Transnational History: Identities, Structures, States

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Over the past twenty-five years, some of the most exciting and innovative works of historical research have emerged in connection with debates on transnational approaches to history.[1] International History in particular has been affected by a transnational turn, leading to a significant reorientation of themes and research questions, as well as to the identification of new historical agents impacting upon existing relations between states. As a consequence, transnational historians have carved deeply into the traditional territory of international history, while at the same time transcending the discipline's conventional focus on connections between states.

Definitions and categories of analysis.

What, then, is transnational history? Thinking transnationally means to trace people, ideas and goods across national boundaries, and to rethink established spatial categories of historical analysis in order to engage with hitherto neglected transnational entities. Exchange generates experiences which are difficult to capture within national categories. As for the border-crossing of individuals and social groups, there are numerous areas of historical research that are inadequately described within the framework of national, international or inter-governmental histories: migration, the slave trade, piracy and organised crime; but new disciplines such as refugee studies, or research on statelessness, also transcend national or international histories. The role played by transnational actors in international organisations describes another field which some international historians tended to neglect in the past. Good examples of this are the impact on international relations of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and transnational networks of activists. In global health NGOs have challenged the role of conventional health diplomacy based on relations between states or intergovernmental agreements. New forms of transnational agency in this sector have contributed to the recognition of bio-socialities, characterised by shared medical conditions rather than nationality.

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[1] For a recent overview see Simon Macdonald, "Transnational history: a review of past and present scholarship", http://www.ucl.ac.uk/cth/objectives/simon_macdonald_tns_review. Special issues of historical journals and a number of edited volumes offer a good overview of research in the field: Matthew Hilton and Rana Miller, eds, *Past and Present Supplement:* Transnationalism and Contemporary Global History, 2013. *Journal of Modern European History*, vol. 6/2 (2008), "Technological Innovation and Transnational Networks". *Contemporary European History*, 14:4 (2005), Transnational Communities in European History. Akira Iriye, "Transnational History" (review article), *Contemporary European History*, 13 (2004), 211-222. Kiran Klaus Patel, *Nach der Nationalfixiertheit: Perspektiven einer transnationalen Geschichte*. Berlin, 2004. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 27/3 (2001), "Diskussionsforum: Transnational Gesellschaftsgeschichte".

Ideas and concepts are often insufficiently understood when pressed into frameworks of national analysis. They rarely retain their original meaning when they travel within culturally and historically diverse contexts, where they are amalgamated into existing ways of thinking. The ideas of Herder and Rousseau assume new meanings when they are discussed in North- or Latin America, or the Indian subcontinent.[2] Likewise, constitutional borrowing usually creates new legal realities, determined by the historical, social and economic framework within which legal concepts are applied. For instance, the fact that constitutions all over the world quote American constitutional documents tells us little about the ways in which they are read.[3] Moreover, too often we assume that intellectual flows are one-directional, whereas careful historical research shows that ideas are exchanged in both directions.[4]

While in most (but not all) cases capital has no nationality, commodities are often brought to a different use when they are absorbed into a new cultural context. Engaging critically with anthropological research on material culture, transnational historians look at the ways in which commodities are adapted and transformed by different groups of consumers.[5] The world drinks Indian tea, eats American potatoes and smokes tobacco of the same provenance, but the cultural significance of these patterns of consumption varies according to time and space, differs from its original use.

Studying these forms of transnational exchange does not require any particular theoretical framework or methodology. Lacking clear demarcations within the historical profession, it can be argued that transnational history does not represent a historical sub-discipline in its own right; transnational historians do too many different things for that. They use a whole range of different

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[2] A particularly striking example for mechanisms by which ideas travel is the integration of Herder's philosophy of history into nineteenth-century Latin American political thought: Nicola Miller, "*A Theatre of Transformations*: Herder and the Writing of History in Spanish America", in: Claire Lindsay, ed., *Traslados/Translations. Essays on Latin America in Honour of Jason Wilson*. London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2012, 19-34.

[3] Relevant work does not always pay attention to these sensibilities. David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence. A Global History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007. George Athan Billias, "American Constitutionalism and Europe, 1776-1848", in: idem., ed., *American Constitutionalism Abroad. Selected essays in comparative constitutional history*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990

[4] See for instance C.A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile. Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Peter Burke takes a transnational approach to the circulation of knowledge, although reception is not at the centre of this survey: *A Social History of Knowledge*. Oxford: Polity, 2 volumes, 2000, 2012.

[5] Bernhard Rieger has demonstrated how the meaning of a commodity like the Volkswagen Beetle changes according to national context: *The People's Car. A Global History of the Volkswagen Beetle.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013.

approaches and methodologies which they share with other historians, depending on their particular area of specialisation; and in most cases they interact closely with scholars in other fields of historical study and refer to their theoretical vocabulary. Therefore, this chapter suggests that the term transnational history describes a particular way of thinking historically, a way of asking questions and developing innovative frameworks of research. Within this chapter it would be impossible to offer a full overview of the many different areas of transnational research, tracing all the different histories of transnational networks and cultural transfers; of diaspora and migration studies. Bibliographic references in this chapter can only give general indications of what the field looks like. While most of these projects contribute immensely to our understanding of society, their agenda is also largely uncontroversial if approached with an open mind. Although transnational approaches have made important contributions to the work of a wide range of historical sub-disciplines, probably the single most important area where transnationalism has transformed a field of historical enquiry is in international history.

International history starts with the history of relations between states. Much of the historical profession, especially in the English-speaking world, is still organised according to national categories, divided into Sinologists, Russianists, Hispanists, Americanists, the latter usually describing historians of the United States. International historians also tend to describe their field of specialisation in terms of particular nation states. Interestingly, though, our professional organisations apply slightly different criteria for geographical areas considered to be on the periphery of our conventionally still rather Eurocentric outlook on the world. Historians working on regions such as Scandinavia, Latin America, the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, or the Ottoman Empire, often transcend national boundaries. This distinction between "national historians" - Italianists, Germanists, Japanologists - and regionalists reproduces nineteenth-century differentiations between "historical" and "unhistorical nations", those worthy of forming independent nation states and those who, according to particular modernisation theorists, were supposed to integrate or assimilate themselves into larger national units. This suggests that these regions, in particular the non-European world, do not require national specialisations, creating separate epistemological frameworks for the study of Africa, the Balkans or Latin America. Here too the boundaries between history and the social sciences are less well defined, following an intellectual tradition according to which only the civilised world had a history worth rewriting. Whereas the civilised world of historical nations required research based on the application of a specific historical method, the rest of the world would be better suited to the methods of anthropologists and ethnographers, investigating the foreign cultures of natural peoples.

