# Between Time and Space

# Between Time and Space

Edited by

Sulevi Riukulehto

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Between Time and Space

Edited by Sulevi Riukulehto

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library



ISBN (10): 1-4438-7544-9
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7544-8

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

# LIST OF TABLES

# PREFACE

Over the past 15 years, a growing number of scholars in the humanities and social sciences have turned their attention to space as a means of understanding historical processes. Perhaps this is also a part of what has been called the cultural turn. The temporality of space and the spatiality of time are crucial to the ideas behind the various discourses of cultural heritage, narrations and of collective memory. These themes have successfully spread among historians, geographers and architects alike (Diaz Viana 2013, 91–113; Sanabria 2011; Rincón 2010; Lorenz 2012; 36–43; Ortiz García 2008). Conferences have been arranged specifically concerning the meaning of space, and special sessions of regional history have been included as part of larger conferences. Also this book was born as the result of the work done in two international meetings: the gathering of historians, regional scientists and geographers at the RSA European Conference of 2013 in Tampere, Finland and the RSA World Conference of 2014 in Fortaleza, Brazil. In addition, one of the chapters – written by Krzywoszyński – is based on ideas originally presented in the ISSEI World Conference 2012 in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The overall theme for all the cases in this book is the interface between time and space. We are interested in phenomena in which both time and space are equally relevant. Sulevi Riukulehto's review of the variation in works written under the heading of regional history serves as an introduction to the theme. In Chapter One he identifies five different ways of defining regional history. Some of them already have been traditions for centuries, such as the Central European *Landesgeschichte* in which old principalities or potential states are seen as subjects of regional history. More recently, however, many historians have moved their attention from the old administrative bodies (such as principalities) to less institutionalized regional formations. Then regional history is situated somewhere between the local and national levels. Also cross-border and cross-cultural areas as well as entirely artificial areas have served as bases for the regional-history point of view. The territorial area thus covered is not necessarily small: a history of an international macro-region may cover half a continent – or even more.

In the diversity of regional histories, Riukulehto finds some overarching features that will also be present in the case studies of the later

chapters. In regional history national states do not have a special role; regions are understood as evolutionary processes in which time and space – history and region – are connected in research questions. There also are some commonly popular subjects of research: borders, the roles of minorities and otherness.

The whole world will be toured in this book in order to further illustrate the entanglement of time and space. The first example comes from Central Europe. In Chapter Two Michal Semian deals with the historical regional discourse and context. He analyses three different regions in Czechia, discussing the influence of historical events and changes on the reproduction of these regions. He states that a region as a social construct and the existence of a regional identity are two of the most critical aspects of the existence of a region. Conceptualizing a region in this way enables him to go beyond the traditional static paradigm, and it makes the region a subject of study in historical geography where the region is no longer a mere object or a category. Semian's chapter is a part of the mosaic of ongoing research projects focusing on the conceptualization of "geosocial regionalization". Here we have an example of the interesting expansion of the discussion when both time and space are equally taken into attention. Neither geography nor history can alone completely fulfill the research needs arising from Semian's topic. In the conclusion of the chapter, modern Czech history is periodized according to geosocial influences. Furthermore, the importance of natural, landscape and administrative features to the reproduction of region is stressed, and related research on the perception of the region by its inhabitants in the future is suggested.

The space of the eminent and historically rich West Wits Line gold mining region in the West Rand of South Africa is explored in Chapter Three. Elize S. Van Eeden's special challenge is how to operate within a regional-history framework with the broad theme of ecohealth and wellbeing. The approach to regional history will also be weighed against recent international trends regarding the understanding of region and place and the doing of regional history in an early 21st century context. Van Eeden's contribution also belongs to a larger multidisciplinary project in which regional history only forms one part. Her research team follows a methodology coined as Integrative Multidisciplinary (IMD) research, which is also introduced in Chapter Three. We see that historians should not and cannot play alone.

In the fourth chapter Mark Davey documents the history of governance and planning in New Zealand's largest city-region, Auckland, from the 1840s up until the wholesale reform of 2010 when governance in the

region was unified into one "super-city". In doing so, this documentation illustrates how inter-organizational rivalry between local authorities, born from ad hoc governance arrangements, can have a crippling effect on regional planning endeavors, aspirations for regionalism and, most importantly, on a region's development. According to Davey, the future success or failure of city-regions relies, in part, on their management and the architecture of the institutional and administrative structures which govern them. Again, both time and space matter.

