

THE NILE DELTA – A CRITICAL ZONE?

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBAL CHANGE

SEARCHING FOR THE TERRESTRIAL

“The terrestrial is actually a political science term to describe where all of us will finally land at the end of modernism. Thus, it is a concept to describe the Earth, differing from the Globe, [in] a triangle formed between the Globe, the Local, and the Terrestrial”^[1]. The project DE\GLOBALIZE is an example for this search movement for the Terrestrial – using the transdisciplinary concept of the Critical Zone. From 2018 to 2020, three critical zones (IISc Bangalore, Nile Delta & Upper Rhine Valley) are studied.^[2]

HAVE A LOOK  !

ACTOR-NETWORK-THEORY (ANT)

Nature and culture, nature and social issues, as well as technology and social issues are no longer seen as irreconcilable opposites. Within hybrid networks between nature, the world of things and society, numerous actors (or actants) – human, animal, plant, material – constantly create new connections and ensure the emergence of new social bonds and the collapse of others. Things become actants in the play of forces when they have an effect, that is, when their presence or absence would change something essential (e.g. the ozone hole as a hybrid/quasi-object, constituting an actant-network of chlorofluorocarbons, air masses, consumers, industrial plants, environmentalists, etc.).^[3, 4, 5]

CULTURE



THE GAIA-HYPOTHESIS

Gaia, defined as „[the] complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil”^[6], makes reference to the primal Mother Earth goddess in Greek mythology. The Gaia hypothesis proposes that all organisms and their inorganic surroundings on Earth are closely integrated to form a single and self-regulating complex system, maintaining the conditions for life on the planet. The Earth as Gaia is neither only a resource, nor a ward or a breastfeeding mother, it's a living planet.^[7, 8]

NATURE



FIND OUT MORE  !

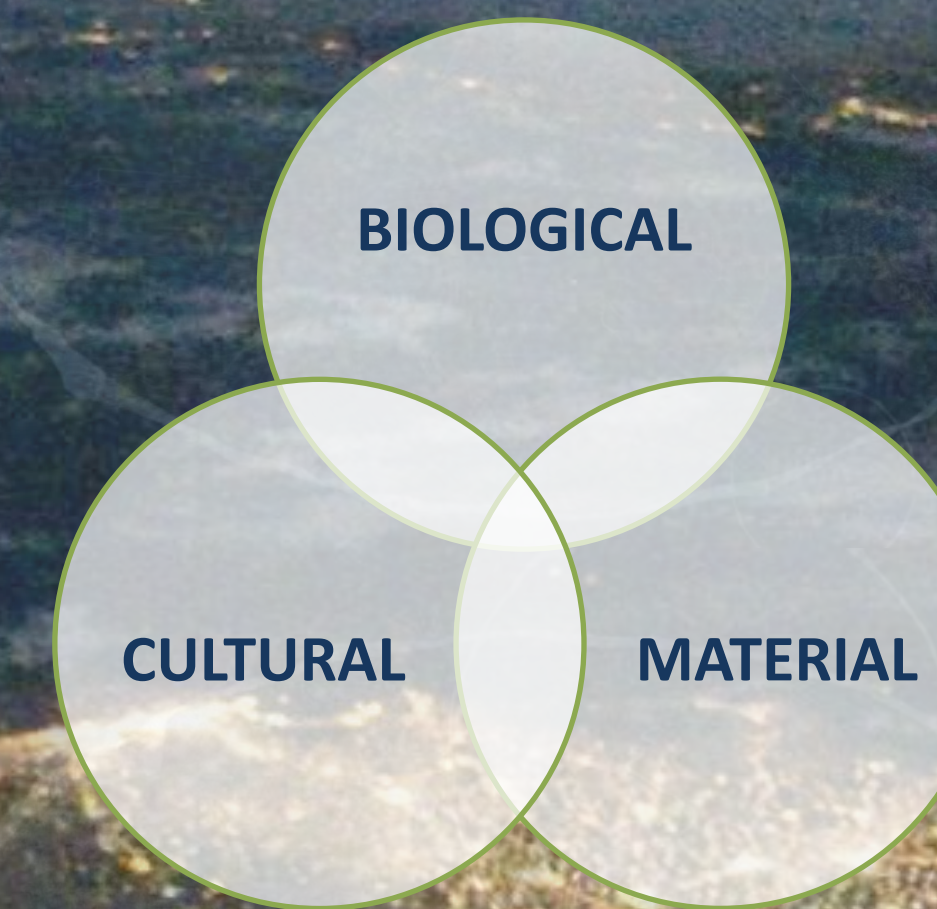
DOWN TO EARTH IN THE NEW CLIMATE REGIME

The observation of Critical Zones of various, shifting dimensions, based not only on ecological crises, but also on questions of politics and cultural history as well as on epistemological changes of perspective, is framed within the assumption a New Climate Regime. This term is used to describe the current global situation, in which climate change, along with other eco-crises call into question the once-universal dream of “development” and globalization, leaving profound disorientation.^[9, 11]

CRITICAL ZONE (CZ)

The term, taken over from the geosciences – originally referring to a spot on the envelope of the biosphere –, is extended by BRUNO LATOUR to describe a critical, participatory relationship of humans to their living environment. Instead of a single human agency “on the nature”, this interdisciplinary approach parses the ideas of the living planet in smaller pieces by tracing diverse combinations of multiple heterogeneous agencies. Within the CZ, all interacting „ingredients“, e.g. laws, cultural and economic practices, political and ethnical conflicts, soil, water, animals, scientific theories, etc. are considered on the very same level.^[9, 10, 12]

MORE-THAN-HUMAN AGENCIES^[9, 13]