It does not need a transnational historian to question the ideological parameters of these conventional categorisations; much of this work has been done before transnational history emerged as a challenge to the discipline, often responding to developments emerging from outside the academic world. The experiences of decolonisation and a new wave of globalisation from the later decades of the twentieth century onwards, contributed to a critique of Eurocentric worldviews, with global and/or world history playing a particularly important role in challenging the conventions of historical research. According to Benedetto Croce, history constitutes a conceptualisation of the mind; and it is on this basis that history is constantly rewritten and changes its agenda.[6] Transnational history responds to this understanding of the past based on a contemporary agenda. Offering a relatively open definition, transnational history is a history of relations, proposing a new approach to the history of cultural transfers, to migrations, to the work of transnational political actors as well as to the circulation and appropriation of goods and ideas. What appears to be new about this approach is the fact that transnational historians systematically look for and account for these relations, privileging them over work within more narrowly defined territorial boundaries. Therefore, there seems to be one major difference between the transnational approach and other histories of, for instance, economic or diplomatic relations. While conventional histories concentrate on connections and trade between nations or states, transnational approaches attempt to go in between nationally defined categories of analysis, looking for a type of relationship that escapes a mental map based on nation states. Typical examples of this kind of relationship are seafaring people, such as Wendy Bracewell's sixteenth-century pirates in the Adriatic; the culturally hybrid diaspora of peoples in Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic, or the sailors and slaves operating within Herman Bennet's "transatlantic triangular".[7] Also, studies of the sociology and transfer of knowledge are not necessarily limited by national boundaries, with writers, intellectuals and artists who see themselves as citizens of the Republic of Letters instead being investigated.[8] To offer another example, the

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[6] In a similar train of thought, Charles Maier has prompted a debate on how International History is reconsidered depending on circumstances: "Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations", in: Michael Kammen, ed., *The Past Before US: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*. Ithaca, 1980.

[7] Catherine Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj : piracy, banditry, and holy war in the sixteenth-century Adriatic*. Ithaca, N.Y. ; London : Cornell University Press, 1992. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London: Verso, 1993. Herman Bennett, *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. Idem., *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570–1640*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003. See also Manning Marable / Vanessa Agard-Jones, eds, *Transnational Blackness: navigating the global colour line*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008.

[8] Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*. Cambridge: Polity, 2000. For specific examples see also M. Geyer / J. Paulmann, eds, *The Mechanics of Internationalism. Culture, Society and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*. Paris: PUF, 1999.

uprisings of 1848 have often been discussed as a series of national revolutions, while a focus on transnational connections between their protagonists and on the transfer of ideas between them allows us to perceive it as a European event.[9] A conventional approach to cultural history might investigate the circulation of a particular book; and economic historians quantify the volume of trade between two ports; whereas transnational historians look at particular modes of reception, at the adaptation and assimilation of goods and ideas in changing context. Confronting established fields of research with the transnational agenda does not mean replacing one approach with another, but complementing different ways of writing about the past and asking new questions. In most cases the quantification of the volume of trade is still as relevant as ever to our understanding of economic relations as the legacy left by a particular product in the country of destination. Turning to more recent history, Patricia Clavin's work on the League of Nations demonstrates how international organisations pursue transnational objectives rather than limiting themselves to negotiating national interests, shifting the organisations' policies from intergovernmental cooperation to transnational agency.[10] Current political differences between member states of the European Union on the role of EU institutions are centred on similar arguments. Depending on the historian's perspective, what we easily describe as an Age of Nationalism might appear as an Age of Internationalism, shaped to a considerable extent by transnational actors.[11]

The Global and the Transnational.

The different chapters of this volume discuss a range of historical sub-disciplines that are all closely related to transnational history. One of these sub-disciplines is global or world history. Chris Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World;* Jürgen Osterhammel's account of the nineteenth century; and Anthony Hopkins' studies of globalisation understand the modern world as an increasingly transnational global culture.[12] The distinction between global and transnational history is not always clear: global history does not need to be transnational; and transnational history does not need to cover the globe. Meanwhile, for many specialists working in these fields the amalgamation of the two is a deliberate strategy, based on an understanding of global history as transnational history. For

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[9] Axel Körner, ed., *1848 – A European Revolution? International Ideas and National Memories*. London: Macmillan, 2000.

[10] Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. See also Daniel Laqua, ed., *Internationalism reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars*. London: I.B.Tauris, 2011.

[11] Daniel Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880–1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013.

[12] C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914. Global Connections and Comparisons.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. Anthony G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in World History*. London: Pimlico, 2002. Idem, ed., *Global History: interactions between the global and the local.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. München: Beck, 2009.

instance, Akira Iriye's *Global and Transnational History* provides an overview of recent scholarship, with particular emphasis on the movement of people across the globe, on human rights, on environmental history as well as on various levels of Americanisation.[13] All of these examples represent areas of global history which are by definition transnational. Following a similar approach, Patrick Manning defines World History as "the story of connections within the global human community".[14] It is the notion of a "global human community" which constitutes the main difference to the work of most transnational historians, who tend to question the assumption that exchange necessarily creates communities; that goods and ideas remain the same when they travel across borders.[15] Likewise, Iriye's understanding of this relationship can be challenged when he argues that looking at a Raphael or reading Shakespeare "is a transnational experience that creates a global community of lovers of art and literature."[16] Scholars of the transnational movement of ideas often come to the conclusion that this is not necessarily the case. A community of art lovers, as described by Iriye, is at best an idea. They might share a love for Raphael or Shakespeare, but what a specific work of art means differs according to the context of reception, which is determined by local conditions. A transnational approach to the circulation of ideas, literature or art requires an engagement with methodologies, which are not exclusive to transnational historians and which add a largely new area of research to the field of transnational history. We cannot simply assume that a text or a piece of music retains its meaning when it crosses borders.

Critics.

While most global historians share an interest in transnational debates, other historians occasionally react defensively when confronted with transnational challenges to the established conventions of the profession. This is despite the fact that most proponents of a transnational agenda do not intend to replace existing historical disciplines or approaches. International historians might argue that transnational history adds nothing substantially new to what they have always done. However, by posing questions about agency and about the deterministic reference to borders between states, transnational history offers new perspectives and pushes the frontiers of the discipline. Historians of

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[13] Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

[14] Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History. Historians Create a Global Past*. Basingstoke: Palgrave 2003, 3.

[15] In this respect Sven Beckert's notion of the "interconnectedness of human history" as a starting point for transnational history, while acknowledging different forms of organisation, might be a helpful corrective: Sven Beckert, in C.A.Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History", *American Historical Review*, 111:5 (2006), 1440-1464

[16] Akira Iriye, *Japan and the wider world : from the mid-nineteenth century to the present*. London: Longman, 1997, 48. On Iriye's notion of "global community" see idem., *Global community: the role of international organizations in the making of the contemporary world*. Berkeley, Calif. ; London : University of California Press, 2002

war and conflict fear that transnational history proposes an idealistic humanism which over-emphasises the friendlier aspects of human relations. Contrary to that, transnational communities are often based on exclusion of and aggression towards others. Supporters of macro-comparative approaches defend their territory by pointing to questions transnational historians are unable to answer. They wrongly assume that transnational history presents itself as a substitute for comparative history. Yet comparative and transnational approaches are frequently combined, despite following markedly different objectives.[17] Comparative history offers new insights through the juxtaposition of more than one historical example; transnational history would only be critical of this approach if it took the nation as the sole framework for comparative analysis, presenting problems similar to those of national history.

