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SPECIAL ISSUE INTRODUCTION

# What is "the global"?: reassembling how international lawyers see space and time

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**Abstract**

This introductory article challenges foundational assumptions that structure how international legal theory conceptualizes "the Global." The prevailing approach remains anchored in a Eurocentric legacy that conflates the earth with a geometrically spherical, chronometrically linear, and cartographically fixed model of space and time. This triad has rendered "the Global" an ostensibly objective terrain—embodied by an iconic World Map of states that is presumably atheoretical and transhistorical. I argue this is a form of "misplaced concreteness," which constrains international legal thought as it confronts increasingly fluid and non-contiguous patterns of global ordering that have become difficult to visualize via the reigning cartographic imaginary. Further, it ignores how "the Global" was constructed by multiple and intersecting types of power, which together manifested demarcations, borders, territories and states as proclaimed mimetic reflections of planetary reality. As contemporary challenges—ranging from e.g. climate change to cyber governance—create trans-territorial or planetary scales of consequence, time is ripe to unfold international legal theory beyond the legacy of a priori conceptualization. Accordingly, the special issue encourages bottom-up, practice-oriented approaches, inviting international lawyers to explore how global spatiality and temporality are actively (re)produced across diverse legal contexts—from mobility regimes and global value chains to counterterrorism forums and planetary systems. Rather than treating "the Global" as a fixed totality or singular map, this special issue reframes it as a historically engineered concept, shaped by ongoing practices of geo-political, geo-economic and legal world-making.

**Keywords:** International law; critical geography; geopolitics; legal theory

The concept of "the Global" is taken-for-granted across much legal scholarship. Whether stated as global inequality, global markets, or the global south, the term is shrouded in absoluteness. Re-examining the concept provokes intuitions that physicists and geographers are better consulted over public and private lawyers. Yet, "the Global" is as much a historical, social and legal construction, as it is a geological thing. In fact, the concept is only a few centuries old, and thus historically-specific and Eurocentric in its framing of life on Earth. There is a misplaced concreteness that has defined how international, public, and private lawyers have visualized global space and time.

This special issue seeks to unpack "the Global" as a foundational and epochal concept in the framing of legal space and time.[1] For many international lawyers, such a departure could seem counterintuitive because, traditionally, "the Global" has been perceived as epiphenomenal: a by-product of the territorial system of states and, therefore, inter-state processes (Ford 1999). To discuss globalization, for instance, implied focusing on what kinds of authority have relocated from states to global institutions, and through what formal or informal processes (Pauwelyn, Wessels and Wouters 2014; Rodiles 2018). Pushed into pre-history, however, has been the presumption of territorial demarcation (Branch 2014), with the effect of obscuring how interstate space relies on much deeper spatial and temporal premises (Elden 2005). A notable example being the planet's geometric divisibility into legal parts (Harley 1987), which derives from a view of "the Global" as something singular, homogenous, and universal—in both space and time. As Jens Bartelson has underlined, such framing traces its origin to a conceptual legacy few international lawyers have noticed or considered critically:

> While practices of territorial demarcation date at least back to the thirteenth century, the construction of global space implied that those practices could be justified and carried out . . . .[T]he drawing of such lines was made possible by a prior re-conceptualization of . . . the world as a spherical object (Bartelson 2010).

That re-conceptualization Bartelson identified represents a seminal pre-condition in the making of international legal space. It enabled rival European empires to spatially divide the earth into geometric legal portions, which subsequently became consolidated into a grid of sovereign state territories. In the words of Peter Sloterdijk, the spherical "globe . . . became the central medium of the new homogenizing approach to location (Sloterdijk 2014)." What is more, it has literally informed the "geo" in geography (Yusoff 2018), geopolitics and, by extension, legal cartography, and its spherical image has governed a history of "World Maps" ranging from e.g. Behaim's Erdapfel Globe, the Cantino Planisphere, Vespucci, Waldseemüller, Piri Reis, Agnese, Ortelius, Mercator. This root conceptualization has structured how international lawyers see, know, and act upon the "the Global". Yet, strikingly, that conceptual legacy has eluded disciplinary scrutiny, and despite serious critical inquiry manifest in adjacent disciplines.