THE NILE DELTA

As a main central water resource for ten African nations, the whole region around the Nile basin – stating a population growth of more than 2% a year – could be framed as a Critical Zone. Due to data availability restrictions, this research focusses on **water as a critical matter** in the **Nile Delta Region**. Within this CZ, not only the balance between population and food security is highly affected by the access to water, the criticality also embraces aspects such as water quality or the estuarine ecosystem, forming a complex actant-network, vulnerable to socio-political dynamics and climate change.^[14]

METHODOLOGY

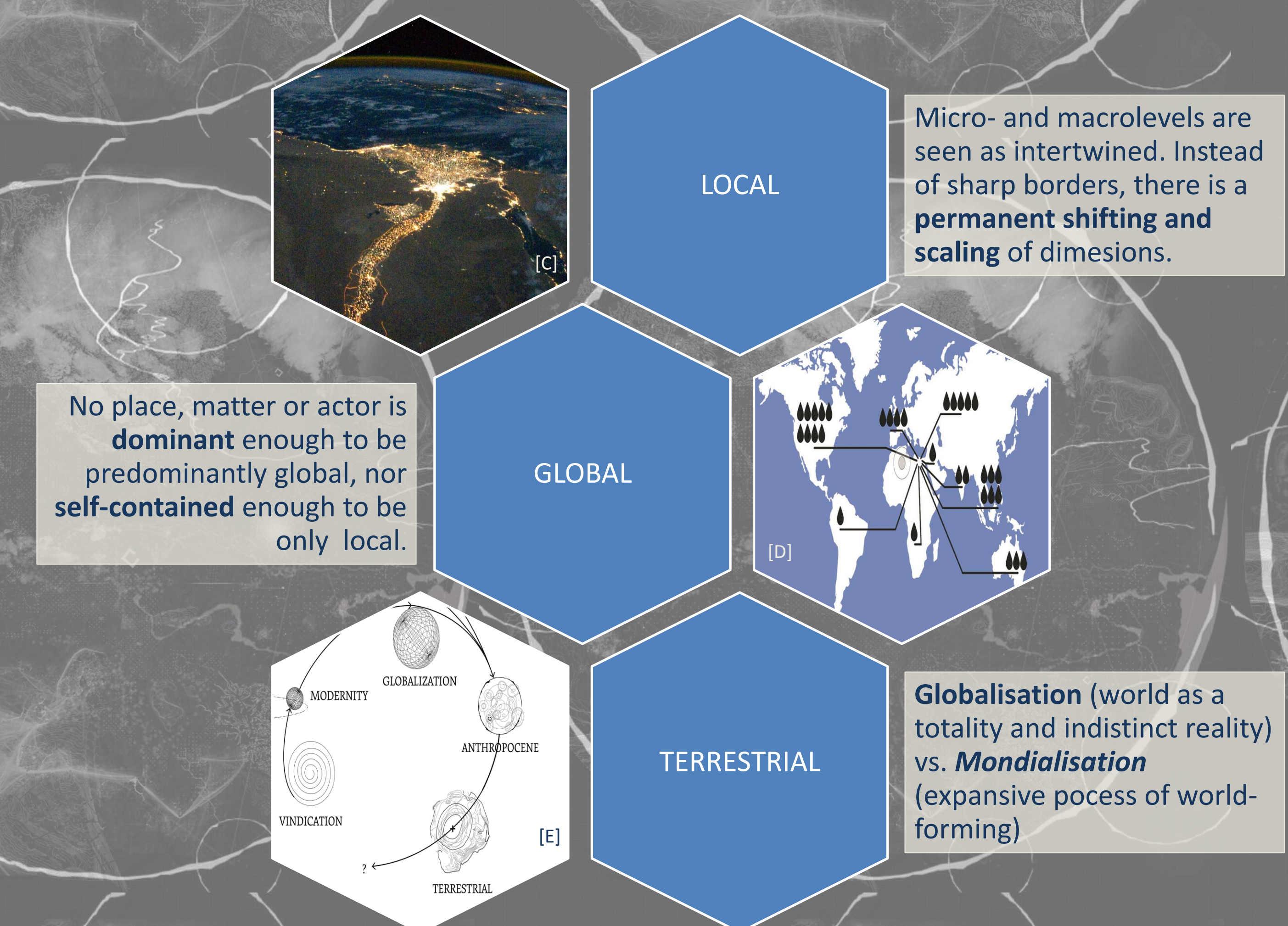


FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE THEORY AND METHODOLOGY BEHIND CRITICAL ZONE RESEARCH:



[C]

INTERTWINED SCALES AND DIMENSIONS^[13, 15, 16]



No place, matter or actor is **dominant** enough to be predominantly global, nor **self-contained** enough to be only local.

Micro- and macrolevels are seen as intertwined. Instead of sharp borders, there is a **permanent shifting and scaling** of dimensions.

Globalisation (world as a totality and indistinct reality) vs. **Mondialisation** (expansive process of world-forming)

GLOBAL

TRENDS, AGENCIES & VULNERABILITIES

DECLINING WATER RESOURCES

POPULATION GROWTH

GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS

RIVERS & ESTUARIES

URBAN AREAS

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURES



PERFORMING THE (DE-)COMPOSITION OF THE WORLD(S)^[13]

CZ-research points out the hybridity between being immersed in and producing criticality through **monitoring** and **responding**.

CRITICALITY & RESPONSIBILITY



VULNERABILITY

By engaging with the term „critical“, both nature and culture are embraced as **vulnerable, unsteady and unpredictable** entities.

Humans, dealing with and entangled in multiple matters of care/concern, are attributed an integral part in **de- and reconstructing criticalities**.

MATTERS OF CARE/CONCERN VS. MATTERS OF FACT



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