Historians of nation states criticise transnational historians for writing the nation or the state out of history; but most transnational historians need both nations and states as constant points of reference. Transnational approaches to the history of the United States offer the most striking examples here. Thomas Bender speaks about the US as a "Nation among Nations", profoundly shaped by its transnational connections.[18] Introducing the term "Transnational Nation", Ian Tyrell aimed to show how the US was connected "to the world, its peoples, its traditions", rejecting traditional accounts of American exceptionalism, which see its history "determined primarily by domestic forces and debates."[19] Returning to the old continent, historians cannot write the nation out of history; it did too much damage during the period Eric Hobsbawm has called the Age of Extremes for that to be the case.[20] Meanwhile, a transnational agenda might encourage historians to think differently about nations. For instance, nineteenth-century Italian history is too frequently written in isolation and based on teleological assumptions, which accept national Unification as the inevitable outcome of a predefined historical process.[21] This approach risks distorting the extent to which the then-existing Italian states were connected to different parts of Europe, or saw themselves as emerging nations in their own right. For instance, John Robertson's work on the

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[17] For a comparativist critique of transnational history see Heinz Gerhard Haupt, "Une nouvelle sensibilité: la perspective transnationale. Une note critique", in: *Cahiers Jaurès*, 2011/2 (200), 173-180. For a combination of a transnational and a comparative approach see Axel Körner, Nicola Miller, Adam Smith, eds, *America Imagined : Explaining the United States in nineteenth-century Europe and Latin America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Also Nicola Pizzolato, *Challenging Global Capitalism: Labor Migration, Radical Struggle, and Urban Change in Detroit and Turin.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

[18] Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2006.

[19] Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation. United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 1.

[20] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*. London: Michael Joseph, 1994.

[21] On transnational approaches to the history of the Risorgimento see the special issue edited of *Modern Italy*, Oliver Janz and Lucy Riall, eds, 2014/1.

Neapolitan Enlightenment shows that progressive forces within the Kingdom of Naples understood themselves to be part of an emerging Neapolitan nation state.[22] During the earlier period of the Risorgimento, notions of liberty were not necessarily understood in terms of national liberation. In Sicily, the revolution of 1848 was concerned first and foremost with independence from Naples; creating a federation of Italian states was of secondary importance. Moreover, the idea of the "resurgence" of the Italian nation responded to developments elsewhere in the world, a process that was informed by a transnational exchange of ideas, which was not simply home-born.[23] In this sense transnational historians can make an important contribution to the rethinking of nation states.

Some practitioners of transnational history insist that their approach makes sense only if practised in the context of research on established (modern) nation states.[24] Instead, a less state-oriented concept of nationality, freed from the constraints of treating every national group as an aspiring nation state, allows the historian to operate with different spatial and territorial configurations. Many historians investigate connections between more loosely defined national groups, confined not by state borders, but by linguistic, cultural or historical boundaries. Owing to a constant history of border-crossing, it is difficult to capture these people, their ideas and the goods they produce and consume in terms of national significance. This fact does not necessarily describe a modern problem, and presents the historian with challenges similar to those that we confront in an age of established nation states. Contrary to the agents of interaction between states, the protagonists of transnational history do not necessarily have a clearly defined nationality; or their nationality does not overlap with the boundaries of existing states. It would be difficult to deny that the Kingdom of Bohemia within the multinational Habsburg Monarchy offers interesting material for transnational research, irrespective of the fact that it never constituted a nation state. For similar reasons the transnational approach is relevant also to our understanding of earlier periods, including medieval history. Predating the constitution of modern centralised nation states, Susan Reynolds suggests that narratives about common descent informed regional identities in the West as early as the end of the first millennium.[25] The fact that separate peoples were often ruled by the same king, and that different languages and customs were used within the same kingdom, led to cultural exchange, but

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[22] John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment. Scotland and Naples 1680-1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

[23] Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*. For the extent to which the Italian nation state continued to be shaped by a transnational exchange of ideas see Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy*: *From Risorgimento to Fascism*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

[24] For Ian Tyrell, transnational history concerns "the period since the emergence of nation-states as important phenomena in world history" after the treaty of Westphalia: *Transnational nation. United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 3

[25] Susan Reynolds, "Medieval origines gentium and the community of the realms", in: *History*, 68, 1983, 375-390. The article explains how stories of common descent created sentiments of "national" solidarity.

also to conflicts between people of perceived common descent.[26] King Stephen of Hungary, who died in 1038, considered a kingdom of just one language and way of life weak and fragile, whereas a variety of languages and customs were perceived to be an asset. Transnational history also matters to medievalists and early modernists due to conventions of the profession dating back to the nineteenth century, when historians contributed to the propagation of national pasts for political and ideological reasons.[27] Frequently historians simply invented national pasts for periods when state sovereignty was not based on national principles. Even ancient history could be written in a national key. The national movements of the nineteenth century used the alleged historicity of their nations to legitimise in teleological fashion the emergence of modern nation states. The historical profession cannot afford to ignore its own ideological agenda. Contrary to the professionalised history of the nineteenth century, Johann Gottfried Herder's enlightened universalism emphasised the unity of mankind over the differentiating effects of the environment, which eventually led to the development of national characteristics. Condorcet too saw the succession of civilisations as part of the general progress of humanity; and even for Hegel, nationality was principally an articulation of the universal spirit and part of the unfolding of the consciousness of freedom. Not Hegel, but the Hegelians, his later followers, understood nationality as a value in itself.

One criticism transnational historians encounter is that they simply follow modish trends, affecting a discipline that is constantly in search of self-legitimization. Historians, the argument goes, invent new terms which contribute little to historical enquiry while at the same time overloading an empirical discipline with theoretical jargon. As a matter of fact, the term "transnational" is not new. According to Pierre-Yves Saunier, Constantin Pecqueur spoke in 1842 about "*considerations d'intérêt transnational*", as a way of establishing cosmopolitan values and securing international peace.[28] In 1862 the German linguist Georg Curtius used the term as a specific analytic category, when speaking of families of languages: "*Eine jede Sprache ist ihrer Grundlage nach etwas Transnationales.*"[29] During the 1930s and 1940s the term entered the vocabulary of lawyers and economists. Finally, a generation ago, Ian Tyrrell and Michael McGerr discussed in the *American Historical Review* the

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[26] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997, 256 f.
[27] Many historians observed the relationship between the emergence of nation states and the development of history as an academic discipline. For a transnational perspective on this relationship see Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake, eds, *Connected Worlds. History in Transnational Perspective*. Canberra: ANUE Press, 2005
[28] Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 17.
[29] Pierre-Yves Saunier, "Learning by Doing: Notes about the Making of Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History", *Journal of Modern European History*, vol.6/2, 2008, 159-179, 165. For the subsequent use of the term see Simon Macdonald, "Transnational History", 3

possibilities and opportunities of a transnational approach to US history.[30] As the history of the term demonstrates, transnationality periodically appears in the social sciences, responding to particular junctures of debates, which in themselves are determined by historical experience. Therefore, accepting transnationality as an epistemological challenge within the social sciences also signals cross-disciplinary awareness.

Moreover transnational history is not alone in pursuing a contemporary agenda, a history informed by junctures of presentist debate. Because nations and nation states still define important aspects of our contemporary political lives, we also organise much of our historical research and knowledge according to national categories. In this sense national history forms a presentist approach *avant la lettre*. This is despite current debates on the devolution of power from the national to regional or local levels, and despite the globalisation of our cultural, social and economic lives, the growing role of supra-national institutions in political and legislative processes. When we practice national rather than transnational history, we think about the past within those categories that dominate our contemporary thinking. With any of these approaches, what matters is to understand history as an unprejudiced enquiry into past forms of social, political and cultural organisation.