## 1. "The Global" as an engineered concept

What this special issue seeks to do is disrupt that inertia, and challenge a conceptualization of "the Global" that has been problematically singular, homogenous, and universal. At risk of sounding glib, the aim is to confront a conceptual zombie, which remains at the deep core of how international lawyers see and know legal space and time. This issue draws motivation from earlier insights by critical geographers (Agnew 1994; Pickles 2004) and international lawyers (Natarajan and Dehm 2022; Lythgoe 2024), who have long cautioned that global "reality" cannot be reduced to a totalized model or depiction (Mickelson 2014). Most notably, a few decades ago, the late critical cartographer Brian Harley forewarned that the cartographic medium—and its "World Map"—had "imprisoned" (Harley 1989) imaginaries of planetary space and places—and by implication international legal ordering as well.

[1]This special issue is a product of the discussions undertaken at the workshop: "What is 'the Global'? Reassembling Authority in Space and Time", June 20–21 2024. The workshop was hosted generously by the Stellenbosch University Law Faculty (South Africa), funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education grant "What is the Global?", and assisted by Tilburg Law School and the Institute for Global Law and Policy of the Harvard Law School. Our special thanks to Dean Nicola Smit and Vice-Dean Juanita Pienaar of the Stellenbosch Law School for their enthusiastic support of both the project and workshop. Thanks to Joanne Scott and Erik Jones of the European University Institute for supporting and hosting a preliminary exploratory workshop in October 2022.

But there is a further real-time problem that inspires this intervention: our human, ecological, and geological world is changing dramatically, and legal rule is simply not what it used to be for international lawyers—even relative to recent decades. Transboundary practices (Bradford 2020), flows, threats (Sullivan 2020), routes, and consequences figuratively pay less attention to a reified World Map of states, and—arguably—inscribe their own heterogeneous and irregular maps (Rankin 2016). What makes that problematic, today, for understanding legal ordering is international lawyers remain attached to a spherical and objectified model of "the Global". However, such dependence confronts the Achilles' heel of any totalized worldview: how inherent geophysical and historical changes ultimately depart from any ideal totality. As Bruno Latour illustrates succinctly:

> $CO_2$ is not spatialized in the same way as urban transport systems; aquifers are not local in the same sense as bird flu; antibiotics globalize the world in a way quite different from that of Islamic terrorists; cities do not form the same spaces as states . . . an economy based on coal . . . does not shape the same struggles as an economy based on oil. And so on (Latour 2017).

Put differently, scholars, practitioners, and humanity-at-large confront a slew of seemingly intractable dilemmas defined by non-geometric and non-linear dynamics. Problems such as climate change, cyberattacks, melting polar ice, viral and financial contagion, mass migration, energy crises, and violent extremism; all manifesting geographies that transcend the international versus domestic model of law, policy-making, and rule (Latour 2017). It is a rescaling of space and time that exposes the profound limits of conceptualizing "the Global" as simply coterminous with a spherical object, which has been at the core of Eurocentric legal imaging (Latour 2016).

The power of that conflation can be explained using David Harvey's notion of time-space compression. Harvey defined the term as follows: "processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter . . . how we represent the world to ourselves (1990)." The spherical globe represented an exemplary instance of time-space compression. What made the concept revolutionary was its erasure of social and ecological relations using a semblance of cold geometry and the illusion of brute geology. It provided a potent conceptual tool to radically reset European understandings of—what we call today—space, which in pre-modern Europe had been defined by a patchwork of discrete human worlds related via cosmologies that answered to "some external authority, heavenly hosts, or more sinister figures of myth and imagination (Bartelson 2010)." Instead, the spherical globe, as time-space compression, asserted that the earth's terrestrial surface was one finite, homogeneous, and calculable surface, which could be rationalized by the mathematical models of geometric space and chronometric time (Harvey 1990).