William Ricardo Marquezin and Adriano Rodrigues Figueiredo focus their eyes on the most recent economic history of the State of Mato Grosso in Brazil. Due to its socioeconomic heterogeneity, the region has perpetuated municipal economic inequalities that have their roots in history. As economists, Marquezin and Figueiredo approach their subject quantitatively with econometric instruments. They investigate how intergovernmental transfer policies, with an emphasis on the Municipalities' Participation Fund (MPF) and the quota share of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) of each city, contributed to the growth of per capita GDP between the years 2001 and 2010. In the methodology, Exploratory Spatial Data Analysis (ESDA) was used. The municipalities' participation fund was shown to be not significant, indicating that the Municipalities' Participation Fund did not have a favorable impact on the real per capita growth of these municipalities. The per capita GDP growth of the municipalities was explained by the distribution of the per capita GST. It sharpened regional income disparity, proving to be ineffective, which also suggests the necessity of rethinking the redistributive criteria in favor of less favored regions.

Otherness as a popular research subject is in focus in Chapter Six. Przemysław Krzywoszyński brings us back to Europe, presenting the image of "others" in some examples of post-Napoleonic romantic operas. Exotic civilizations fascinated composers of staged works, especially in the 18th-century French court; the most characteristic work concerning "other" civilizations was the opéra-ballet *Les Indes galantes*. In the time of colonial conquests and independence movements, the conflict of civilizations and the image of confrontations between them became a very important theme in librettos and in musical forms of the time. Regional identities were manifested in a cultural form. The characters and local communities in these works were described by means of interesting musical techniques and fine artistic effects. The composers created dramas in which conflicts between communities were, on the one hand, a good background for the dramatic plot; on the other hand, the artists were able

to express their personal political support for independent movements and use such a work as an analogy for contemporary events.

In the final chapter Sulevi Riukulehto and Katja Rinne-Koski introduce how history and geography link others seamlessly on the personal level in historical consciousness. Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski study conceptions of home in its broader meaning of *Heimat*, as a question of belonging to somewhere. How do the inhabitants of the Lake Kuortane area, in Finland, see their home? What are the key factors and deeper structures of their home in historical and geographical perspectives? Riukulehto's experiential theory of home serves as a theoretical framework for the chapter. It provides that every person has a specific, unique perception of home that has been built and is continually being built from experiences. The perception of home is revealed in personal memories and in homey landscapes. These are interpretations of important places (geographical interpretation) and events (historical interpretation). Thus, home is a personal relation to both history and geography at the same time. In short, home as *Heimat* means the totality of the things among which an individual feels at home.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the contributors of this volume for their effort and patience in making this book idea possible. I would also like to acknowledge the following projects and institutes for their sympathies and time resources in writing and editing this book: the research and development project of regional history (University of Helsinki), the project Geosocial Regionalization: General Questions, Methodological Approaches and their Verification (Charles University in Prague), the Historical Geography Research Centre (Czech Science Foundation), the CAPES project (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) in Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso, Brazil and the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF).

This book would never have been completed without the unselfish work of numerous commenters, proof readers, technical assistants and other actors in various countries and universities. The whole team of authors sincerely thank you for your contribution.

# CHAPTER ONE

# REGIONAL HISTORY BETWEEN TIME AND SPACE

SULEVI RIUKULEHTO

A branch such as regional history does not yet really exist in the family of human sciences. But it should exist. Regional vision would be highly useful in historical analysis in a world where national borders are inexorably losing their importance. The fact that regions remain important is not a new finding. John Dewey reasoned in *Dial* in 1920: "the locality is the only universal" (cited in Hurt 2001, 176). Dewey's statement is still valid – or more valid than ever – in our global world of localities.

History has traditionally focused on national characteristics. Specifically, attention has been paid to national history and to those events thought to have particular national significance. Historians have assumed that they were serving in a national mission – and honestly: this attitude has often gone so far as to result in writings of pure indoctrination. Historians have taught people something about their national identity, their national situation and particularity. In some countries historical sciences are still divided into national and general history. This is the case, for example, in Finland. Of course, many disciplinary branches of history have developed and strengthened during the 19th century, including economic and social history, and the history of ideas. Interestingly, the same kind of separation between national and general has not been made in other sciences: specialization in national biology or national physics, for example, sounds ludicrous. Strict differentiation has not been made even in all national sciences. Finnish language and literature are studied in Finland but certainly there is no branch of Finnish economics, or Finnish anthropology. Historians are exceptions. They seem to have – or perhaps they have simply undertaken – a specific national mission. This is not a Nordic phenomenon, only.

The big names among American historians have often had a strong emphasis on Americanism: events have been explained in terms of

westward expansion, manifest destiny, and in its continuation as the Americanization of Hawaii, Western Samoa, the Philippines, and further across the world (Turner 2008). In the history of ideas, historians have talked about the American mind (Commager 1950, Persons 1958). The basic thesis of the school is that Americanism was not imported from Europe. It was born in the new world. There surely are notable exceptions but, I am quite convinced, the mainstream of French historians has focused on the history of France. They have created French local history and micro-historical research. They have enquired after the French mentality and French identity – and they have found them, too (Braudel 1986/1990; Le Roy Ladurie 2001).

