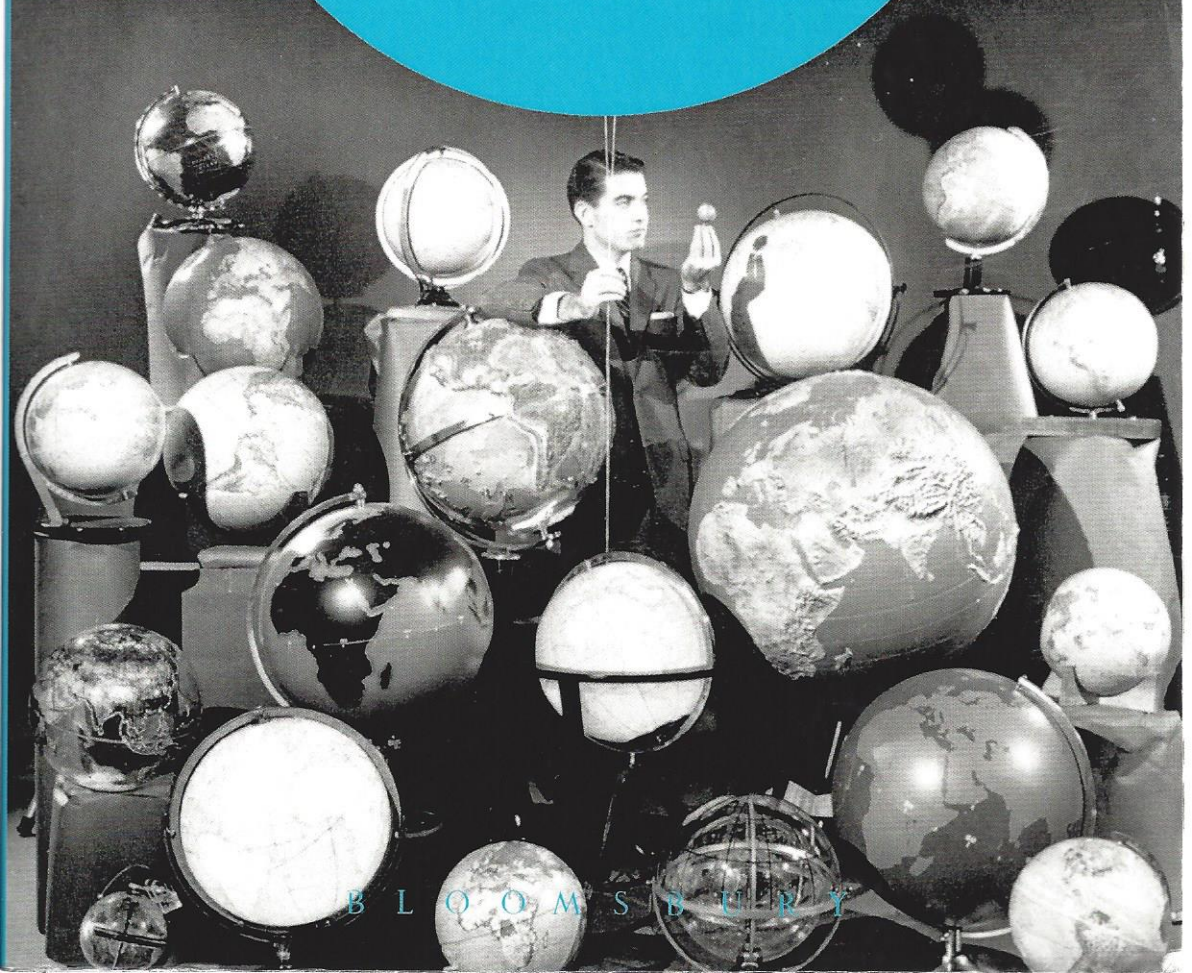


Sven Beckert and  
Dominic Sachsenmaier

# GLOBAL HISTORY, GLOBALLY

Research and Practice  
around the World



BLOOMSBURY

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# INTRODUCTION

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Global history seems to be everywhere. Wherever you look—the course offerings of history departments, the catalogues of publishers, the programs of history conferences—the words “global history” appear. You can sign up for a lecture course on global social history at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, pursue an MA in global history at Capital Normal University (CNU) in Beijing, study the global history of capitalism at the University of Capetown, read a global history of 1968 published in Dakar and attend a conference on the global history of slavery at the University of São Paulo. The Harvard University libraries contain 437 books with “global history” in their title. Thirty of these books were published between 1962 and 1990, twenty-six in the 1990s, 115 in the 2000s and in the past five years alone the libraries acquired 266 more books on global history.<sup>1</sup> Further testifying to the enormous popularity of global history, the 2014 European Congress on Global History attracted more than 800 participants—an astounding number considering that the first such Congress was convened less than a decade ago. And by 2017, centers for the study of global history had been established at universities in Shanghai and Osaka, Oxford and Berlin, São Paulo and Dakar as well as places in between.<sup>2</sup>

No matter whether you call it “world history,” “global history,” “transnational history” or the “new global history,” historical scholarship that operates on larger scales is growing rapidly and is increasingly focused on the creation of archive-based studies. Many doctoral dissertations are now being written in the field. Perhaps most importantly, scholars with different regional expertise have discovered global history as a common ground for scholarly exchange and even collaborative work.

The emergence of global history is one of the most significant developments in the discipline of history since the social history revolution of the 1970s. It is a remarkable shift that challenges the institutional logics of history writing as if we have known since the mid-nineteenth century. For more than a century and a half, most history writing and teaching has been focused on national or regional histories. There have long been experts on French, Chinese or Argentinean history, and on world regions ranging from South Asia to Eastern Europe and from Latin America to sub-Saharan Africa. Yet only few scholars were able to draw connections across these regions. To put it in a different way, there was very little institutional encouragement to think globally.