Therefore, transnational history does not ignore nation states or interaction between them; and it is not a cosy history without conflict. As a concept, transnational history is inclusive rather than exclusive. It is not a dogma. Meanwhile, it would be misleading to think that transnational historians have simply adopted a new name for what most historians have always done. Transnational history describes a particular thematic approach to the past and a way of thinking historically. There is not one way of doing transnational history, but a multitude of different approaches. What, then, do transnational histories have in common? In an article for *Contemporary European History*, Patricia Clavin suggested that transnationalism "is first and foremost about people: the social space that they inhabit, the networks they form and the ideas they exchange."[31] These spaces, networks and ideas are transnational, but they still present narratives about people, their lives, goods and ideas. Therefore, we investigate them using the same methodologies historians have always used to study

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[30] Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History", in: *American Historical Review*, 96/4 (1991), 1031-1072.

[31] Patricia Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism", *Contemporary European History* 14/4, 2005, 421-439, 422. For a history of individual lives eluding national boundaries see also Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, Angela Woollacott, eds, *Transnational Lives. Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700-present*. NY: Palgrave, 2010. For transnational networks and imagined transnational spaces of organisations, including religious communities, see Berthold Unfried, Jürgen Mittag, Marcel van der Linden, eds, *Transnationale Netzwerke im 20. Jahrhundert. Historische Erkundungen zu Ideen und Praktiken, Individuen und Organisationen*. (ITH-Konferenzen 2007). Wien: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 2008.

people, their mentalities, their material world, their institutions. Meanwhile, transnational historians look for new sources to gain access to this world of exchanges; and they have to re-read previously explored sources from a new, a transnational point of view. In this respect transnational history has something in common with gender history: gender is everywhere, but historians do not necessarily talk about it. When historians of cultural and intellectual exchange pay particular attention to the reception of goods and ideas, the ways in which they are assimilated into existing cultures, subjectivity, individual experiences and perceptions emerge as important categories of analysis. However, the way transnational historians study texts, discourses or images, the way they quantify objects and apply criticism, is not methodologically different from other good history.

Even much of social or cultural history predominantly refers to national developments. In doing so the profession follows nineteenth-century parameters of modernisation theory, which assumed that societies will automatically constitute themselves as nation states; that local and regional identities will disappear, along with religious and other markers of traditional identity. However, this assumption is historically incorrect, even for the modern period. If defined by their economic, social or even political activity, or by cultural signifiers, societies are often characterised by transterritorial connections between sub-national groups, including trade across political borders, labour migration and other strategies of guaranteeing subsistence and reproduction.[32] These transterritorial exchanges are not only used to meet demands in moments of crisis, but constitute the essence of how certain societies understand themselves.

Transterritoriality and the imposition of national states: an example.
Transterritoriality characterised many societies at the time when they constituted themselves as nation states. In the case of Venice and Venetia, the legacy of transterritoriality helps to explain their late and difficult integration into the Italian nation state after 1866, and the provincial isolation which characterised Venice after a liberation to which the city's population contributed very little. While Venice fought heroically for its independence from Austria and for the reconstitution of its Republican rights in 1848-49, in 1866 it made no significant contribution to its integration into the Italian nation state and largely left its fate in the hands of the Prussian and Austrian armies. At the time, the social, economic and cultural boundaries of Venetian society hardly overlapped with those of the new nation state. Despite the long decline of the Republic of Venice, cultural and economic connections linked it to different parts of the Habsburg monarchy, but also to the wider Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean. Most of these connections were lost as a consequence of Unification.

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[32] For a case study see the example of interwar Greece: Susanne-Sophia Spiliotis, "Das Konzept der Transterritorialität oder Wo findet Gesellschaft statt?", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27 (2001), 480-488.

Even Italian cultural institutions, such as the Venetian opera house *La Fenice,* were adversely affected by the city's integration into the Italian nation state. Over decades the famous theatre was run with great success in a joint venture with Vienna, as one of the most prestigious opera houses in Europe.[33] After 1866 it shared the misery of most Italian theatres post-Unification. The new nation state refused to take on responsibility for the theatres of the former capital cities, and as a consequence *La Fenice* was unable to find impresarios prepared to take the financial risk of organising a season without adequate subsidies. Over the following decades its doors remained closed for eleven out of twenty-four years. Similarly, Naples' *San Carlo*, accustomed to the generosity of the Bourbon rulers before 1860, remained closed for three successive seasons during the 1870s; the *Pergola* in Florence ceased to produce regular opera performances after 1877; and even Milan's famous *Teatro alla Scala*, another of the Habsburgs' great opera houses, remained shut for several years because the municipality was unwilling to provide subsidies.[34] While historians continue to debate *Italian opera* as well as *opera in Italy* in terms of "national culture", as soon as it was pressed into the straightjacket of the nation state this quintessential example of Italian culture declined, threatened by immediate suffocation.[35] Many of Italy's great theatres remained just shadows of themselves; Italian musicians emigrated to Latin America; the centre of operatic attention became European Wagnerism. The great successes of Verdi pre-dated Unification; afterwards, he mostly wrote for foreign stages. In Bologna, *Lohengrin* became the most frequently performed opera, followed by *La Traviata*, but with *Tristan* in the third place.[36] When Puccini and *la giovine scuola* tried to revive the myth of Italian opera, most critics rejected his works as effeminate and "un-Italian".[37] Italy had been unified, but one of the principal features which defined Italy as a *Kulturnation* – opera – was seriously undermined by the whole enterprise. Even in an age of nationalism the history of music does not easily fit national categories. Italian Unification is often studied as a problem of international history. The example illustrates how cultural history can challenge an existing narrative while also pointing towards the transnational dimension of a political event.

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[33] Jutta Toelle, "Opera as business? From impresari to the publishing industry", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17/4, 2012, 448-459

[34] John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi. The role of the Impresario*, Cambridge: Cambridge Paperback Library, 1987, 78. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, *Storia dell'opera italiana.* Vol. IV: *Il sistema produttivo e le sue competenze*. Turin: EDT, 1987, 180.

[35] See the special issue "Opera and Nation in Nineteenth Century Italy", Axel Körner, ed., *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17/4, 2012.

[36] Axel Körner, "Ein soziales „*Dramma in musica*"? Verdi, alte Notabeln und neue Eliten im Theater des liberalen Italiens", *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol.287 (August 2008), 61-89

[37] Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem. Opera, Nationalism and Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Colonial connections in transnational perspective.

Colonial administration provides an even more obvious example where territorial identities do not coincide with the boundaries of nation states. In two rather different bodies of work Catherine Hall and Geoffrey Hosking have demonstrated how the experience of empire is essential to the understanding of national identity, including concepts of citizenship and patterns of inclusion and exclusion.[38] Historians often treat Britain or Russia as nation states, but what defines their peoples' identity, their motivation, their social hierarchies and their economic strategies, is the fact that they live in states which, at the same time, constitute Empires., The pasts of these peoples have to be written as imperial histories, rather than in national terms. The British Empire started out as an institution of commerce and became an institution of conquest. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Britain's relationship with its dependencies in Ireland, America, the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent was largely mediated through mercantile elites and English settlers in the colonies.[39] Attempts to centralise colonial power after the Seven Years War provoked new forms of resistance, followed by a further wave of uprisings connected to the revolutionary wars. Britain reacted by strengthening the colonial executive and the authority of the Crown. To investigate the relationships resulting from these changes in colonial administration, the tools of international history (with its focus on state actors) are of limited use.