There is no more need for further examples in this introduction. It suffices to note that history has often had and still maintains a strong national emphasis (Isern and Shepard 2006). Naturally there also exist other kinds of historical works as well. I do not state that historians have always and everywhere been moved by national pathos, but I do maintain that the national angle of vision has been all too encompassing. War histories written in two countries with the same available sources have often led to entirely different interpretations. Sometimes it is hard to believe that it really is the same war in question. There are many reasons for this. Sometimes the sources have led a researcher: the sources have easily been restricted nationally though the object of research is spreading cross the border. This causes bias. Or perhaps the historian has been led along certain lines of thought on purpose. The national level has been chosen because it has been demanded. Also the research tradition may have captured a historian. Researchers have been guilty of a kind of myopia when they wish to join the common discourse with their colleagues. It is seductive and usually even functional. Who wants to be a loner? Again, it is important to remember that by the same token, other kinds of histories have surely been done.

## The need for a regional view in history

Time, event, and narrative are basic concepts in history, whereby space, place, and landscape are basic concepts in geography. These two conceptual baskets obviously correspond with each other. The relations between the concepts are quite parallel. Event is a specific, meaningful point in time just like place can be seen as a meaningful point in space. Moreover, history – as a narrative – is an interpretation of time, either personal or collective, just like landscape can be seen as an interpretation of space (about the basic concepts in geography: Tuan 1977/2011, 3–7).

The two baskets are fascinatingly parallel. Both have created large research traditions – history and geography are seen as frame sciences. Researchers of whatever branch usually take one or the other basket as the frame of their research work. Unfortunately the two traditions are often quite separated and operate independently. Historians and geographers could discuss more with each other. And I (although a historian) have to admit that geographers have usually been more interested in time than historians in space. It seems to me that historians have been all too interested in asking what, when and who, and all too lazy in asking where, on what area, and in what direction. All these points of views together would give a fuller understanding also to such deeper questions like why, and with what influences and results? Both time and space matter.

Historians usually take the regional borders for granted. Often they anachronistically project current political boundaries back in time (Binnema 2006, 17). The research area follows the national border or some specific part of it. If the chosen administrative region changes, then so, too, will the historians' research area likewise change. The exploration stops at the border. If a smaller unit is taken under consideration it usually is a politico-administrative part, such as a municipality or county. If a larger area is under analysis, historians will operate on the country level. If national borders are crossed, the study will follow a multiple of national states. Formations of regions, that is, other than administrative levels, have all too often been neglected. But, in reality, phenomena do not stop at the administrative borders (Jordan-Bychkow 2006, 107) General history has the same kind of tendency. The states play central roles in political history: the states make wars and find allies; they secure business relations, they compete in trade as well as in sport competitions. This is made visible in cartography. In political maps, the administrative state jumps out clearly, because it is presented in gaudy colors and strict borderlines. When a border is changed, one color is magically exchanged for another. This is simply imaginary. In reality we seldom have such sharp borders. The demarcation lines in nature, in the built environment, and in cultural phenomena are unclear and blurred.

Many artificial African borders were made as the result of colonial decisions. Indeed, the sphere of cultural and historical influence may, in fact, cross current borders (Pankhurst 1997). But the same kinds of demarcations can easily be found also elsewhere. The frontier between Mexico and the USA cuts violently across an old cultural area of the Pimeria Alta, thereby forming the states of Arizona, USA and Sonora, Mexico (Griffith 2011). This is not because of some cultural or natural

differences, but simply due to bellicose relations between Mexico and the United States.

> [A] unified regional culture spreads over all these political and bureaucratic divisions, split into nation sates, sovereign nations, and administrative jurisdictions, but uniting them into something else, something real, that we call the Pimería Alta (Griffith 2011, 113).

The borderline between the USA and Canada, furthermore, was created in the compromise of 1846. It runs westward from Lake Winnipeg. Everybody understands that the plumb line on the prairie is not a real frontier[1]. It divided the settlements of Oregon. It crudely separated the Indian tribes and metis groups of habitation in the area. It is not a natural geographic border, nor geologic, climatic, linguistic, nor even an ethnic border. No cultural phenomenon follows the 49th parallel. It is entirely a political demarcation. But it has deeply separated Canadian and American historiographies from each other. Both have had interests in their own national history. Neither has given enough attention to cross-border phenomena.

Regional history touches upon these obscured points in traditional historiography. The attention may fall upon cross-national, comparative and borderland histories. Finally, after several decades of the linguistic turn, historians and other history-oriented scholars have deliberately begun using such terms as "region", "space" and "territory" in the context of history. In Europe the rise in importance of regional history and identities may be linked to current efforts at decentralization and regionalization in the European Union, the Europe of Regions (Johansson 1999, 27). But this interest is increasing all over the world. Historians have found various forms of expression for their regional endeavors. Cross-national histories explore the similarities and differences of historical development in two countries. Comparative historians attempt to compare aspects of the countries, borderland histories are those studies that examine the historical significance of the international borders upon the people who lived near such borders. (Binnema 2006, 35–36)

Perhaps it is too early to talk about a new movement, a turn to space, or a spatial turn in history. But new spatial connections can clearly be seen in various forms of history from below, such as the traditions of local history, micro-history and family history. It is an essential part of narrative history and the places of memory (the famous *lieux de memoire* de Pierre Nora 1983–1992) In all these historiographical directions, the role of space must have been taken carefully into account. The specific features of the place – the forum where history is made – may be decisive to historical

analysis. A regional point of view could have much to give in such historiography.