Starting from the nineteenth century, most scholars were trained as experts in a particular nation's history—of Italy, or Japan or the United States and many other countries. They joined associations dedicated to the study of these national histories, published in journals with a national focus and occupied chairs defined by particular

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national histories. To be sure, national boundaries did not demarcate the horizons of all researchers: ancient and medieval historians, for example, dealt with eras before the rise of the nation-state, while intellectual and economic historians have long paid attention to the crossing of borders. In the study of modern history, however, the boundaries of the nation-state loomed large, perhaps larger than in any other discipline. Such framing was hardly surprising, considering that history as an academic discipline emerged in the nineteenth century not just chronically hand in hand with the nation-state but ideologically and foundationally as well. As statesmen and ideologues created nation-states, they needed a useful—that is to say, national—past. Many historians were only too happy to oblige.

Of course, histories written from regional or national parameters have provided us with a rich view of the past. In quite a few areas of the world, a focus on national histories enabled the rise of a history profession, mobilized funds dedicated to history education in schools and universities, created intellectual communities among scholars and allowed for the rise of broad audiences. In the best cases, by helping to forge national communities, these histories allowed citizens to use a shared history to make demands on the state, claim new rights or mobilize against colonial powers. In the worst cases, such national histories fostered exclusionary nationalisms that seemed to justify the exclusion, expulsion or even extermination of those deemed not to be part of the national community.

Along with accomplishments, the hegemony of national and regional histories has had certain shortcomings. By privileging connections and processes unfolding within particular nation-states, historians often overlooked developments that crossed boundaries. Such constrained views had significant interpretive consequences. Just take one example: the Industrial Revolution. Huge numbers of books have been written on the British economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as if this history could be understood from a purely national perspective, as if the history could be complete if it only featured the tinkers of Lancashire, the merchants of Liverpool and the statesmen of London. An almost equal number of publications treated the beginnings of industrialization as a wholly Western European phenomenon. Such histories left out hugely consequential events that took place beyond Britain's or Europe's boundaries: the importance of technology transfers from India, the opening of markets in Africa and the slave-produced commodities of the Americas, among others.<sup>3</sup>

This example also points to another limit of much of modern historiography: a strongly Eurocentric perspective. Developments in Western history were often defined as a universal norm. This has left many historians unable to understand how processes unfolding in one part of the world fit into developments elsewhere. Take for example the question of labor under capitalism. Hundreds of historians writing in Europe and the United States have taken wage labor as the quintessential modern form and assumed the urban factory as the location of such labor. They then universalized that model and wrote a history of labor that charted the transition from bonded agricultural labor to wage labor and, then, depicted the formalization of these labor relations. Because this

story was often cast as the universal norm, Europe's past was assumed to foreshadow the future for the rest of the world. A global perspective that is sensitive to local conditions, however, immediately recognizes that the forms of labor under capitalism vary widely—from slavery to wage work, from peasant production to informal peddling—and thus radically revises the allegedly universal story that we have told for all too many years.<sup>4</sup>

Global history thus breaks with both an exclusively national, respectively regional, focus and Eurocentric perspectives.<sup>5</sup> It breaks with them not because it wants to marginalize the historical importance of the nation-state or the era of Western dominance during parts of the modern era. To the contrary, the analysis of nation-states is a central project of much of global history, as is the study of Western hegemony. Instead, it breaks with them because it sees that vast swaths of human history are not best understood within these frameworks, and that a global perspective allows for a wealth of themes to come into focus. Studying nationalism and state-building programs as transnational ideologies, for example, can help us recognize individual national experiences as part of wider, interconnected patterns. New research on transnational institutions ranging from the Catholic Church to Standard Oil to intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations has granted us new insights into the complex interplay between global and local power systems. Alternative approaches to the history of colonialism and slavery have accentuated the agency of those who found themselves at the bottom of these systems of power.

As a whole, the field of global history has begun to challenge many “common wisdoms” manufactured in (and by) a Eurocentric age. Consider the history of the Enlightenment: from this new global perspective, the Enlightenment, once seen as a singularly European event, appears as part of a more global and diversified pattern. Some scholars have shown how the eighteenth-century Chinese Kaozheng School shared much with contemporary European movements. Other scholars, by pointing out that in societies like Meiji Japan the concept of “Enlightenment” carried rather different attributes, have shown the utility of comparing the European Enlightenment with those occurring in other countries, while also illuminating links between them.<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, global human rights discourses can no longer be understood as European export; instead they are now recognized as multidirectional, moving between places and times, as when, for example, Haitian slaves appropriate concepts of the French Revolution globalizing them in the process.<sup>7</sup> Other branches of global history have come to rethink global migration during the nineteenth century, challenging the myth of the exceptional scope of transatlantic migration, showing that movements of similar magnitude occurred in East and Southeast Asia during the same time period.<sup>8</sup>

Beyond its revisionist character, global history is both connected history and comparative history. On the most basic level, it is the search to understand how human societies have developed as an interactive community across the world. Searching for alternative modes of conceptualizing the past, global history examines processes, networks, identities and events that cross boundaries of modern states, regions and landmasses. Interested in circulation, global history focuses on the connections between people, ideas, fashions and commodities across borders. It also considers

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shared transformations (from technological innovations to political ideologies) and changes to distributions of power that have affected people all over the world. Global history does not necessarily assume that such transformations have made the world more homogenous or just, and thus it pays particular attention to the highly specific ways in which local communities have been and are affected by global change and how local changes transformed global connections.<sup>9</sup>

Studying global transformations with attention to local specifics implies comparative and connective perspectives. *This is a general principle for most global historical work. One useful example is the history of racism.*<sup>10</sup> There are many instances of racism across the world that can be usefully compared allowing us to understand each instance better. But true global history also considers that racisms are connected, as the global circulation of ideas and ideologies about difference did have a powerful impact on each and every local instance, and as each and every local instance of racism can impact global ideas and ideologies.