The new imperial history challenges the focus on relations between sovereign states by discussing cross-cultural encounters, though not always explicitly in transnational terms.[40] This historiography has immensely enhanced our understanding of imperial connections and their economic rationale. What sets the transnational agenda of this approach is the emphasis on the metropole as the product of imperial connections, illustrated in particular in the work of Catherine Hall. Postcolonial theory has helped to shift the emphasis from Empires within international relations to research on Empire and metropole as a transnational relationship, where Empire is no longer seen as happening far away but as an experience which constitutes the understanding of the imperial nation back at home. Through literature, material culture and education, Empire constructed notions of citizenship,

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[38] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830 – 1867*. Cambridge: Polity, 2002. Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917*. London: Harper Collins, 1997.

[39] C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian. The British Empire and the World 1780-1830*. London and New York, Longman, 1989, 5

[40] Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton ed.s, *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. Antoinette Burton, *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities*. London: Routledge, 1999.

gender, class, religion and race, in the colonial possessions as well as in the metropole.[41] Rethinking exchanges between colonisers and colonised also challenged preconceived ideas about the flow of ideas and cultural practices, emphasising the hybrid nature of colonial relationships. A traditionally perceived international history of Empire has little to contribute to this particular thematic. Reconnecting the once separate histories of Britain and its Empire only works in the form of transnational history.[42] Moreover Empires, following their own political and economic rationale, tend to reach beyond their own colonial realms, forming transnational connections with other colonial Empires. Historians of the early modern period have demonstrated how colonial connections helped to establish new world orders. They have contributed to our understanding of these relationships as Atlantic and global historians, without necessarily adopting the more recent language of transnational history.[43]

Multinational and non-colonial Empires.

Imperial experiences vary greatly, and it is misleading trying to understand one Empire in terms of another. The ways in which national and imperial identities interlace varies from case to case. Egyptian nationalists, after 1876, could be Ottoman patriots at the same time; and demanding Irish home rule did not necessarily mean requesting a separate Irish nation state.[44] Towards the end of the nineteenth century modern political forces drove the Tsars to make concessions to Russian nationalism, even if they knew that this would stir up tensions with the non-Russian subjects of their multi-national Empire. The Orthodox Church played a crucial role in fostering Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian nationalism against Ottoman rule, at the same time undermining the concept of a Christian commonwealth in the region. The Ottoman Empire could accommodate Armenians, Arabs and Jews in a way that the Young-Turkish nation state could not after 1908. All this describes complex transnational relationships.

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[41] See in particular the essays in Catherine Hall and Sonya O.Rose, eds, *At Home with the Empire. Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006. For issues of race in the relationship between empire and nation see in particular Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, eds, *Race, nation and empire. Making histories, 1750 to the present. Manchester: Manchester University Press*, 2010

[42] That this transition also led to fierce debates within the historical profession can be illustrated by the persistent tensions between advocates of the different approaches. See for instance Catherine Hall, review of *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914. Global* Connections *and Comparisons*, (Reviews in History, no. 420): http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/420. Date accessed: 11 April, 2014

[43] John Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650*. Cambridge: CUP, 1970. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. New York: Palgrave, 2002

[44] C.A.Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914. Global Connections and Comparisons*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, 206 f. Also, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

Of particular interest in this context is the Habsurg Empire, which Marx and Engels have described as "a barbaric feudal enclave".[45] They chose these words for theoretical and ideological reasons, not to characterise the Habsburg Empire in historically descriptive terms. Consciously ignoring the extent to which Austria was culturally, politically and in economic terms connected to the German federation, to Russia, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, Marx and Engels described it as a "European China", closed off from civilisation and the rest of the world by a mental wall. They make no reference to the Empire's economic life, to the relatively early beginnings of industrialisation in some parts, or to its centres of European culture, to Vienna, Budapest, and Prague, to the cosmopolitanism of cities like Venice and Trieste, or the melting pots of Fiume and Laibach/Ljubljana.[46] The bitter language of the Habsburg literary canon has taught us to dismiss the provinciality of these cities. Meanwhile, when in 1882 Gustav Mahler was Kapellmeister in Laibach, a provincial capital of less than 30,000 inhabitants, he conducted 38 evenings of opera as well as 43 evenings of operetta, a genre understood as a way of negotiating the Empire's modernity.[47] Literacy levels reached 90% in Bohemia, where compulsory education was introduced in 1775. Almanacs and other books could be found in the households of most Czech peasants, with more sophisticated collections of books common among the Czech-speaking middle and lower-middle class. Marx and Engels were not alone in assuming that Austria had lost touch with the civilised world. Börne and other young Hegelians used the same comparison with China, recognising in Austria's Catholicism the main source of its backwardness, added to its imperial bureaucracy as well as the its sheer geographical extent, protected by high external tariffs.[48] Due to their conception as a multinational empire, the Habsburg lands were perceived as an anachronism, which did not fit the modern map of Europe. For Marx, as for many Hegelians at the time, multinational states presented an obstacle to the imminent formation of modern nation states in the region.

As Ernst Hanisch has demonstrated, the reason for Marx's and Engel's distorted view of the Empire was not ignorance, but method, a view of the world based on political principles, combined with philosophy of history. Class conflict needed capitalist development, enforced by the formation of

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[45] The key-text here is Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels, "Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution". (Karl Marx, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*. Ed. V. Adoratsky. London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1943, vol.II, 39-153). For a more detailed analysis: Hanisch, 31.

[46] On this particular aspect see Dominique Kirchner Reill, *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation. Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012

[47] Axel Körner, "Warum Herr Kapellmeister Mahler in Ljubljana `mit Feuer` und `voller Verve` Operetten dirigierte. Kulturelle Modernisierung in der Provinz. Laibach / Ljubljana 1881–1882", in: W. Suppanz / H. Uhl, eds., *Moderne als Konstruktion. Debatten, Diskurse, Positionen um 1900*. Vienna: Passagen-Verlag, (Studien zur Moderne, 15), 2006, 127-162

[48] Ernst Hanisch, *Der kranke Mann an der Donau : Marx und Engels über Österreich*. Wien: Europa Verlag, 1978, 33.

nation states. Therefore, nation states represented an inescapable step in the emergence of the modern condition. Russia likewise contradicted these inescapable features of historical development; and it needed a Lenin to adapt Marxist conceptions of history to the specific conditions of Russia. In the case of the Habsburg monarchy, the fact that important parts of the Empire belonged to the German Federation meant that it delayed the formation of a German nation state and therefore the coming of a proletarian revolution. While emphasising the progressive role of revolutionary Germans, of Poles and Hungarians within the Empire, Marx despised the counter-revolutionary attitudes of the so-called "unhistorical nations" of Czechs, Slovaks and Croats. Multinational states had to give way to nation states.