The spatial turn also has connections to the general globalization analysis and the wave of regionalism in the world. The regionalist paradigm is stressing the importance of place in explaining success and failure and the need for endogenous growth strategies (Hise 2009; Klieman 2008; Frisvoll and Rye 2009; Gerber and Gibson 2009). Reflections of regionalism can be seen in policy targets and in programmatic strategies. They are lightly visible in the EU programs of the period 2014–2020 (See for example Horizon, Interreg and Leader programs). The listings of World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage, made by UNESCO, are obvious examples of worldwide political interest in the interface between time and space (Heslon 2008, 24).

The current turn may still have connections to the arrival of institutional and evolutionary drifts in economics; the adherents of new institutionalism are interested in the implications of all kinds of institutional changes in the economy, including the institutions established on a spatial basis (Keating 2007, 158). Again, regional history could be a useful resource in analyzing the interaction on the global and regional levels.

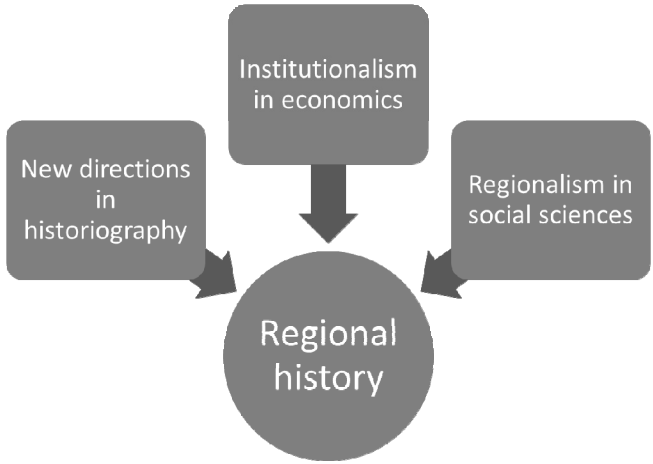


Figure 1-1. Regional history has connections to various trends in history, economics and social sciences.

New Institutional Economics follows the long tradition of the institutional approach when it underlines the importance of "good institutions" in the development process of a region. In economics, authors from Thorstein

Veblen to Gunnar Myrdal emphasized the role of institutions when they studied the politico-economic development of a region. However, the use of institutions in the historical analysis of development remains far from unproblematic. How do we identify the most crucial institutions and their role in historical contexts? How do we dismantle – how do we get rid of – the myopia of the present? Is it possible at all to artificially create – or even to enhance – good institutions? If not, why bother to discover them?

It is logical to interpret regions as institutions, too. These kinds of efforts have been made in many social sciences. If regions are institutions, they have the same features of evolutionary change and institutional rigidity that characterize all institutions. Thus from a regional historian's point of view the institutional framework is acceptable but it has some evident weaknesses, as well.

The evolutionary complexity of institutions is hard to handle and express analytically. More problems will emerge if we understand the regions as processes that are overlapping each other. Regions are both rigid and evolutionary at the same time.

The first requirement for good regional analysis is that we should operate with correct regional units. The top-down regional definitions that are in favor among historians too often remain fictive projections. In historical analysis this is a big problem. At its worst the history is profoundly misinterpreted. Or the other way round: the false regional units are violently kept alive in statistics, and the current administration may operate with regions that do not exist outside the maps of planners.

## Old institutional reasoning of regions

Institutional inertia or rigidity was one of the main elements in the doctrine of the old institutional school. Institutions are always formed throughout history, shaped by previous generations. So, in a way, they are always out of date. Economist Thorstein Veblen labelled institutions as featuring delay, friction, and leaks (Veblen 1909/1961, 240–245). Institutions are dangerously lagging behind the technical development. They always resist changes. They are reluctant to come to terms with new ideas. They do not smoothly support reforms. This fact has both good and sides to it. New innovations are most easily been adopted where institutions are young. Regions with old institutions have to pay "the penalty for taking the lead" (Veblen 1915, 224–228).

The idea of rigidity was further developed by William Ogburn in the 1920s. He saw "cultural lag" as the joint effect of all institutional impact in cultures.

> The thesis is that various parts of modern culture are not changing at the same rate, some parts are changing much more rapidly than others […] Where one part of culture changes first, through some discovery or invention […] there frequently is a delay in the changes occasioned in the dependent part of the culture (Ogburn 1922/1966, 200–201).