Using global history to critically rethink the history of a particular society or world region thus does not abolish differentiation. In fact, it allows the distinctions that persist in diverse human communities to be put into a framework that illuminates the continuing tension between the shared and the specific, between the similar and the different. It allows historians to compare with more refinement and to communicate more effectively with other social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, political science and economics, while keeping history's disciplinary uniqueness, its ability to pay so much heed to local specificities.

By connecting and comparing developments unfolding in distant parts of the world, global history has also put greater emphasis on the more sustained, drawn-out patterns of history. While the cultural turn during the 1980s and 1990s has often emphasized the indeterminate nature of history and the impossibility of "knowing," global history has returned historians' attention to making causal arguments, often linking factors such as environmental change, demography, the violence of state making and the importance of economic change.

This is not to say that global history returns to the teleological determinism that framed much of the 1960s social science scholarship when modernization theory was en vogue within Western academia. In contrast to scholars such as Talcott Parsons, today's global historians usually do not assume that societies around the world are becoming more similar as they develop economically. Recent scholarship, instead, has focused on local particularities and regional specificities. The decisive difference between global and local history, however, is that the former tries to understand the local while at the same time paying attention to its global entanglements. It is indebted neither to approaches that conceptualize the global as a delocalized universal nor to epistemic traditions of digging into the local while ignoring the global. Global history explores the complex and fascinating ways that the global and the local entwine and entangle, and it sees in these entanglements the constitutive elements of both the global and the local.

Privileging border-crossing connections and at the same time partaking in the spatial turn, global history does not take the nation or the region as the natural container for

social processes. The field critiques Eurocentrism and tends toward a relational history that sees developments in various parts of the world as affecting one another, rather than assuming a one-way street of influence. It is this history—its methods, themes and debates—that this volume focuses on. It shows that global history in itself is a global undertaking and aims to further a project that embeds the production of historical knowledge in new global communities of scholars.

### The trajectories of global history

Of course, as historians will be the first to point out, everything has its antecedents, and thus border-crossing history has its own distinguished history. This book will provide some insights into that long history. Already in ancient Greece, China and the Arab world, some scholars endeavored to write the history of the known world.<sup>11</sup> In the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant proposed to write history with a cosmopolitan intent, and so did Kang Youwei around the beginning of the twentieth century. Such ideas have flourished now and again through time. Most such writings took a civilizational approach, defining the writers' own cultural realms as the norm and portraying outsiders as the "Other." Particularly during the nineteenth century, it became common among historians to divide the world's people into a number of nations and civilizations, a move that obstructed many possibilities for alternative approaches to human history.

The belief in civilizations and, later, nations, as basic, almost natural units of human order also shaped the field of world history. Even though it clearly remained in the shadow of national history, world history became significant during and after the nineteenth century. Many famed historians, including Leopold von Ranke—often regarded as the founder of academic history writing—attempted world historical reflections.<sup>12</sup> But more often, he and other scholars preferred to line up their histories of single cultures and nations as quasi-autochthonous units—taking little interest in their entanglements, transfers and connections.

In essence, world history was often understood as the triumphant rise of Europe as it progressed via its own civilizational forces. Consequently, many works in the field confined their visions to European history, perhaps adding some brief chapters on the early Chinese, Indian, Egyptian or Mesopotamian pasts. The main epochs of world history were defined by changes in Europe—the advent of Greek philosophy, the Reformation or the Enlightenment.<sup>13</sup> Many non-Western authors accepted the basic visions of this interpretation of the courses of human history. Perhaps less surprisingly, much scholarship in the communist world also builds upon these Eurocentric narratives.<sup>14</sup>

Starting from the 1960s, the field of world history began to change in many parts of the globe.<sup>15</sup> In India and China (prior to the advent of the Cultural Revolution), an increasing number of scholars tried to view the history of our planet at least partly through categories and concepts not solely derived from the European experience.<sup>16</sup>



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And in the United States, world historians became far more critical of Eurocentric perspectives. Despite these departures, however, world history retained many of its earlier characteristics. As a teaching field, it was usually represented by one person in a given history department—and that person was supposed to cover the entire world outside the West. As a research field, world history long remained a domain whose main focus seemed to be the production of textbooks covering vast stretches of time and space.<sup>17</sup>

Compare that with the situation today: the number of global historical publications has risen sharply, while their character and scope has changed. The body of academic literature in global history today mainly consists of specialized studies that deal with single themes and almost always focus on well-defined time periods considerably smaller than the entire sweep of human history. The scope of these publications is usually not “global” in the sense of covering the entire world equally; instead they typically focus on a selection of world regions relevant to a particular problem, and do so with appropriate local sensitivity. The transformation into a research field is evidence that global history has arrived.

Let us pause to consider why that reorientation occurred. Some reasons are applicable to large areas of the world; some are unique to particular regions. This should not surprise us since, as they say, all history is contemporary history, and since, as historians know, each locality experiences contemporary events in its own way and through its own lens. The first wave of more global approaches to history emerged during the 1990s, a decade characterized by widespread discussion of globalization and a sense that the world had suddenly become much more interconnected. Unsurprisingly, this discourse influenced historians, who then tried to shape it by arguing that globalization itself had a history that went back much before the 1970s. But this happened in specific ways: in parts of the global North, for instance, it was the need to explain the apparent destabilizing of nation-states that led historians to take a more sustained look at the longer histories of global connections.

