Empire, the Ningbo overseas trade and commercial businesses also returned. They did so partly through the use of the smaller ‘imperial’ powers in their attempts to secure a share in the vast domestic and East Asian sea trade, e.g. Prussia and the German Hanseatic sailing companies, and partly through exercising their own might. Richthofen observed this increasing dominance of Chinese trading houses overseas, some of them based in Ningbo, in Yokohama in 1870.³⁰ The European trading houses in China and Japan were struggling to survive financially and to get a sustained foothold into the imperial Treaty Port system of trade. One of the main reasons for Richthofen’s extended China travels was in fact the urgent request of the International Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai to explore investment options in coal mining and infrastructure that would make up for the failing trading balance in the treaty ports.³¹ Yet Richthofen’s observation of long-distance connections and Chinese agency in forging them bears deeper meaning than just an applause to observe the success of Ningbonese around the world. Richthofen was speaking in his works to the social imaginary of the European audiences, in particular to the German. He suggested to the Prussian and later German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck that Ningbo and its outlying islands of Zhoushan were the ideal place to invest, trade and collaborate as Germany was slowly turning its dream of an Empire in the East into an aspiring reality.³² “In a country, in which everything seems to be amalgamated and

²⁹ Richthofen, *Tagebücher*, II, p. 7.

³⁰ *Tagebuecher Japan*, p. 157.

³¹ *Baron Richthofen's Letters*, 1870-1872, 2nd edn, Shanghai 1903; *North China Herald*, 14 November 1868, p. 557, 30 November 1869, pp. 628f., and 4 January 1870, n.p.

³² See Yü Wen-tang, *Die deutsch-chinesischen Beziehungen von 1860-1880*, Bochum 1981, pp. 155-164; Helmuth Stoecker, *Deutschland und China im 19. Jahrhundert. Das Eindringen des deutschen Kapitalismus*, Berlin (East) 1958, pp. 62-84.

undifferentiated, this localized pre-eminence of talents and directions of the entrepreneurial spirit is a most notable fact.”³³

The human web of local connections that forged communities of trade, commerce and opportunities in sometimes friendly cooperation, sometimes fierce competition with foreign and other local networks was not only observed by foreigners. While the perceptions of outsiders on local connections can overlap with misperceptions of global or trans-local experiences, we can also find traces of global connections forged by Ningbo agency. The thriving steam shipping lines that challenged the traditional junk trade emanating from Ningbo as central port of Chinese North-South commissioned trade also opened new opportunities for professional local human webs. One group that emerged long after Richthofen had left China to lecture at German universities on the geography of Asia and China were the Ningbo white collar workers on German shipping lines that served on the Imperial shipping routes to East Asia and on the Atlantic fast steamer lines to the Americas.³⁴ It is long known that especially Cantonese labourers were hired by British and German steam companies for work in the boiler rooms.³⁵ Their crews worked for lower salaries than the Germans, a fact that caused massive irritations among the German socialists in the 1890s who called – rather against their internationalist spirit of worker solidarity – for the national protection of boiler room seafarers

³³ Richthofen, *Tagebücher*, II. p. 7.

³⁴ See the pioneering study of Jane Sirong Wu, “The Chinese ‘Rope Roads’ to Germany. Chinese sailor migration, migration community building and transnational civil society in Hamburg, 1880-1930” (MS BA thesis International Studies, University of Nottingham Ningbo China, 2018).

³⁵ Lars Amenda, *Fremde – Hafen – Stadt. Chinese Migration und ihre Wahrnehmung in Hamburg 1897-1972*, München-Hamburg, 2006; Sebastian Conrad, “The politics of segregation: Chinese workers, global networks and the ‘colourless peril’,” in: Idem, S. O’Hagan (trans.), *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 203-274; S. Küttner, *Farbige Seeleute im Kaiserreich. Asiaten und Afrikaner im Dienst der deutschen Handelsmarine*, Erfurt 2000.

and workers.³⁶ The German Reichstag in 1898 backed the steamship companies in utilizing Cantonese boiler crews on the Indian Ocean and East Asian routes.³⁷

White collar jobs, better paid and of higher status such as stewards and washers, remained an opportunity for Chinese labour. The German steamship companies *Hamburg-Amerikanische Paketfahrt Gesellschaft* (HAPAG) and *Norddeutsche Lloyd* (NDL) as the most prominent lines running from Hamburg and Bremerhaven increasingly employed through agents in Shanghai a large number of Chinese washers on their ships. Almost all of them came from Ningbo.³⁸ Jane Sirong Wu has shown in her study on these workers that they were very sophisticated in creating their own businesses on those ships.³⁹ They also used this privileged position to dominate the Chinese overseas communities in Hamburg and Bremerhaven through a trans-local connection that depicted these influential overseas Chinese communities more as particular Ningbo overseas cultures and sub-milieus.⁴⁰ Not only did Ningbo workers occupy these important positions on the ships, but they also built with entrepreneurial creativity their own washing business into the fabric of steam ship connections by monopolizing this labour niche and hiring their own crews within the ship crew.⁴¹ During the mid-1930s, the *HAPAG* had to explain to the highest German taxation courts how was it possible that they had overseen to pay income tax for a huge number of Chinese washers, all from Ningbo and many of them

³⁶ Pro memoria report for the Hamburg Senate on “The use of Chinese and Negro workers on Hamburg Shipping Lines”, Hamburg 5 July 1889 in: *Staatsarchiv Hamburg (StA HH)*, 111-1/66659, No. 3 attachment; August Bebel (Socialdemocrat), 8 February 1898, in: *Stenographische Berichte des Deutschen Reichstags (StBDRT)*, 9. Leg.-Per., 1897/8 Vol. II, p. 903.