Yet, the mathematics behind those models have always possessed a gnawing politics, which becomes visible with elaboration. For imperial Europe, the spatial advantage of a spherical globe was its homogenous surface still permitted the expression of hierarchy between European and non-European worlds, which meant racialized divisions could be continued from the pre-modern period (Anghie 2007). Accordingly, the entire world could be depicted in one universal map, but that map permitted visually distancing and, in effect, provincialization of non-Europeans. In sum, the spherical globe emphasized time-space compression largely in geophysical terms, while it was used to sustain social distance between (superior) European versus (inferior) non-European "worlds" (Nisancioglu 2020).

The spherical object and universal map represented a potent tandem that enabled imperial Europe to project its positional superiority and, in turn, demarcate unequal social worlds (Said 2003). A similar rationalization also took place via the calendar and chronometer. Both conflated time with the "tick-tock" of a mechanical clock, which substituted discontinuous rhythms of experiential and ecological time with the linear arrow of universal time—that moved symmetrically forwards and backwards. As David Harvey explains, that re-conceptualization enabled not simply

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retrodiction and prediction, but more significantly the temporal institutionalization: "... of the rate of profit (return on stock capital over time...), the rate of interest, the hourly wage, and other magnitudes fundamental to capitalist decision-making (Harvey 1990)."

In a nutshell, "the Global" as spherical object became reinforced by a triadic concept: spatially geometric; temporally chronometric; and politically cartographic. That triad then brings us to the "gnawing politics" referred to earlier: imperial Europe's flawed presumption that it could profit from time-space compression without collapsing social and racial distance, because territorial demarcation would durably separate European versus non-European worlds (Nisancioglu 2020). However, the presumption was unsustainable because the imagined effects of territorial demarcation were casually premised on earlier scales of population and speeds of movement.

The extent of miscalculation emerges when one compares three rough intervals of time-space compression regarding mobility: horse coaches and sailing ships, in the mid-nineteenth century, averaged speeds of 16km/h; by the early 20th century, locomotives averaged 100km/h and steam ships 24km/h; and, now, in the early twenty-first century automobiles average 120km/h, high-speed trains 200km/h, (diesel) container ships 40km/h, jet aircraft 900 km/h, and email delivery 0.15 seconds. Add to that how worldwide (human) population between 1800 and 2024 expanded dramatically from roughly 1 billion to 8 billion—with 7 billion today (87.5%) not residing in Europe or North America! The political mathematics behind the triad did not foresee population, movement, and distance as dynamic variables, and, consequently the presumed gatekeeping effects of territorial demarcation diminished over time with exponential increases in both human population and speed of movement. As a result, social distancing departed exponentially from the founding imperial expectations of a geometric, chronometric, and cartographic globe.

## 2. International law and its conceptual bubble

For international lawyers, this means ultimately that the discipline has operated, unreflexively, within a conceptual bubble, engineered no less by the shadow of imperial Europe's ambitions and purposes. The problem largely unnoticed to date due to faith in how the linear "reality" of the World Map and the chronometric passage of time would, ultimately, push uncomfortable legacies into *passé* irrelevance (Kratochwil 2014). As such, international lawyers could freely move on, and merely administer and query International Law relative to "the Global" surface that history bequeath by default. Whatever "meta" debates that could arise would not forestall walking onward securely in the belief that legal geography had achieved an "end of history" after Alexander von Humboldt and Karl Ritter formalized the mapped ubiquity of geographic science (Schlögel 2016).