Global challenges also drove the embrace of global history. Throughout the world, environmental issues have encouraged thinking in increasingly global terms, with climate change, for example, affecting the planet and humanity as a whole. Moreover, we are entering a new historical moment when the global realities of yesterday no longer hold. The seers predicting the end of the nation-state may have exaggerated, but it is beyond doubt that the nation-state’s power as a container of human activity is shifting. It has become much easier for people, goods and ideas to transcend national boundaries, and the power of state institutions to regulate these flows has declined. In fact, we are witnessing a redistribution of economic wealth and political influence on a global scale. We are not on our way to a world of equal distribution of wealth and power, but we are moving toward one that is no longer centered on the North Atlantic Rim. Together, all these developments make Eurocentric assumptions increasingly problematic, thus opening up large-scale narratives of human history to reinterpretation by incorporating new regions of the world into them.

Historians themselves, moreover, began to circulate in a much more international community. Certainly, prior generations of historians read one another's books even if they were separated by oceans, but the advent of cheap air travel and new modes of communication made international contacts much easier and more frequent. Living in this interconnected world showed historians in a very real and personal way the connections and comparisons that increasingly have come to characterize their scholarship.

Last but not least, there is the logic of historical research itself. Once historians started looking for connections across vast geographic distances, they kept finding them. In the United States, for example, once scholars began to treat the French, Spanish and English settlements in North America as more than the prehistory of the United States, it became ever more obvious that every aspect of North American history was linked to developments in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia. All the major institutions of North America then needed to be compared to those of other colonial societies; colonial America was now connected back to the world, influencing and influenced by larger global shifts that contained within them many different paths and possibilities.<sup>18</sup> Similar developments occurred in histories of other regions of the world as well.

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The title of this book, *Global History, Globally*, does not refer to its subject matter only but also to its global scope. To put it in a different way, this collection of essays introduces the burgeoning field of global history while tracing it in its global settings. It is based on an effort to create a forum for global historians from all corners of the world. In a series of conferences, leading scholars based on all continents debated the past, present and future of global history in a critical and collegial spirit.<sup>19</sup> Participants in these meetings reviewed the state of the field in different parts of the world, discussed the debates on core themes in global history and considered—not without controversy—some of the problems global history raises intellectually and institutionally. These conversations were not easy, given the variety of standpoints, academic traditions and modes of arguing involved, but it was precisely that breadth that made the meetings so productive. This book makes these debates available to a broader public, giving readers a comprehensive and global view of one of the most significant developments in the field.

Beyond charting the enormous diversity and vibrant nature of global history, these chapters allow for some general observations. For one, it becomes clear that local conditions matter greatly to the ways global history is conceived and practiced. The directions of global historical scholarship in Brazil or Argentina, for example, have differed from those in, say, the United States or France. For global history, as for other areas of history, the local conditions the global: the world of global history is not flat.

Yet the global also conditions the local. The chapters show how global collaborations—and the related flows of people and ideas—influence research agendas and interpretive

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strategies all around the world. The rather simultaneous rise of global history in different parts of a world is a perfect example of the global entanglements of historical scholarship in today's world. However, the question of how exactly global and local patterns are enmeshed with one another remains a complex one, and is discussed at length in many of the chapters here.

One of the key assumptions underlying our project has been the idea that global history must establish global dialogues and global intellectual exchanges. The times when only Western scholars had the stature to develop perspectives of a global magnitude are definitely over. More often than not, historians writing on North American and European history are familiar with the history of these regions but rarely have an understanding of Latin American, Indian or African historical experiences. Yet the opposite is not true. Historians in East Asia or the Middle East are far from ignorant about the West's historical heritage. Chinese historians of China, or Egyptian historians of Egypt, may only focus on their national histories in their own research and teaching, but the parameters of their thinking usually encompass the history of Europe and North America, or at least key parts thereof. The imprint of colonialism on the non-Western world has meant that historians working outside the West often have had to take a transcontinental, or even global, approach.

An earlier and more sustained attention to global history in regions like East Asia or Latin America, however, did not translate into a greater presence in the global marketplace of ideas. Indeed, *Global History, Globally* shows that just the opposite was frequently the case, as the vibrant research emanating from other parts of the world was often completely ignored in the halls of North Atlantic academia. It is common for a Chinese historian of China or an Indian historian of India to take notice of British, US or other Western publications relevant to his or her own field. Yet the same is not necessarily the case in the opposite direction. As one of the chapters illustrates, it is almost unacceptable for a Japanese historian of the world economy to be unfamiliar with the works of Immanuel Wallerstein, but it is perfectly acceptable for historians in Europe and North America to ignore the works of Japanese scholars of the "world system." The power to interpret the world has been and continues to be distributed in radically uneven ways.

The chapters also deliberate on the commonalities and differences between the rise of global historical perspectives within subfields of historiography such as social and environmental history. The spread of global history into most corners of the historians' guildhall should not lead us to assume that its contours look the same everywhere. The "global turn" may mean something quite different to an economic historian than to a cultural historian. Simultaneously, a particular phrase will not necessarily mean the same thing to cultural historians in France as it will to those working in India.