Again, Swedish institutional economist Gunnar Myrdal was grappling with the same problem of rigidity in his largest work *Asian Drama* in the 1960s. The new economic practices and ideas could not flourish in South Asia because of such delaying, ancient institutions as the caste system. At the same time, the basic nature of institutions made it really hard to artificially create new, useful institutions. And it also made it difficult to borrow them from the Western World.

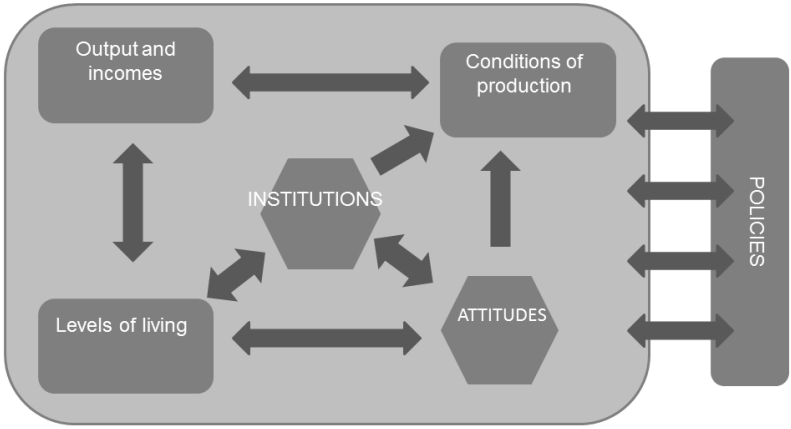


Figure 1-2. The conditions of development in Myrdal's evolutionary model

In a way, the idea of path dependency can be found in Myrdal's analysis: Each region has unique socio-economic conditions. The western success story of development should not be supposed to be repeatable everywhere – if anywhere. Policies create institutions and attitudes and the other way round (Myrdal 1968, 1859–1871). All the alternatives are either not available or cannot be chosen at any one time.

In his model Myrdal differentiates six categories of conditions (output and incomes, conditions of production, levels of living, attitudes, institutions and policies). A change in one condition will tend to change others in the same direction (Figure 1-2). Myrdal's model as pictured above is only an illustrative example of the evolutionary tools that

institutionalists have tried to develop to better catch the procedural nature of socio-economic phenomena.

The institutional framework is acceptable but it has some evident weaknesses. The evolutionary complexity of institutions is hard to handle and analytically express. Myrdal's own masterpieces are illustrative: it took some 2,000 pages for him to describe the situation in South Asia.

We can learn a lot from the works of old institutional economists but their institutional framework is far from perfect. They noticed that the regions are not the same everywhere. However, they did not identify the problem of defining the regional units. Myrdal, like others, took the concept of region for granted, and this, I think, is the problem. It stands in contradiction with old institutional conceptions. Regions are rigid but certainly evolutionary at the same time. In order to get a better picture of different regional phenomena over time, we should not operate with fixed units. Regions defined from the top down do not match up with historical reality. What is a correct contemporary representation of the regional structure may fade into a fictive projection in the context of historical data.

## Regions as institutions

In the recent works of cultural geography and regional history, regions in themselves have also been understood as having an institutional nature. This makes the general view of reality even more complicated. Olivier Nay concludes his study of regions as institutions in the finding that a region, when institutionalized, is not the sum of its sub-regional interests but something more (Nay 1997, 320).

According to Finnish cultural geographer Anssi Paasi, regions are formed in quadripartite institutionalization processes (Paasi 2002, 140). All regions have

1. territorial space,
2. symbolic manifestation,
3. regional organizations, and
4. identity or consciousness of a region.

In Paasi's model the region is institutionalized precisely in this order: forming regional borders is the first phase and regional identity is the last one.

The same interest in regional institutionalization processes can be found in other contemporary discourses, as well. The spatial turn is manifested in the ideas on the new regional history that is challenging the

traditional economic history of regions (e.g. Lancaster et al. 2007). They claim that instead of realities being defined in an a priori manner, set once and for all in history, regions should be understood as evolutionary processes. Basically, in reality, a region cannot be created by a governmental act. It cannot flow top down from the national government. The substantial legitimacy for the existence of a region is first caught by its inhabitants and secondly by the outsiders. The human factors form regional institutions, regional identity, and regions as well.

Regional space can always be characterized by its physical nature, but regions as historical units are never completely determined by their environment. The human factor shapes institutionalized spaces with little reference to geographical context. In such a social process the region is created. Only because the region is a social creation does it always have a history. The mere environment could not have but a natural history. A region's identity, too, depends on human memory – on historical consciousness. Without the human factor a region can have an identity only in the pale meaning of sameness (Ricoeur 2000, 98–128; Riukulehto 2013, 41–45; Piwnica 2014, 18; 129–132).