However, over-reliance on that spatial and temporal reification, combined with blindness to its visual capture, have left a "gnawing" atrophy at the epistemic core of the present discipline: International Law has operated within an imperial and flawed conceptualization of "the Global", which has come at the price of impoverishing its language, theorizing, and geographic literacy vis-à-vis the historicity of legal space, time, and its changing tableaus of global ordering (Harley 2001). This all implies considerable stakes for international lawyers, because the "World Map" of states may represent the most conceptual, normative, and material point of origin for the doctrinal field. Imagine the proposition: IL is less an independent and insulated discipline, and more the tributary of an engineered scheme of social distancing and imperial hegemony? With the celebrated assertion of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, ironically, capturing the taken-as-given trap: "... the relations law entertains with social reality are much similar to those between maps and spatial reality. Indeed, laws are maps; written laws are cartographic maps; customary, informal laws are mental maps (1987)."

That might explain how "methodological territorialism" (Brenner 1999) continues to monopolize the scope and terms of inquiry that international lawyers apply, even when examining groundbreaking spatial developments such as the pronouncement of the *Anthropocene*

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(Harrington 2016), global value chains (IGLP 2016), drone and shadow warfare (Lubell and Derejko 2013; Niva 2013; Gregory 2015), or global surveillance systems (Severson 2015). Notwithstanding that such powerful trans-border developments suggest radically new trans-territorial geographies of authority, which defy ready translation using geometric space, chronometric time, and cartographic geopolitics. Yet, transformation of legal ordering is hardly novel, since earlier historical periods involved territorial and trans-territorialized schemes of spatial authority (Ruggie 1993).

As such, what makes the present rise of trans-territorialized authority seem so disruptive is the way it grinds against an impoverish conceptual legacy, which has been masked over centuries by billions of mappings that have equated "real" geography to a spherical object (Pickles 2004). With the problem being that this foundational conceptualization has narrowly filtered what international lawyers see as the boundaries of geopolitical and geo-economic authority. This imaginary became the visual means for engaging the planet: an essential part of *seeing* "the Global" *as it is* versus what it *may otherwise be*. However, the construction of such a reigning imaginary involved more than just disseminating and popularizing cartographic maps to form a graphic regime. Above all, the making of "the Global" involved multiple and intersecting types of power, which together manifested demarcations, borders, territories and states as proclaimed mimetic reflections of planetary reality.

This has left international lawyers—among many experts—stuck to an eternalized "World Map" of states that hinders scrutiny into novel kinds of spatial and temporal boundaries which define "the Global" in present-day practices. With few scrutinizing how a problematic conceptual legacy has stood at very root of their disciplinary enterprise (Schmitt 2006). That goes back to the "misplaced concreteness"—mentioned earlier—regarding how the *res*, or material thereness, of "the Global" is more complex that just a spherical object. Rather, it is defined by evolving assemblages of maps, lists, algorithms, guards, fences, gates, ISO standards, weapons, passports and other technologies, which have given material life to a grand theory that the Earth's legal order is reflected by a jigsaw-puzzle map of state units.

## 3. The "Business of Seeing" the global

Notably, the significance of how one *sees* the legal world has gained focus in recent years in disciplinary International Law. David Kennedy has emphasized how varied lawyers and experts each struggle to impose their professional image on how to see the current state of "the world" (2016). Martti Koskenniemi has underlined the significance of legal imagination in shaping perceptions of the "international", and in turn the way such imagination has been framed via prevalent vocabularies and established assumptions. As Koskenniemi has explained:

> Any . . . imagining takes place within the frame of the possibilities offered by vocabularies "lying around" when it commences. The frame is constituted in part of what the lawyer or political thinker learned during formal education, in part of the accumulated experience that forms the general sensibility of people in those kind of positions, their consciousness of the world and of their place in it . . . . Many vocabularies—religious, scientific, political—complement them to provide the totality of materials from which a sensibility emerges . . . They synthesise elements of the past and make its multiple aspects stand for a limited set of ideas enabling us to orient our political intuitions and projects today. But they also act as epistemological obstacles . . . blocking thinking and simplifying a varied and multiple reality into generalisations with unsustainable casual relations that produce a bad guide for the future (2023).