As mentioned, our historical thinking ought to change along with these new global realities. This is easier said than done, not least because sustained hierarchies still characterize the field of history. The global academic system, which is both nation- and Western-centric, thwarts many of global history's possibilities. Certainly, in their own work, global historians have begun to leave historiographical nationalism

and Eurocentrism behind. But how can this field unfold if the current structures of historiography remain unchanged? How powerful can historians' arguments be, if the field's practitioners in the West continue to ignore scholarship produced in other parts of the world?

The answer to these questions is obvious: the community of global historians needs to make sustained efforts to change both historical thinking and its underlying patterns of interaction. Most importantly, the field's debates and exchanges need to move past the West-Rest axis, which has characterized it up to the present day. It needs to become more multilateral and create more opportunities for scholars to engage in critical global dialogues with one another. If it does, the possibilities of global history will be enormous.

\* \* \*

This book is divided into three parts: the practices of global history in various regions of the world, central themes in global history and key problems of global history. Rather than covering all possible regions, themes and key problems, each of these sections provides a sample of some of the most important traditions, debates and complications within the field.

The first part underlines one of global history's key messages: the global historical turn emerged in many parts of the world, but it is not a globally homogenous approach. Local academic communities producing global historical scholarship have shaped the field. In other words, it makes a difference whether global historians are located in the United States, Chile, Italy, India or Singapore. And these differences are not necessarily rooted in the size of libraries, history departments, or the availability of funding. While these factors are important, it is local academic structures, public discourses, historiographical traditions and the forms of historical memory that shape global history as it is practiced. The landscapes of global historical research around the world are not simply extensions of the field as it has been shaped in the global North. On the other hand, the chapters in this part also prove that we must refrain from resorting to cultural stereotypes. We should not assume that scholars in places like China or the Arab World approach global history through iron-clad traditions, frozen in time.

These chapters discuss the trajectories of the field in East Asia, Western Europe, Africa, Latin America and the United States. Far from homogenizing these large areas, they show the diversity of traditions and approaches within each of them. They deal with the question of how much the nation-state shapes historiography—for example, through targeted funding measures and the creation of academic and departmental structures. Some of the authors also discuss whether and how older national or regional imaginations relate to new global forms of historical scholarship. In a number of cases, these chapters can draw upon an already richly developed meta-discourse on global history; in other cases, the authors are trailblazers in trying to understand the configurations of global history in a particular part of the world.

Focusing primarily on Western Europe, Gareth Austin reviews the emergence of global history in this part of the world. He charts the development of the field since the 1990s, tracing its origins to dissatisfaction with increasing specialization, the contemporary experience of intensifying global interactions and the challenges to Eurocentric thinking. According

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to Austin, global history emerged first in Britain and the Netherlands, from where it spread to Germany, Switzerland, France and, eventually, the rest of Europe. At first the conversation was largely between historians with expertise in regions outside Europe; it was still unclear how much global history would turn into a wider research movement. In recent years, however, global history has increasingly thrived as an archive-based project; or, as Austin puts it, global historians in Europe now largely focus on “how to get on with it.” At the same time, global history has been increasingly institutionalized, with centers in the UK, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria and other countries. Central to that emerging research agenda has been the desire to “provincialize Europe”; the goal of overcoming the “Eurocentrism of agency” has, Austin says, largely succeeded, but “conceptual Eurocentrism” has proven much more difficult to overcome. Austin emphasizes that the increasing interconnections between global history scholars around the world make it difficult to distinguish between “national” or “continent wide” approaches to the field.

In his chapter “Re-presenting Asia on the Global Stage,” Edward Wang focuses primarily on Japan, Korea and China. He argues that historiographical developments in this region are characterized by some remarkable parallels, despite all the national, linguistic, political and ideological divides. For example, from the nineteenth century onward, nation-centered perspectives thoroughly transformed the earlier historiographical traditions of East Asia. Then, after the Second World War, world history became more prominent (primarily as a teaching field), despite the thoroughly different ideological contexts in East Asian countries. Wang points out that these forms of world history were typically based upon Eurocentric perspectives and remained centered on individual national histories.

Wang uses these perspectives to discuss the origins of more recent forms of global historical scholarship in East Asia. Among other themes, he illuminates the rise of “relational histories” in Japan during the second half of the Cold War: works that operated on a transcontinental scale. In China, he observes a mounting interest in the history of transnational connections and global transformations at around the same time, particularly after the end of the Mao Period. Closer to the present, Wang depicts the growing presence of global historical perspectives since the 1990s in much of East Asia. He presents an overview of the wide variety of scholarship in this field and takes up the way it has been institutionalized in different East Asian societies. At the same time, Wang cautions us against taking a naive view of the development of global history in East Asia. He stresses that throughout the region, national historical outlooks remain dominant in historical research and education. No matter whether in Korea, mainland China or Taiwan, global history is surprisingly often written from a decidedly nationalist perspective.

Like East Asia, Latin America has a distinguished tradition of global history, and indeed Latin American scholars have written some of the most influential studies in this field. Rafael Marquese and João Paulo Pimenta review relevant academic developments over the past 150 years, showing how from the very beginning historians of Latin America embedded their histories in transcontinental narratives. This is perhaps

not surprising, considering the central importance of European colonialism in the continent's modern history. In much of Latin America it was almost impossible to write history in a purely national mode, and one could say that a transcontinental perspective was the water in which historians had to swim if they wanted to make sense of the continent's history. The authors cite three examples to show how transcontinental and global perspectives taken by historians in Latin America had an impact on scholarship elsewhere. First, they review a group of Caribbean historians, C.L.R James and Eric Williams most prominently among them, whose efforts to connect the history of Caribbean slavery to European economic ascendancy were widely ignored when their studies came out, but their books are now considered a foundational perspective on Atlantic history. Marquese and Pimenta show how Fernand Braudel's thinking about global capitalism was greatly influenced by his encounter with Brazilian historians when he taught at the University of São Paulo, and how, in turn, his global perspective influenced generations of historians in Latin America who, like Braudel, saw that capitalism could only be understood as a world system. Their final example is the dependency school, which was forged by Latin American economists and sociologists such as Raul Prebisch and Fernando Henrique Cardoso. This school introduced the notions of "center" and "periphery" into global debates, ideas that have had a profound influence on what historians and others have called the "world system."