Questioning the historical logic of these assumptions is at the core of a transnational critique of ethnocentric historiographical conventions, with important implications for our understanding of international relations. Rethinking the relationship between nations, states and empires offers transnational historians a rich territory for critical enquiry. Important examples of transnational approaches to this field are studies of the linguistic borderlands in multi-national configurations such as the Habsburg Empire.[49] A nation state-centred teleological bias tends to emphasise conflicts between nationalities, which risks reading into the earlier history of the Habsburg Empire the events of 1918. A debate about social groups transcending rigid boundaries links back transnational history to earlier debates about the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences. These connections between debates once more demonstrate the importance of historians maintaining a dialogue across different sub-disciplines. Transnational historians reconstruct geographies, which relate in multiple ways to other mental maps as well as to politically bounded territories.[50]

International History as Transnational History.

Taking account of these different debates, this chapter proposes an open and non-dogmatic use of the term transnational, with the aim of rethinking particular categories of historical analysis and widening established fields of historical research. It is within this historiographical context that transnational history presents a challenge to conventional forms of international history as well,

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[49] See in particular Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the nation: activists on the language frontiers of imperial Austria*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006. Kirchner Reill, *Nationalists who feared the nation: Adriatic multi-nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2012. Also Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky, eds, *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances and State Loyalty in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*. New York: Berghahn, 2007. István Deák, *Beyond nationalism: a social and political history of the Habsburg officer corps, 1848-1918*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

[50] Michael G. Müller and Cornelius Torp, "Conceptualising transnational spaces in history", *European Review of History – Revue européenne d'histoire,* vol.16/5, October 2009, 609-617, 613

forms which were sometimes reluctant to conceptualise transnational spaces. International history frequently presents itself as the study of foreign policy and of relationships between nations regarding spheres such as trade, diplomacy and military conflict, often with particular focus on decision-makers. The study of great powers and of geopolitics (established as a discipline in its own right in France) was part of this academic orientation. Within this field of scholarship the term diplomatic history was increasingly replaced by international history, eventually linking international to intercultural relations, and political entities to cultural communities.[51] The nation state was still the focus here, but increasingly the analysis of the relationship between nations on different levels (going beyond the principal actors of foreign policy) changed the understanding of the discipline. Meanwhile, as the examples above demonstrate, transnational history does not set an agenda for international history alone: transnational thinking also has major implications for the work of intellectual, social and cultural historians, for environmental historians and historians of science and medicine, across the whole spectrum of all periods.

A German collection of essays on *Internationale Geschichte,* published in 2000, occasionally uses the term "transnational", but does not problematize transnational approaches as a distinctive addition to scholarship in international history.[52] This is surprising when one considers the extent to which international historians working in the United States, in particular Akire Irye, have embraced the transnational agenda.[53] Any attempt at a systematic account of the ways in which international historians have used the term would go beyond the scope of this essay, but a few examples will help to illustrate how the concept has transformed our understanding of foreign policy and international relations.

According to Iriye, the "foreign affairs of any country are built on certain ideas and images about a number of communities: national, regional, global, as well as subnational." In his work on Japan the wider world becomes "the key framework, the mental universe, in which Japanese people and their leaders have sought to understand their place and their role in the international community".[54] Illustrating the transnational significance of global connections, he begins his history of modern Japanese diplomacy with a quote from 1869, shortly after the Meiji Restoration, in which the court

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[51] Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 6 ff

[52] Wilfried Loth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds, *Internationale Geschichte. Themen-Ergebnisse-Aussichten*. München: Oldenbourg, 2000.

[53] For an early example see Akira Iriye, *Japan and the wider world : from the mid-nineteenth century to the present*. London: Longman, 1997. And for a more systematic outline of his approach idem., *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

[54] Iriye, *Japan and the wider world*, VII f

noble and government official Iwakura Tomomi instructs his fellow countrymen that "all human beings have horizontal eyes and vertical noses. Even if their hair is red and eyes blue, they are all human, endowed with their ideas of loyalty, filial piety, and marital affection. We should not despise them as barbarians but treat them as courteously as we would friends."[55] Japan's role in international relations – including both economic and diplomatic relations – started from the comparability of racial features and their significance for shared behavioural codes. The dramatic change of Japan's relationship with the world resulted from the transfer of ideas between different parts of the world and from the border crossings of people who had previously lived largely in isolation. Rather than simply emulating the West, Iriye sees this process as a pragmatic approach to perceived realities, a largely non-ideological understanding of the world, which nevertheless met the opposition of those political actors in Japan who favoured a more robust and sometimes a more Asianist orientation to the nation's foreign policy. What is sometimes simply described as Japan's modernisation or its westernisation becomes a complex process of cultural and intellectual exchange, which historians cannot fully investigate using the traditional methods of diplomatic history.

A transnational approach to the problem emphasises cultural and intellectual developments, and their impact on changing attitudes towards other cultures and general world-views. Methodological considerations form the basis of this approach, including the choice of archives as well as of specific research questions, but in themselves these do not constitute an approach that is substantially different from other kinds of cultural or intellectual history. As the example shows, in the context of international history transnationalism poses new questions; it helps to develop a new approach rather than replacing international history with something new.

While for obvious reasons international peace settlements such as the Vienna and Versailles conferences have generated an immense volume of scholarly work by international historians, there are a number of examples where the focus on the role of transnational networks in international relations have raised new questions. Erez Manela's study of self-determination and anticolonial nationalism uncovered the role of transnational networks among representatives of the colonial and non-European world lobbying Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace conference of 1919.[56] As colonial subjects from different parts of the world, they were considered "non-state actors". The victorious

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[55] Iriye, *Japan and the wider world*, 1
[56] Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. For his use of the term transnational see in particular p. 13.

powers who assembled in Paris were concerned with the self-determination of some peoples, namely those living in the territories of their former enemies; but they largely ignored requests for self-determination from the peoples of the colonial world, motivating some, including Ho Chi Min, to turn their attention to the new Bolshevik leaders who had emerged from the Russian revolution. Statelessness was another problem resulting from the transformation of the world's political map after 1918, which the Peace conference was reluctant to discuss and which for a long time attracted little interest among historians. Disillusionment with the official form of liberal anti-colonialism resulted in protest movements all over the world, leading almost simultaneously to revolutions (or forms of non-violent resistance) in China, Egypt, India and Korea. From a historiographical point of view, this is the example of where a classic field of diplomatic history – the Paris Peace Conference - became global thanks to the impact of transnational non-state actors. If we ignore the role of transnational networks, we risk seeing these revolutions in isolation.