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These interventions by Kennedy and Koskenniemi provide a seminal opening within international legal theory because they emphasize a dimension of perception and social imagination that international lawyers scantly acknowledge, whether in doctrinal practice or scholarship. Each underlines the intimate connection between practices of seeing, world-making, and what international lawyers come to perceive and act upon as "the Global" (Shim 2014). However, the nature of those insights are not completely new. In fact, they echo Benedict Anderson's earlier interventions with historians, sociologists and anthropologists on the need to grasp social arrangements, like nations, as "imagined communities" (1991). Transferring Anderson's assertion into the discipline and profession of International Law, one could similarly assert that international lawyers—as a social arrangement—are likely shaped by a governing imagination of "the Global". An imagination animated by dominant images, pictures, maps, and theories, which cohere socially into a collective vision of—as John Ruggie once coined it—"what makes the world hang together (Ruggie 1998)".

In this way, international lawyers can be understood as actors that—like everyone—are governed by practices of seeing and thus a "circumference of vision" (Burke 1969). "The Global" that any lawyer claims to see, know, and act upon always mediated by varied concepts, maps, models, tools, or frameworks. Those items constituting the practices of seeing that make the earth "what we see it to be" in any given moment and context. As Nicholas Onuf underlined: "the worlds that we make for ourselves . . . look the way that they do because of the ways that we go about the business of seeing . . . .(Onuf 2013)." Notably, such an awareness has grown regarding the hybrid dynamic between theory and reality, punctuated by Sir Daniel Bethlehem's 2014 inaugural lecture for the Sir Eli Lauterpacht series. A lecture titled, "The End of Geography", and published—with canonical significance—by the *European Journal of International Law*:

> . . . [O]ur current conception of jurisdiction is overwhelmingly territorial in character, even in its non-obviously territorial dimensions. It is rooted in analyses of the 1930s that have developed little since then. While the challenges of the future may continue to be squeezed into this framework, with greater or lesser adequacy and effectiveness, this is not ideal. Issues of cyber, of the global environment, and of other transboundary matters could do with some creative thinking about how we approach questions of jurisdiction. [ . . . ]
>
> Geographers have a good fortune that lawyers are denied. The law is not about eternal things. It is about the here and now. It is about how humankind organizes and manages its society. We hope that the law is of consequence, and it is our calling to work to this end. But the law can become old-fashioned. Mountains may only rarely change their position, and oceans only very rarely empty themselves of water. But the law is both more vulnerable and more adaptable. The place of geography in the international system is changing. It presents challenges to international law. These are challenges to which we must all rise (2014).

The "End of Geography", according to Bethlehem, meant recognizing that disciplinary International Law had over-relied on *a particular* geography of "Global", which overlooks the ahistorical and reified nature of that geographic worldview (2014). With current legal practices being, in fact, more spatially heterogenous and transversal than "the Global" depicted by the World Map of states. Yet, there was a bigger problem that Bethlehem touched upon: the substantive and, even, nominal absence of spatial and geographic theorizing within the discipline's repertoire (Bethlehem 2014). This atrophy flowing from how select premises falsely naturalized statist geography as the inherent map of geo-institutional ordering. As Bethlehem noted, such premises were failing versus novel global boundaries, which had already begun reshaping geo-institutional and geo-legal ordering. To such an extent, there was a rethink needed on geographic assumptions and concepts that had long-dominated the doctrinal field.