³⁷ Voting result for the *Dampfersubventionsvorlage* in: *StBDRT* 1897/8, II, p. 1155.

³⁸ ‘Königin Louise’ under ‘Ship Descriptions – K,’ in: *The Ships List*, Version 1 Nov. 2009.

<https://www.theshipslist.com/ships/descriptions/ShipsK.shtml> (last accessed 30 October 2020); *Stadtarchiv Bremerhaven (StadtA BH), Einwohnermeldekartei Alt-Bremerhaven (1890-1930)*, C: Chinesen auf Dampfer Königin Louise, fols. 1-9. H. Ziegler, *Bremens politische, ökonomische und soziokulturelle Beziehungen zu China bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Göttingen 2003, p. 119.

³⁹ Wu, “The Chinese ‘Rope Roads’ to Germany”, p. 28.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-8.

⁴¹ See the correspondence between different tax courts, the *HAPAG* and the First Washer Jin Yongring in: *StA HH, Depositum HAPAG*, 621-1/ 95/ 1885.

permanent residents of the towns of Bremerhaven and Hamburg.⁴² It became obvious that the Ningbo washer leaders, the ‘No. 1’ in the internal hierarchy of localized professional networks, had commissioned among their social network plenty of jobs as washers yet had hired them through the official *HAPAG* system. Fiscally, most washers were employed by the *HAPAG* but also paid commission to the ‘No. 1’ while a side business included the independent hiring of washers by the ‘No. 1’.⁴³ From the sources that indicate a dominance in Ningbo washers already in the 1900s it emerges an increasingly flourishing business that was solely built on local *guanxi* and showed the quality of global long-distance connections of an interpersonal business network that was able to fill out the imperial structure of German shipping lines with subaltern lucrative agency.⁴⁴ The social space of Ningbo that was constituted as overlapping networks of family and *guanxi* ties related to professions rendered the place of a city into a connecting point of human agency that gave global connections different meanings beyond the assumed way of imperial dominance and colonial submission.⁴⁵ Ningbonese washers as subaltern actors ‘dominated’ the washing business on almost all German steamer lines against the classically assumed hierarchies of race or class.

What becomes clear from these casuistic observations is that the sense of place and the category of space in order to analyse human agency is closely related to the way in which we embed the local in the international. Borders as traditional markers of hedged space become blurry and relative to the extent that we connect these places through the understanding of interactive

⁴² Decision of the *Reichsgerichtshof der Finanzen* Munich, 24 February 1937, in: *StA HH, Depositum HAPAG*, 621-1/ 95/ 1885.

⁴³ Jin Yongring to *HAPAG*, Bremerhaven 2 August and 13 September 1937, in: *StA HH, Depositum HAPAG*, 621-1/ 95/ 1885.

⁴⁴ See e.g. Gregor Benton, “Chinese Transnationalism in Britain: A Longer History”, in: *Identities. Global Studies in Culture and Power* 10,3 (2010), pp. 347-375, pp. 349-51; McKeown, “Ethnographies”, p. 354.

⁴⁵ Ahiwa Ong, Donald Nonini (Eds.), *Underground Empires. The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*, London – New York 1996, pp. 11, 21; Gregor Benton, Edmund Terence Gomez (Eds.), *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present: Economy, Transnationalism, Identity*, Basingstoke 2008, pp. 11-12. More general: Simon Potter, *British Imperial History*, Basingstoke 2015, pp. 114-120; Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History*, Basingstoke 2013, pp. 86-89.

social spaces and a more dynamic definition of connections that span long distances. The apparent opposition of bordered space immanent in a more traditional local or regional history and the border-crossing perspective of global history in which encounters with the other produce new forms of interaction fades away.⁴⁶ Instead of spatial continuities, the overcoming of hedged space gains relevance through movements in time. To embrace spatial categories like Ningbo as a place and its social spaces of interaction through local webs as one dimension of international relations means that one important aspect of a new global perspective is to analyse differentiated processes of globalizations through the lenses of actors that define their spaces and spatial relations through connecting local places in overlapping webs.⁴⁷ This dimension of trans-locality also avoids to fall into the trap of pre-conceived European categories of the territorial fixed spatial nation state that is increasingly questioned as the foundation of classical International Relations. By taking Richthofen's imperial gaze on trans-locality and Ningbo's entrepreneurial washers on German imperial shipping lines as examples, we grasp the full meaning of the sense of place and the dynamics of a 'spatial turn' that provide new dimensions to understand globalizations and their manifold repercussions in localized contexts.

⁴⁶ Paulmann, "Regionen und Welten", p. 660.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 668.