Erez Manela's book is not an isolated example of the transnational turn in international history. Innovative work has emerged on the workings and the role of the League of Nations, often explicitly emphasising transnational networks.[57] Daniel Laqua's recent book looks at the origins of non-state internationalism in the fields of intellectual cooperation, peace movements and the struggle against unfree labour.[58] Sarah Snyder's work challenged traditional accounts of the end of the Cold War through an analysis of transnational networks of human rights activists after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975.[59] The study of intellectual movements such as pan-Slavism or pan-Africanism, tracing the invention of concepts such as Latin America or the *Homo Europaeus*, offers rich territory to intellectual and cultural historians interested in the transnational agenda, while at the same time contributing to our understanding of international relations.[60] Many international historians follow an explicitly transnational agenda in the study of European integration, seeking to

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[57] In addition to the above mentioned works see in particular Patricia Clavin, 'Transnationalism and the League of Nations: Understanding the Work of its Economic and Financial Organisation' . *Contemporary European History* 14(4) (2005) , 465-492. Idem., ed., *Transnational Communities in European History, 1920-1965, Contemporary European History (Theme Issue)* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005) , 421-614
[58] Daniel Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism*. Idem, "Pacifism in Fin-de-Siècle Austria: The Politics and Limits of Peace Activism", *The Historical Journal*, vol. 57, no. 1 (2014), 199-224. Idem., "The Tensions of Internationalism: Transnational Anti-Slavery in the 1880s and 1890s", *The International History Review*, vol. 33, no. 4 (2011), 705-726. Idem., "Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations, and the Problem of Order", *Journal of Global History*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2011), 223-247.
[59] Sarah Snyder, *Human rights activism and the end of the Cold War: a transnational history of the Helsinki network*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011
[60] Arturo Ardao traces the relatively late emergence of the term Latin America: *España en el origen del nombre América Latina*. Montevideo: Biblioteca de Marcha, 1992. Less on the term than on the idea of Latin America in postcolonial perspective see Walter D. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. For Europe: Lorraine Bluche, Veronika Lipphardt, Kiran Klaus Patel, eds, *Der Europäer – ein Konstrukt. Wissensbestände, Diskurse, Praktiken*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009. On the invention of Asia: Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe*, 22 ff.

establish the extent to which the political and economic process of integration has an impact upon cultural identities. The term Europeanisation, sometimes used to describe forms of cultural diplomacy, refers to such developments.[61] Similarly, studies of Americanisation often centre on culture and economics, but they also debate the impact of government intervention on transnational cultural developments.[62]

The transnational and the cultural turn in history have also contributed to making new connections between intellectual history and international history. While the contextual history of political thought, in particular around Quentin Skinner, tended to concentrate mainly on the state itself, independent of external powers, David Armitage proposes an analysis of the foundations of modern international thought.[63] In distinction to the histories of international law and of diplomacy, his history of international thought presents itself explicitly as a form of transnational history that studies the circulation and reception of ideas.

Transnational histories of global power.
The geographical scope of the examples presented above points once more to the proximity of some forms of transnational history and global or world history. Here, a transnational approach to international history helps to highlight the nature of the relationship between different parts of the

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[61] Kiran Klaus Patel, "Introduction", in: idem., ed., *The Cultural Politics of Europe. European capitals of culture and European Union since 1980.* New York: Routledge, 2013, 1-15. On cultural diplomacy also Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*. Baltimore, 1997.

[62] The literature is immense. Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna. The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. Claudia Dall'Osso, *Voglia d'America. Il mito americano in Italia tra Otto e Novecento*. Rome: Donzelli, 2007. Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's advance through twentieth-century Europe*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2005. Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May, eds, "*Here, There and Everywhere". The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2000. Wagnleitner, Reinhold, *Coca-Colanization and the Cold War. The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*. Chapel Hill & North Carolina Press, 1994. Alf Lüdtke, Inge Marßolek, Adelheid von Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung. Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996. Egbert Klautke, *Unbegrenzte Möglichkeiten. "Amerikanisierung" in Deutschland und Frankreich (1900-1933).* Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003. WILLETT, Ralph, *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949*, London, Routledge (1989), 1992. BIGSBY, C.W.E, ed., *Superculture: American Popular Culture and Europe*, London, 1975. R.Laurence Moore / Maurizio Vaudagna, eds, *The American Century in Europe*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2003. WOLLEMBORG, J.Leo, Stars, Stripes and Italian Tricolor. The United States and Italy 1946-1989, NY, 1990. SCHWARTZ, Thomas Alan, America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany, Cambridge, Havard UP, 1991. POMMERIN, Reiner, ed., The American Impact on Postwar Germany, Oxford, Berghahn, 1994. Duignan, Peter and L.H. Gann, The Rebirth of the West. The Americanization of the Democratic World 1945-1958, Cambridge, Mass., 1992. BERGHAHN, Volker, The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945-1973, Leamington Spa, England, Berg, 1986. Idem, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shephard Stone between Philantropy, Academy, and Diplomacy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001.

[63] David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 6.

world.[64] Political and ideological considerations often shape the theoretical dimension of these approaches. For instance, World-System Analysis, as it emerged since the 1970s, criticized the ideological foundations of modernisation theory, through emphasis on the exploitative relationship between "advanced" economies and the allegedly less developed parts of the world.[65] Scholars such as Immanuel Wallerstein insist on the existence of a single capitalist world economy, while critically examining the place of various "national" and "colonial" economies within this system of "international" trade. The fact that particular states expand their jurisdiction into foreign territories played an important part in fostering the system's internal hierarchies. The most recent volume in Wallerstein's series explains the role of nineteenth-century liberalism in retaining the capitalist world order after the legitimisation of popular sovereignty.[66] While primarily studying the shifting patterns of core and periphery, World-System theory presents us with an important complement to the territory explored by historians of international relations. What turns world system analysis into a form of transnational history is the fact that it analyses the relationship between "one economy" and "multiple states" and the tensions arising from their contradiction, specifically.

Most global approaches to the economy regard the interplay of different kinds of power as crucial, which explains not only the interdependence of international and economic history, but also the role of transnational history in these debates. Economic power depends not just on manufacturing output, but also on the exchange of goods and the circulation of people more generally. The rise to global power of the United States was linked to trade connections, which were unaffected by the War of Independence and the disconnection from Britain. While the British Empire mainly traded the output of its own manufacturing, the USA lived from the worldwide demand for American primary goods and agriculture, leading its ships to go as far as East Asia and the Indian Ocean.[67] After

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[64] For a historical perspective on World History and its problems see Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "The Writing of World History in Europe from the Middle of the Nineteenth Century to the Present: Conceptual Renewal and Challenges to National Histories", in: Matthias Middell and Lluis Roura, eds, *Transnational Challenges to National History Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 54-139. For an outline of more recent objectives in Global History see Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "World History in a Global Age", *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 1034-60. For a theoretical framework of globalization itself see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis, 1996. On Globalization as an aspect of the postmodern condition see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

[65] For a comprehensive outline of the theoretical foundations of World-System Analysis see Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis. Theory and Methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982. The main proponent of this theory was Immanuel Wallerstein, whose first outline dates the development of a world-capitalist economy back to the sixteenth century: *The Modern World System, I. Capitalist Agriculture and the origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press, 1974.

[66] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789-1914* vol. 4. University of California Press, 2011.

[67] Akira Iriye, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, vol.3: *The Globalizing of America*. Cambridge: CUP, 2013, 4

the Civil War, industrialisation fostered the United States' role in the world, forming the basis of the United States' informal imperial ambition, which a traditional history of international relations, with its emphasis on state actors and official diplomacy, risks overlooking. Economic relations never quite mirror governmental interactions between states, but are shaped by networks and relations with third parties and non-state actors. International politics, as well as economic and cultural exchange, are at the origin of the processes of industrialisation and administrative and educational reform which characterise the global imposition of Western models. Studies of Americanization and the expansion of Western power have to take account of these developments. Only a transnational approach offers the tools to analyse the multi-dimensional nature of such relations.