● Omar Gueye's chapter on the history of global perspectives in Africa confirms this general point: it would be nearly impossible to write the history of Africa in the modern era without references to places, people and processes on different continents, and very few African historians did so. As a consequence, African historians almost always took on a wider, if not yet global, perspective. They wrote the history of the continent or of substantial parts of it; they wrote pan-African history that included the African diaspora in the Americas or they wrote global economic history centered on Africa, as in the pioneering work of Abdoulaye Ly. Yet history was as central to the forging of African nation-states as it was elsewhere: in the twentieth century, history became a prime ideological battleground, as African historians asserted their versions of history against European-dominated narratives that saw Africa as a continent "without history." Gueye describes the early and central role historians played in the struggle for national liberation and the ways that the global orientation weakened as newly forged nation-states sought to establish their legitimacy. Historians wrote national histories that became central to the project of nation making, but still these histories remained connected to events outside the continent. It was only later that the transnational perspective became less prominent, as African historians increasingly focused their work on subnational groups. Today, Gueye says, the wealth of research accumulated over the past decades has encouraged African historians to step back out into the world and connect aspects of the continent's past, including local histories, to that of the globe.

● Following this chapter, Selçuk Esenbel and Meltem Toksöz analyze the trajectories of historiography in Turkey and the Arab Middle East. From the beginnings of modern academic historiography in Turkey, conceptions of both the local and the global past changed continuously along with the politics of identities and other political realities.

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Most notable was the significant historiographical transition between the multiethnic polity of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey during the 1920s. Esenbel and Toksöz point to the diversity of late Ottoman historiography and the globality of parts of it. During the late nineteenth century, world histories were being written that operated on conceptual grounds and narrative traditions that were significantly different from their Western counterparts.

Esenbel and Toksöz next describe the rise of nationalist historiographies in both Turkey and the Ottoman Empire's Arab successor states. In addition, they pay attention to the influence of European imperial powers and their impact on history writing and education. Western influence remained strong during the Cold War, when there was a debate between Turkish historians over modernization theory versus World Systems theory. Since the 1980s, paradigms such as alternative or shared modernities have grown more influential. At the same time, there has been a resurgence of interest in the Ottoman Empire, which has given rise to a wealth of studies operating beyond contemporary national boundaries and returning to different—regional and other—visions of the past. In their concluding thoughts, Esenbel and Toksöz remind us of the importance of considering sociologies of knowledge when we reflect upon historiographical developments. The authors remind us that internationally mobile scholars from Turkey, Palestine and other regions were a crucial social group behind the rise of transnational approaches to history in Turkey and the Arab Middle East.

The concluding chapter of Part I takes up developments of global history in North America. It was authored by the late Jerry Bentley, shortly before his untimely death in the summer of 2012. Bentley emphasizes the continuities between global history and world history in the American context; in fact he is opposed to drawing a distinction between these two field designations. According to Bentley, world history has long been a field whose main protagonists have sought to overcome both Eurocentric and nation-centered perspectives. World historians problematized these pillars of modern academic historiography while at the same time remaining loyal to their main field's key conceptual and methodological principles.

Bentley discusses new forms of world historical scholarship that started in the 1960s and situates these developments within the wider intellectual and social transformations in the United States. At the same time, Bentley does not neglect the important role of individuals who had a major impact on the development of world history in North America. He also touches upon key institutions, associations and journals that were major sites of activity and carried significance for the wider community of world historians. He contends that world—or global—history has increasingly acquired the character of a vibrant research field. The scholars active in that field have not articulated a clearly discernible political or ideological position, but they usually belong to the liberal camp, which might connect to their shared critique of Western-centric perspectives. For that reason, a number of world or global historical projects have become the targets of right-wing critics who blame the field for undermining national identities.

The second part of this collection centers on significant themes of and debates within global history. More specifically, the authors focus on the ways that global history has transformed the fields of labor, economic, immigration and intellectual history. Setting the agenda, Andreas Eckert and Marcel van der Linden investigate the history of labor from a global perspective and find that such a viewpoint significantly alters our understanding of core themes within the field. The widened focus—moving past workers in the West to look at those in Asia, Latin America and Africa—has shown that North-Atlantic-focused labor history, with its emphasis on wage workers, industry and cities, has provided a radically incomplete picture of labor, one that ignores the vast amount of labor done in the countryside, outside of wage relations and in agriculture. Global labor history thus puts the subsistence laborer, the slave and the sharecropper next to the waged worker and explores the complex entanglements between them. This understanding of the global scope of labor history undermines a core narrative of the emergence of the modern world that emphasizes the development of labor toward contract, freedom and formalization—a narrative that turns out to be wrong when the entire world is kept in mind.