Forming a region is an evolutionary process. The edges of regions bleed across their boundaries into their neighbors' territories. The regions are socially interdependent. Areas of immediate belonging and familiarity are surrounded by labile zones (Phythian-Adams 2007, 7). It is in such a context that regional institutions emerge from amidst such interaction. Sometimes the formal boundaries divide rather than delimit the continuous areas. So, regions should be seen as constantly ongoing creations of individual and institutional choices, constantly reforming themselves anew. A region is a process and the process is both chronological and evolutionary in nature, that is, a process over time, but one that also simultaneously undergoes spatial change.

However, the great majority of all economic history writing is still grounded on the ideal of the durability of regional structures. The focus is on the nation state or on some sub-division defined nationally. The prevailing vision of a state is a teleological one. The state is still seen as the final target of development history. The same Hegelian teleology has dominated history, economics and political science for two hundred years. History has composed the national history of nation states, written by national historians, just like economic history is dominated by national economists. There have been unorthodox authors, such as the above-mentioned American institutional school manifesting an evolutionary vision in economics. But their voices have been weak and almost

disappeared in Europe before the emergence of new institutional economics and new regionalism at the end of the 20th century.

The authors of the *Agenda for Regional History*, Charles Phythian-Adams and Bill Lancaster, list some crucial criteria for a region. Phythian-Adams starts his definition at the socio-cultural level. He gives us seven key features for defining a regional society:

1. concentration of population;
2. hierarchical structure;
3. intra-dependence of the region;
4. self-identifying;
5. a region's provincial interests against those of national power structures;
6. a demographic concentration (of indigenous families); and
7. a regional sense of belonging together (Phythian-Adams 2007, 8–9).

In addition, Bill Lancaster's list consists of purely socio-cultural factors: space, language, culture, economy, political movements, traditions, and relationships to the nation state (Lancaster 2007, 24). It seems obvious to me that both sets of criteria lead to an evolutionary interpretation of a region. Both authors have listed relevant factors, but the listings are not complete. In addition, other criteria could be made use of in defining a region (like: shared history, religious and intellectual movements etc.)

Another example of the spatial turn in social sciences can be found in the field of political science. Regions and territories have acquired a new focus on the discourse of new regionalism. Specific attention is also given to the definition of a region. Compared to Paasi or to Phythian-Adams, the Spanish political scientist Desiderio Fernández Manjón comes from an entirely different scholarly tradition. His analysis is based merely on José Ortega y Gasset's idea of *circunstancialidad*, that is, a human being is defined by his or her circumstances. Fernández Manjón's criteria of a region include (Fernández Manjón 2010, 68–69):

1. borders;
2. landscape;
3. language;
4. group solidarity; and
5. administrative autonomy.

In spite of differences in their backgrounds Paasi's ja Fernández Manjón's criteria are quite similar. Obviously, territorial space and borders are

different facets of the same phenomenon. Also group solidarity and identity belong together, and autonomy sounds something like organization to me. Paasi's symbolic manifestations (such as monuments) are part of Fernández Manjón's landscape (Fernández Manjón 2010, 25).

The idea of seeing a region as an institution has deep roots in the works of such authors as Paul Vidal de La Blache and Fernand Braudel. Both of them listed the main features of regions long before the rise of theories, such as those mentioned above. The main idea in Vidalian human geography is that any region – such as we see it – is drastically shaped by human intervention (Vidal de La Blache 1903/1994, 26). Geography is a huge history book, the result of ongoing human intervention and action.

Vidal had a great impact on Lucian Febvre and both of them on Fernand Braudel's vision of history. In his last work, *L'identité de la France*, Braudel repeated his famous theory of three kinds of historical changes (events, conjunctures and structures), now specifically connected to regions in history. Besides historical events, historians should also be interested in the slower alteration of conjunctures and the rigid (or almost solid) evolution of structures (Braudel 1986/1990, 15–16; 1958/1969, 44–56).

Regions seem to change their form and nature very slowly, but unavoidably. In Braudel's terminology they certainly are structures. Any administrative boundary and any political frontier, once marked out, has a tendency to persist and become fixed for all time. Braudel gives us plenty of examples, from the Treaty of Verdun to colonial Africa and to the Conference of Yalta, thus repeating the Veblenian (institutional) or Vidalian (human geographic) findings of the rigidity of regions (Braudel 1986/1990, 314–321).

We can easily find more recent examples: German reunification in 1990 ushered in a new era for that once-divided country: the five new *Bundesländer* were no longer forbidden to invoke regional deep structures. The eastern populations desired to escape their East-German label. Individuals refer to their identity as being anchored to specific region. The presence of old regional deep structures is thereby attached to the cultural-historical realm. But, the quarter-century closure of borders has a certain efficacy as well. It has provoked an approximately 2–3 percent difference between the East and West German vocabularies (Lindeborg 1999, 94–97; Fernández Manjón 2010, 72). The differentiation between westerners and easterners will probably persist for decades to come.