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However, while Bethlehem's emphasis on dated geography did break ground, the substance of that recognition fell short of something groundbreaking for the discipline. It only touched the surface of a deeper epistemological and conceptual void: International Law rarely acknowledged, or reflected on, the root conceptualization—i.e. the spherical object—that lurked in its normative basement. That lack of acknowledgement visible even in Bethlehem's own critical wording cited earlier: he framed disciplinary Geography as unitary and homogeneous, and seminal notions such as theory and space became obscured via geological metaphors, a plea for "creative thinking", and the vague assertion of a "framework" (Bethlehem 2014). There was scant admission by Bethlehem that International Law was premised not on brute geology but spatial concepts and theory, which then conditioned how international lawyers visualized global legal practices and, consequently, "the Global" itself.

This omission pointed, in fact, to something beyond Bethlehem's individual argument: few international lawyers identify International Law as being tied to a legacy of geographic world-making shaped by imperial Europe's history of conquests. The blindness flowing from a key binary legacy that has governed the modern international lawyer's horizon: International Law was mostly a doctrinal, and less a theoretical, institution. The extent of atrophy becoming clearer when one observes how the text of Bethlehem's critical acknowledgement lacked the language and concepts to convincingly theorize new spaces of geo-legal ordering, because the discipline had so thoroughly internalized concepts and premises from beyond its own disciplinary inquiries.

We arrive, therefore, at a sizeable ontological problem that now confronts international legal theory. In a nutshell, the World Map of states struggles to perform its—traditional—"world-configuring function" (Balibar 2002) in the face of fluid patterns of mobility (e.g. capital, migrants, trade, diseases) and proliferating boundaries. The net result being that "the Global" today is characterized by overlapping, polysemic, and heterogenous boundaries. Further, material appropriation, wealth accumulation, and coercive power increasingly operate via elastic networks. This is all of critical significance for many types of lawyers—not just international—because each have built their disciplines upon the meta-presumption that "the Global" was simply a singular, homogenous, and universal object. A kind of scientifically-vetted mirror of nature—so to speak. However, such a presumption becomes troublesome since no human, social, or cultural geography is ever given or transhistorical, even when buttressed by formal institutions. In fact, change is the only enduring aspect of human geographies and temporalities, and change is often diachronic. Using today's vernacular: there is no past or future "proofing" of any "Global" worldview, only a spectrum of spatial relevance and social weight that ebbs and flows over time.

That brings us to the methodological aim of the issue: to re-visit the concept of "the Global" starting not with a flawed *ex ante* and reified presumption, but with grounded scrutiny into how the concept has been and still is being (re)constructed through varied practices of legal world-making. As such, we want to open space among international lawyers to inquire into the heterogeneous character that globality manifests in everyday space and time. Rather than start with an *a priori* theory on "the Global", the emphasis is on studying what particular legal actors have done and are *doing* with legal space and time. This is a more bottom-up approach, where "the Global" is studied not as a presumed homogenous and universal object, but as an essentially heterogenous and—often—contested concept produced through practices by a range of legal actors, interests, projects, and legacies. We believe time is ripe to unfold international legal scholarship beyond the legacy of an *a priori* conceptualization which has informed much of international legal theory, and encourage greater heterodoxy via research on what communities of actors and scholars are *doing* and *saying* globally.

The general questions we explore across a variety of legal contexts are: how do global spatiality and/or temporality become produced in particular legal projects or contexts? What implications do such insights have for our understanding of global boundaries in this century, and their corresponding practices of legal inclusion and exclusion? For example, while the legal globe can still be presented as consisting of 195 states, to what extent has this become an inadequate framing

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of legal bounding and boundaries on global scales today? What might we be missing out with a conceptualization of "the Global" that is *a priori*, homogenous, and totalizing?

## 4. Outline of the special issue

This issue suggests "the Global" is better understood as a dynamic rather than fixed adjective, because its meaning is attuned to, interacts with, and is shaped by ongoing spatial and temporal practices. The contributors examine "the Global" not as a singular object, but more as a perceived whole composed by variable premises, practices, and enactments. Cumulatively, the articles foreground the rich conceptual politics imbued within the "business of seeing" law's globe. In doing so, the special issue invites international lawyers to consider the complex state of practices and meanings that stand behind "the Global", which by no means are inherent, unitary, and timeless. The intention is to stimulate a new line of interdisciplinary queries, among international lawyers, regarding the appropriateness of an objectified and innocuous approach to "the Global" as a concept. As such, the contributions aim to disrupt a governing imagination within the discipline, and thus spur a more reflexive "geo" conceptual inquiry.