The next chapter, by Kenneth Pomeranz, charts the way the global turn has influenced the field of economic history. Although deeply rooted in national histories, economic history has now morphed into a core area of research in global history, and in fact, the rise of global history has given new impetus to economic history. Pomeranz introduces us to a number of research projects in the United States, Europe and Japan engaged in writing connected and comparative histories of the world economy. An important part of this research agenda is measurement—the generation of data that allows comparison of wages, growth rates and economic structures over very long time periods and large parts of the globe. Pomeranz also discusses economic historians who explicate connections between different regions of the world; he moves from Immanuel Wallerstein to Fernand Braudel to more recent historians who look at the history of particular commodities such as sugar and cotton. Comparative questions have also become important, for instance, studies that explore a crucial moment such as the so-called great divergence, the point when some parts of the world suddenly became much wealthier than others. Himself a central participant in these debates, Pomeranz shows how global perspectives are overthrowing old Eurocentric certainties, replacing them with a story that is much more contingent, much more global and much more persuasive.

Human migrations transcend single regions and nation-states, yet, as Amit Mishra shows in his chapter, their study does not always reflect that obvious fact. All too often, the histories of significant migration movements have been written in isolation from one another and without considering the global constellations that channeled the flow of particular people to particular places. Migration history for all too long has been surprisingly North-Atlantic-centric, ignoring Pacific and Indian Ocean migrations even though these movements of people were, in numerical terms, just as important. A global approach, says Mishra, brings all human migrations into focus, reveals their connections to each other, compares them and sees how developments



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in one part of the world have an impact on developments elsewhere, as when the end of the transatlantic slave trade caused the migrations in the Indian Ocean world to intensify. Global migration historians, Mishra says, have increasingly acknowledged these connections and made these comparisons, which has deepened our view of migration history. Yet all too often these historians still write from a Eurocentric perspective: they universalize arguments about global migrations based on North Atlantic cases, which leads them to underemphasize the importance of coercion, imperialism, exploitation, racism and violence in the movement of peoples. He concludes that the “history of global migration is critical for studying the history of the world and therefore global migration history is a crucial subset of writing global history.”

In the last chapter of Part II, Dominic Sachsenmaier and Andrew Sartori reflect on patterns of global intellectual history. For too long, they argue, intellectual historians were slow to react to the global turn. Discussing recent developments toward global intellectual history, Sachsenmaier and Sartori focus chiefly on Anglo-American and Chinese universities. They argue that in the United States, more intellectual historians began to do work who crossed the Western/non-Western divide. Among other developments, experts on South Asian history were becoming more influential in the field, which triggered new debates and paradigm shifts. Many concepts that one or two generations ago had been widely accepted were now challenged, including the idea of a quasi-hermetic “Western civilization” with its allegedly unique intellectual traditions.

Sachsenmaier and Sartori point out that in recent years far more complex—global and local—patterns of thinking have replaced these kinds of assumptions. Furthermore, they demonstrate that Chinese intellectual historians have also been seeking to decenter intellectual history traditions. Already a century ago, intellectual history in China put a strong emphasis on comparative perspectives and the history of transfers between China and societies like Japan and other “advanced” Western societies. The challenge for global intellectual history in China is now to move beyond this binary focus on China and the “developed world” by including world regions outside of the West in their comparisons.

The third part of this volume looks at specific problems in the growing field of global history. As a movement that challenges earlier historiographical traditions, global history faces many epistemological and methodological tests, and also political pushback. For instance, in some parts of the world, global historical critiques of nation-centered perspectives evoke counterreactions from nationalist forces, both inside and outside of academia. In an age of heightened nationalism, global history can and should be read as a critique of a history too closely aligned with the nation-state—a critique that is less than welcome in many quarters. As the chapters show, sometimes such concerns make the practice of global history difficult; sometimes they encourage a global history from a nationalist perspective. These conflicts emerge in many places with each case characterized by locally specific dynamics.

For this reason, contributions to this part of the book focus on specific parts of the world while also discussing more general challenges to global historical scholarship. In the first

chapter, David Simo deals with the question of finding a voice when writing world history from an African vantage point. Concentrating on sub-Saharan Africa, his chapter starts with reflections on the general conditions of historiography in this part of the world. Scholarship in Africa, Simo maintains, cannot be understood without considering the effect of Western, particularly North American, universities' domination of African academia. In Simo's eyes, the growing presence of intellectuals from the Global South at universities in the Global North has not only granted them access to resources and sites of academic production but has given them a voice that will come to challenge dominant narratives and concepts.

When reflecting upon the possibility of an African voice in global history, Simo cautions against merely constructing an African "Other." He is also wary of mobilizing allegedly pristine African epistemological traditions. If African historians want to create alternative global historical perspectives, they need, Simo says, to develop them through critical dialogues with the currently dominant disciplinary cultures, which, of course, were shaped by and under Western hegemony. Simo points out that starting from the 1980s, an increasingly visible group of African intellectuals have spoken against national and linear modes of thinking about the past. In the meantime, quite a few influential scholars in Africa have grown convinced that the rewriting of African history must involve the critical reconsideration of dominant global historical master narratives.

In the next chapter, Lim Jie-Hyun reflects upon the danger of national interests instrumentalizing global historical viewpoints for their own purposes. He does so in the context of intellectual and academic landscapes in East Asia, particularly Korea and Japan. Revisiting the history of modern historiography in these societies, Lim cautions us against understanding world history and national history as antithetical. Starting from the nineteenth century, he argues, both fields developed simultaneously and complemented one another. While national history was supposed to support state-building efforts, world history long had the primary mission of describing the paths traced by industrialized countries. Eurocentric perspectives dominated both national history and world history, including various Marxist schools (before and after the Second World War), which did not deviate from this pattern, as they too had a linear reading of modernization. The main opposition to identifying Western historical developments as role models for East Asia, Lim holds, emerged from Pan-Asianist circles, who articulated their visions for new Asia-centered world histories mainly within the context of Japanese imperialism.