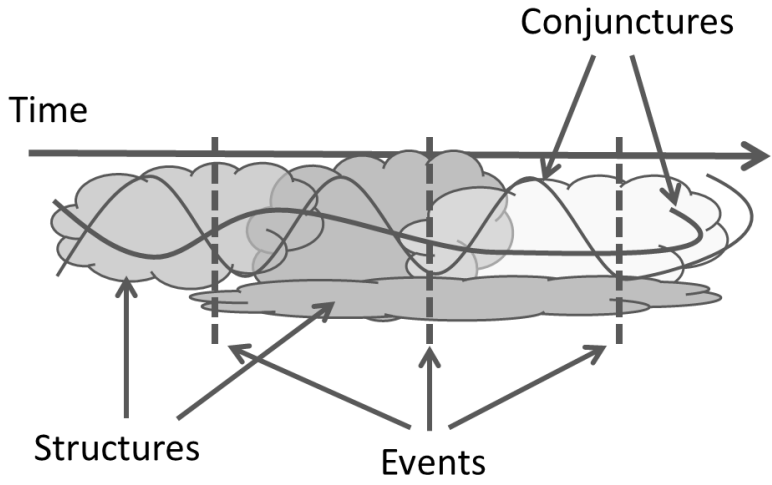


Figure 1-3. Events, conjunctures and structures in history

## The space matters

International networks have grown increasingly complex. They are requiring units of administration that connect with economic and social reality. New non-governmental agencies and institutions have emerged. In this context it is only natural to ask also after a new regional vision of history, a history that exceeds the national level of historiography, studying regions that are not necessarily nations or its administrative sub-divisions. Their form may vary; they may cross national borders. Finally, a nation is somehow understood as an exception of a region, a special case of a regional framework.

The new conditions have already changed our conceptions. Territories are no longer considered interchangeable. They have different histories. Markets, capitalism and entrepreneurial activity are not the same everywhere. They vary not only in time but from one place to another. The context of interregional competition is European and global – no longer national (Keating 2007, 158).

The new regionalism has made regions more visible. The people have always identified themselves as inhabitants of a certain region, so they have a sense of where they belong. But how visible these regions are, either culturally or economically, cannot easily be differentiated in national statistics. In Finland, for example, the most crucial regional

features – (*maakunta* in Finnish) – did not exist in national statistics at all before joining the European Economic Area (Kukawka 2001, 70–71). The administrative regions (provinces) were established in Finland in 1994. The national statistics had already been applied in following the new regional units two years earlier. Still, the operationalization of the regions (i.e. making the regions visible in historical data) is difficult because the existing indicators and historical statistics are, for the most part, created following only the administrative boundaries, not cultural-operational bases. Besides, the historical administrative borders are usually other than those of the modern provinces. The alternative possibility in defining regions is based on the cultural-operational unity of a territory. An area with a common cultural and operational basis can be seen as a coherent region, but collecting and counting statistics from the amoeba-like regions is an operationally hard puzzle to solve. How can one study a region that does not have stable, clearly defined boundaries?

## The concept of a region in historiography

I next try to review a range of the manifold meanings of the concept "regional history" in literature.

If one types in the word-pair "regional history" into a search engine in order to find references, the display will not be filled with listings of books and articles in the tens of pages. Regional history is not an established branch of history. There are not plentiful numbers of international conferences, publication series, and academic chairs in regional history. Over the last twenty years the regional-history point of view has begun to command a place in research reports, projects, history books and other scientific outputs, insofar as half a meter of items can be found even in my own bookshelf. Thus far, the concept is still unestablished. The new regionally oriented directions in historiography are so recent that a generally recognized orthodoxy has yet to be adopted. The various elements from localism to globalization can still be seen. What is a region? There exist competing views concerning the definition and criteria. In this listing I try to make the various meanings of the concept more visible.

**1. There are lively traditions of regional histories in Central Europe under the German label of *Landesgeschichte* and the history of *Heimat.***

Ancient Central European principalities have a flourishing tradition of regional histories that are commonly known by their German name *Landesgeschichte.*

Actually, the history of *Landesgeschichte* is longer than national historiography (Berdah et al. 2009; Řezník 2009). It extends beyond centuries. The ethno-territorial evolution in Europe was distinctive in the early Middle Ages (Tägil 1999; Lindeborg 1999, 64–72; Řezník et al. 2009, 59–60). The old principalities were once more or less independent with their own rulers, laws and cultural specialties. In present-day Germany there were, at the most, two hundred states, both in Italy and Austria several dozens. A similar system of miniature regional bodies reached the large area of Central and Southern Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. A prosperous group of institutions have grown up on these regions. There are regional newspapers, annual books, museums, associations, and foundations. Some of the principalities now exist as part of current federations. A few have continuously maintained their independence as dwarf states (Monaco, San Marino). Still others have regained their independence after a long period of subsumption, or even for the first time (Montenegro, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia). Those who have lost their autonomy have still often maintained various regional institutions and plenty of specific characteristics.