A global approach to transnational connections also helps to challenge Eurocentric prejudice, putting more recent world economic developments and international struggles for supremacy into perspective. Kirti Chaudhuri has traced cultural and economic interactions in the Indian Ocean between 700 and 1750, demonstrating that, compared to the Islamic civilization, Europeans entered this system of trade after a delay of several centuries.[68] Other historians would point out that between the so-called Middle Ages (in itself a Eurocentric concept) and the beginning of the nineteenth century, China was the world's most powerful centre of commercial and cultural exchange.[69] What these studies show is that the rise of Europe as a global power is a relatively recent phenomenon, which, contrary to many traditional accounts, does not coincide with the "discovery" of the New World several centuries earlier. Around 1900 Britain led worldwide manufacturing output, followed closely by the United States; but as late as 1800 China was still producing more manufactured goods than any other country. This is not only relevant to our understanding of the world economy as such, but also explains China's political power in that particular part of the world – power that survived China's own turmoil during the twentieth century. According to Bayly, it is between the late eighteenth and the early twentieth century that uniformities in state administration, trade and political ideologies place the European imperial system and Western cultural models at the centre of a new wave of globalization. For Bayly, globalization as a specific form of modernity is the consequence of Empire-building and emerges from the establishment of transnational connections between Western Imperial powers, the Islamic

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[68] Kirti N. Chadhuri, *Trade and civilisation in the Indian Ocean: an economic history from the rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Idem., *Asia before Europe: economy and civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
[69] See for instance Kenneth Pommeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000. Also R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1997.

world and South Asia. Race, ecological degradation and the use violence are at the centre of this system. They form the transnational connections which define global power.

A new epistemic context.

As with all histories, global history is also a conception of the mind. Global connections can be analysed through a close reading of transnational developments, but if the objective of a particular project is to write the history of the world, the opportunities for employing a transnational approach are limited, a consequence of sheer scale. Fernand Braudel investigated the totality of a given historical situation: the Mediterranean or the emergence of Western Europe as a world economy, in which nation states played a limited role.[70] For Braudel, world history had become an all-encompassing *science de l'homme*, but few *Annales* historians followed him on this path, concentrating instead on micro-historical research. *Histoire croisée* and the history of "cultural transfer" developed directly out of this approach and became an important conceptual source for transnational historians.[71] It is on this basis that Sebastian Conrad understands transnational history "primarily as a perspective that allows us to go beyond the sharp division between 'internal' and 'external', and the question of which has primacy. Historical processes are seen as relational, and the focus is on the constitutive role played by the interactions between regions and nations in the development of modern societies. Transnational history is critical of the idea that national developments took place autonomously and that they can be understood on the basis of the nation's own traditions."[72]

The many different trajectories transnational history has taken in recent years suggest that it presents history as a whole within a new epistemological context. Traditionally, few questions were raised when social, cultural and intellectual developments were mainly discussed in relation to the nation, usually based on teleological concepts of national history, which take the emergence of the nation state for granted at a time when such outcomes were far from certain. This was (and often still is) a history written from the perspective of the winners of history. Transnational perspectives can help to challenge such narratives. Transnational history is therefore more than the history of connections across borders; it also challenges a conceptual prejudice that sees the past primarily

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[70] A more recent comparable example would be Geoffrey Parker, although his main emphasis on junctures of short term developments: *Global Crisis. War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth-Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

[71] Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée*. Paris : Seuil, 2004. Idem, "Beyond comparison. Histoire croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity", in: *History and Theory*, 45, 2006, 30-50.

[72] Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 6

through the prism of nationality. National approaches privilege one aspect of human identity over others. Although I have stated previously that transnational history does not need a theory of its own, transnational historians can learn from theoretical debates within the humanities and social sciences. These often point us towards the complexity of human experiences. Georg Simmel explained the experience of modernity as the tension arising from the overlapping plurality of impressions, identities and associations. While Baudelaire's *flaneur* relishes in this experience, the traveller in Rilke's Notebook lives it as an unbearable dystopia. Contrary to the early sociologists and commentators of the experience of modernity, some political activists and social scientists in the later twentieth century have reduced modern human experience to single categories, as identities narrowly based on either nationality, religious faith, race or ethnicity. A particularly prominent example of this approach is Samuel Huntington's thesis of the Clash of Civilizations as an attempt to explain modern relationships between groups. Taken to the extreme, this approach leads to dangerous forms of religious, ethnocentric or national determinism. It is perhaps provocative to argue that national prejudice in historical analysis involves similar risks; but the vivid nature of debates on the transnational challenge suggests that historians should engage with concerns articulated in our neighbouring disciplines.

The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and the economist Amartya Sen, among others, have questioned the validity of rigid categorisations in the social sciences. Primordialism is one of the main targets of Appadurai's attempt to understand transnational flows as constitutive of ethnoscapes, where the social imaginary has become a de-territorialised political reality.[73] For Appadurai, the obsession of globalised liberal democracies with cultural cohesion is at the origin of genocidal violence against minorities.[74] Although a reflection upon more recent forms of violence, his point applies perfectly to the history of ethnocentric and racial violence in the early twentieth century. This must have implications for the ways in which we still see the emergence of national states as a natural development of modern times. Amartya Sen also presents us with a pertinent critique of identity-based thinking, which has important implications for the ways in which some historians make nationality and ethnicity the sole basis of their analysis. Arguing against the reduction of human experience to single identities, Sen reminds us of "the broad commonality of our shared humanity, but also many other identities that everyone simultaneously has".[75] His political aim here is to restrain the exploitation of a specifically aggressive use of one particular categorization over others. Sen's main motivation is to explain the origin of religious and ethnic

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[73] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*.
[74] Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of small numbers. An essay on the geography of anger*. Duke Univesity Press, 2006
[75] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*. London: Penguin, 2007, 3 f.

conflict in the modern world; but he also targets the risks of a multiculturalism turned into a "plural monoculturalism" in which different cultures "pass each other like ships in the night". He rejects a view of interpersonal relations reduced to "singular intergroup terms", which pays no attention to the many other social groups to which individuals also belong: based on gender, social, political or cultural connections.[76] Among this plurality of affiliations many are by nature transnational. Meanwhile, nationality represents a relatively minor aspect of what characterises humanity. Therefore, any history which makes the nation or national identity the sole focus of analysis risks diminishing human experience. An international history which understands the past primarily as the past of nation states forces people and their experiences into boxes of singular identities. Sen's claims echo the words of another anthropologist, written long before transnationalism obtained prominence within the social sciences. Eric Wolf asserted that "the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes; and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality. Concepts like 'nation', 'society', and 'culture' name bits and threaten to turn names into things. Only by understanding these names as bundles of relationships, and by placing them back into the field from which they are abstracted, can we hope to avoid misleading inferences and increase our share of understanding."[77] The main issue here is the importance we attach to one identity, in this case nationality, over the relevance of other categories to which individuals also belong. The implications for the ways in which we treat nationality in history are clear. Transnational history is a way of thinking the past beyond the limitations of a particular category.

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[76] Sen, *Identity*, XVI, 156.
[77] Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, 3.