With an eye on today's situation, Lim shows that nationalist camps in East Asia share an "antagonistic complicity" in their rejection of transnational and global historical approaches. Border-crossing scholarship is often seen as unpatriotic because it runs counter to national interests. Nevertheless, East Asia has recently witnessed efforts such as the production of transnational history textbooks and the establishment of international historians' commissions. In both cases global historical approaches play important roles.

Next comes Marnie Hughes-Warrington's discussion of the challenges global historical scholarship faces in a postcolonial settler society. Choosing Australia as her

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focal point, Hughes-Warrington argues that the trajectory of global history as a research and teaching field has been closely entangled with the development of Aboriginal history. The Aboriginal dimensions of Australia's past have long been neglected, even silenced, by the majority of historians. More recently, Aboriginal history has been granted a more visible space within national public memory and history education. In this context, Hughes-Warrington discusses scholars who draw on Aboriginal understandings of time and space to develop alternative visions of global history. In her eyes, a historiography that takes these Aboriginal visions seriously would have the possibility of breaking with the Western narratives that still dominate historical scholarship in Australia.

Hughes-Warrington demonstrates that also in other branches of historiography, Australian academia has witnessed a surging interest in scholarship that transcends national boundaries. Some projects are comparative; others deal with transfers and connections. Hughes-Warrington subsequently outlines possibilities of further developing global historical scholarship in Australia.

Last but not least, Shigeru Akita's chapter focuses on efforts to develop alternatives to Eurocentrism in global history by detailing the Japanese contributions to global economic history. Emphasizing the long and distinguished traditions of writing global history in Japan, and the diverse perspectives in which it was embedded, he presents an Asia-centered research agenda on the history of global economic change. That agenda seeks to overcome both of the Eurocentrisms that Gareth Austin speaks of—the Eurocentrism of agency and the Eurocentrism of concepts. In his view, some renowned Japanese global historians have written the actions, interest and beliefs of Asians into the emergence of the global economy, while at the same time emphasizing specifically Asian paths toward industrialization. Both perspectives question the universalism of the European model and the idea of the West as the sole shaper of the world economy.

As should by now be clear, this book introduces not just the field of global history but also the global conversations that have arisen around it. The result of several years of intense debate among historians on all continents, *Global History, Globally* is a collaborative effort to rethink both the work of historians and the ways historians work. It is a beginning of what we hope will be an exciting journey to develop the tools that allow us all to rethink human history beyond the confines of particular cultures or the nation-state.

## Notes

1. Hollis, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=HVD](https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=HVD), (accessed August 30, 2017).
2. The examples mentioned above refer to: East China Normal University in Shanghai, the research institute “re:work. IGK Work and Human Life Cycle in Global History” at Humboldt-University Berlin, Lab Mund at USP in Sao Paulo, the Center for Global History Studies at the Institute for Academic Initiatives, Osaka University, and Oxford University.
3. Joseph Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014).
4. See Marcel van der Linden, *Workers of the World: Essays towards a Global Labor History* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
5. Our book’s cover page displays a young Caucasian man investigating a variety of globes (see <http://www.bloomsbury.com>). On one side, it symbolizes the spirit of multiperspectivity and the willingness to operate on a wide variety of scales, characterizing much of recent global historical scholarship. On the other side, as a historic photo, it is meant as a critique of earlier forms of world historical scholarship that had often been written chiefly from the perspective of white males.
6. On-cho Ng and Q. Edward Wang, *Mirroring the Past: The Writing and Use of History in Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005); Sebastian Conrad, “Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique,” *American Historical Review* 117:4 (2012), 999–1027.
7. Laurent Dubois, “An Enslaved Enlightenment: Re-thinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic,” *Social History* 3 (2006), 1–14.
8. Adam McKeown, “Global Migration, 1846–1940,” *Journal of World History* 15 (2004), 155–89.
9. For very similar wording, see the Weatherhead Initiative on Global History, <https://wigh.wcfia.harvard.edu/>, (accessed February 10, 2015).
10. See for example Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line White Men’s Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
11. Dominic Sachsenmaier, “The Evolution of World History,” in David Christian and Marnie Hughes-Warrington (eds.), *Introducing World History (= Cambridge History of the World, vol. 1)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 56–83.
12. Ernst Schulin “Universalgeschichte und Nationalgeschichte bei Leopold von Ranke” in Wolfgang J. Mommsen (ed.), *Leopold von Ranke und die Moderne Geschichtswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988), 37–71.
13. See for example Jerry H. Bentley, *Shapes of World History in Twentieth-Century Scholarship*, Vol. 14 of *Essays on Global and Comparative History* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 1996).
14. See for example Denis Kozlov, “Athens and Apocalypse: Writing History in Soviet Russia,” in Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 375–98.

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15. See for example Jürgen Osterhammel, "World History," in Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 5 (Oxford University Press, 2011), 93–112.
16. Wang, Q. Edward. "Encountering the World: China and Its Other(s) in Historical Narratives, 1949–89," *Journal of World History* 14:3 (2003), 327–58.
17. Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), ch. 1.
18. See for example Rosemarie Zagarri, "The Significance of the 'Global Turn' for the Early American Republic: Globalization in the Age of Nation-building," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31:1 (Spring 2011), 1–37; Nicholas Canny, "Atlantic History and Global History," in Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan (eds.), *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009), 317–36.
19. These conferences were held twice in the United States and twice in Germany. The hosting institutions were the Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, the Duke Asian Pacific Studies Institute, the Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies and the research center "Work and Lifecycle in Human History" at Humboldt University Berlin. Funding for the latter two conferences was provided by Volkswagen Foundation and by the German National Research Foundation.