In this vein, Scott Newton's article, *Of Continents and Großräume*, provides a provocative opener because he questions the innocuousness of "continental" geography. Specifically, he underlines that continental geography is not simply tectonic, but also socio-legal ordering on a meta- and macro-scale. As such, the continents are better grasped as under-examined types of *Großräume*, because their mapped meanings derive from an imperial view of European versus non-European space. He thus contends that continentality is both conceptually geological and social, because it has served to geo-politically and geo-racially differentiate "the Global."

In *Re-Defining the Mobility Paradigm in International Law*, Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen and William Byrne target the innocuous absence of mobility within international legal theory. The void, they argue, confronts an empirical reality where the mobility of e.g. "persons, goods, money, information, and pollutants" is central to everyday international practices. What explains that conceptual-empirical disjuncture? Gammeltoft-Hansen and Byrne point to the legacy of sedentarism within International Law, which has privileged static ontologies and, in turn, immobile concepts such as territory and property. The consequence being blindness toward the co-constitutive relation between mobility and immobility in International Law.

In *Contracts: Reterritorializing the (Global) Exercise of Authority*, Gail Lythgoe further identifies a conceptual-empirical disjuncture in the opaque distinction between public versus private legal space. This opaqueness, Lythgoe argues, flows from a presumption that transnational contracting is de-territorialized, because private legal entities, like Global Value Chains (GVC), stand outside the publicness of territorial space. Yet, such a spatial ontology relies on binary coding, where legal entities are deemed to either conform with the features of state-centric space or not. That in/out binary, Lythgoe highlights, is unwieldy relative to how GVCs have engineered non-Euclidean geographies of power and authority through adroit practices of transnational contracting and governance.

Alejandro Rodiles and Gavin Sullivan suggest binary distinctions, i.e. between global versus national space, typically encourage zero-sum analyses, which lose sight of scalar processes that ultimately enact "the Global." In their article, *Assembling Global Security Law through the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)*, Rodiles and Sullivan stress an empirical approach that studies how security projects, such as the GCTF, construct global scale through socio-material assemblages. Drawing from expert interviews and participant-observation at the GCTF and the United Nations, they use the GCTF to show how "the Global" becomes scaled through assemblages of local sites, counterterrorism policies, state and non-state actors, Artificial Intelligence, and automated decision-making processes.

Peering into the temporal, Eliana Cusato pivots our inquiry toward the under-examined character of "Global" time. In her article, *Against Temporal Abstractions*, Cusato points to how

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International Law is structured by a chronometric, linear, and unidirectional model of time. In the alternative, Cusato seeks to invert that structural relationship by re-conceptualizing International Law as a medium through which multiple kinds of temporalities intersect. That reconceptualization, she argues, would enable International Law to grasp alternative logics of time, which then become integral to legal deliberations on colonial and climate reparations.

Finally, Elena Cirkovic and Danielle Wood direct the last word toward the planetary, bringing cross-disciplinary insights from Earth Systems Science into global legal view. In *Complex Earth-Outer Space Systems and New Spacetime for International Law*, Cirkovic and Wood argue that the "the Global" is embedded within the biological, chemical and physical processes of the "Earth System". Moreover, "the Global" should be perceived relative to many interconnected subspheres, such as e.g. the atmosphere, biosphere, cryosphere, hydrosphere, and magnetosphere. Accordingly, Cirkovic and Wood propose a cosmo-legal approach, which situates the legal discipline within a planetary context that focuses on a variety of human and non-human dimensions of "the Global."

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