The sense of belonging is also an important factor: these regions are felt homey. They are *Heimat* for their inhabitants (Blickle 2004, 1–9). Demarcation between *Landesgeschichte* and the history of *Heimat* is difficult and useless. Today both seem to be translated into English as regional history (E. g. Berdah et al. 2009, 39; Řezník 2009, 233; Gullberg 1999, 158–164). The German word *Heimat* and the French concept *son pays* are also made use of in English in this connection (Fox 2009, 5; Bozkurt 2009, 21–31; Morley 2000).

**2. Many regional scientists define regions as a level between that of local and national. This conception has also been adopted by some regional historians.**

This is a moderate interpretation of the concept. Regional history thus defined does not radically differ from the traditions of national historiography. Many historians who have specialized in a certain province or county found themselves to be missing from within the circle of regional history (Bucur and Costea 2009; Hoare 2009). Similarly the history of autonomous territories, such as the historiography of Catalonia or the Basque Provinces, can be interpreted as regional history. The difference from national history is not substantial.

**3. Cross-border and cross-cultural areas serve an excellent basis for regional history.**

European regionalism has given a new importance to the histories of areas. In the Europe of Regions much attention has been given to the areas that cross state borders, ethnological borders and linguistic borders. They merely talk about *new* regional history. Such phenomena as divided cities, European Euregions (e.g. *Oderraum*, the frontier area between Poland and Germany from the Baltic Sea to the Czech border), and the contemporary history of so-called potential states (e.g. Galicia) are under analysis, as well as the economic micro-regions inside cities and the identities in micro-regions (Řezník et al. 2009; Persson 1999, 212–249; Ira 2008).

A border can also have a mental nature. Also such themes as immigration and linguistic, ethnic and religious minorities have been studied under the label of regional history. Thus, in France, there are regional history books concerning European immigration, linguistic minorities and the Jewish Holocaust from a regional perspective (Genty 2009; Le Roy Ladurie 2001; Cabanel and Fijalkow 2011).

During the sixth framework programme the European Union funded quite a large humanistic research project, Cliohres. Altogether, 45 European universities participated in the research network. Special attention was given to borders and minorities. National borders are not the only frontiers to cross. Again, many regional historians are interested in invisible borders, such as sexual, professional, ethnic and linguistic (Pintescu 2008; Hofmann 2008; Betlii 2008). Some researchers have made a positive separation from the old *Landesgeschichte* tradition, in the sense that they merely talk about *new* regional history (Eβer and Ellis 2009).

**4. Regional history may study artificial regions.**

Some areas may never have had an historical identity, though they could be reasonably restricted by some research criteria. Such a region is the American Midwest, for instance. The Midwest lacks the kind of geographic, historical and cultural coherence that can be found in New England or in the American South. However, the topic of regional identity can be relevant here as well (Cayton and Gray 2001, 1).

Exemplifying cases can also be found in Europe. Regional scientists have paid attention to unusual regions, such as the Euro-Arctic Barents region in Northern Europe. As many as 146 such regions have been differentiated or named in Europe mostly by the influence of new regionalism (Lord 2006, 1853–1854). Furthermore, they can also be studied from an institutional and historical point of view.

**5. An entirely different meaning for regional history has been developed in the research of international macro-regions.**

Such phenomena as globalization and international business draw attention to the level of continents and free trade areas. This concept is commonly used by economic historians and globalization researchers. They may study large zones, such as Southeast Asia, Central Europe, Mercosur area in Latin America or European development corridors (e.g. a zone from Northern Italy to the Benelux-countries) (Acharya 2012; Tussie and Trucco 2010; Escuder and Iglesias 2010). The macro-regions may be artificial, or then perhaps not. In both cases, they could also be studied by regional historians.

Although the discourses presented above have different origins and although they have developed independently they also have much in common. They are not entirely separated but clustered just like concepts usually are. At least four features connect the different discourses of regional history:

1. National states do not have any special role in research work.
2. Regions are understood as evolutionary processes.
3. Time and space (history and region) are connected in research questions.
4. Borders, the roles of minorities and otherness are popular subjects of research.

## An agenda for regional history?

I next take a deeper look into the various meanings of regional history exemplified by *An Agenda for Regional History*, a book edited by Bill Lancaster, Diana Newton and Natasha Vall (Newcastle 2007; henceforth the *Agenda*). It was the initial intention to collect different authors together under the label of regional history. It may serve as a window to the general view of conceptions concerning regions in current regional works of history.

The *Agenda* consists of 19 articles throwing light on regional history from different points of departure. I try to analyze the different conceptions that can be found in the articles by categorizing them through a number of dichotomies such as simple–complex, static–evolutionary and administrative–discursive. Certain aspects can better be examined through such manifold qualifications as *sub-national – supranational – cross-national* and *geographical – socio-cultural – economic*.