

Hagen Schulz-Forberg (ed.)

ZERO HOURS

CONCEPTUAL INSECURITIES AND NEW BEGINNINGS
IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD



P.I.E. Peter Lang



Series
**Multiple
Europes**
No. 53

To cut off time and seal away the past, to proclaim a new beginning in the present and project a better future onto tomorrow – and thus to make history – is a key signature of modern social, political and cultural discourses. In this book, this practice is represented through the metaphor of the Zero Hour, which alludes to the wish to rebuild the past in the face of a crisis-ridden present characterised by growing conceptual insecurity, hoping for a more stable future. Indeed, the ever-new construction of our past, sequenced and ordered in explanatory narratives, bears witness to a future that 'ought to be'. As the case studies in this volume show, this is a global phenomenon.

Against the backdrop of a confluence of experiences which unsettled conceptual norms after the First World War, this volume presents a novel approach to global history as it examines ways of breaking with the past and the way in which societies, as well as transnational historical actors, employ key concepts to compose arguments for a better tomorrow.

Hagen Schulz-Forberg is Associate Professor of Global and European History at Aarhus University, where he co-ordinates the International Studies programme. His latest monograph, co-authored with Bo Stråth, *The Political History of European Integration* (2010, paperback 2012), was shortlisted for the European Book Prize 2011.



Zero Hours

Conceptual Insecurities and New Beginnings in the Interwar Period



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Bruxelles • Bern • Berlin • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Oxford • Wien

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IN MEMORIAM

JAMES KAYE
(1966-2011)

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This book is the outcome of an inspirational collegial effort at carving out common research interest at the former *Institute of History and Area Studies* at *Aarhus University*. I joined the institute in 2007 and was soon inspired by its internal structure that would allow common research and for a dialogue between a variety of area studies and modern history. Having developed a strong interest in global and transnational history, I began to work on the idea of the common project finally named *Zero Hours* in 2008/09. We had an internal seminar session in February 2010 with a renowned conceptual historian, Lucian Hoelscher, which clarified methodological questions; we were able to host an international conference at Aarhus on 24-26 June 2010, called '*Zero Hours*' – *Conceptual Insecurities and New Beginnings in the Interwar Period from a Global Perspective*, which allowed us to find the second half of authors needed to cover certain fields of expertise; and we were able to host a panel session to get critical feedback on finished papers in April 2011 at the *Third World Congress of the European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH)*, which took place at the *London School of Economics*. Through this stretch of time and these project milestones, we have been in the wonderful situation of receiving critical and constructive feedback from colleagues both in Aarhus and further afield.

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integrated – whose financial support allowed me to bring this book to the printing press. The Velux Foundation’s support for a large research project I have the pleasure of coordinating – entitled *Towards Good Society: Conceptualizing the Social through the Economic from 1930s until Today* – helped with the financing of this volume’s printing costs, too. In many ways, it is the first publication coming out of this project because its idea was mainly developed through writing and preparing this book. I am very grateful for the meticulous formatting and proof-reading of the final manuscript by Roxana Breazu, Zsuzsanna Erdős and Søren Friis. The continuous patience, flexibility and support of this project by Emilie Menz from P.I.E. Peter Lang in Brussels has been highly appreciated.

Preface

The preparation of this book brought together researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds and different countries, even continents. The meetings and discussions were brimming with intensity and curiosity. One of the participants joining our multilingual crowd was James Kaye, who originally came from the United States, or rather Brooklyn, as he would make sure to point out. He had lived for the last fifteen years mainly in Florence, Italy, however. I got to know James in 1998 when I joined the *European University Institute* for my PhD research. James arrived a year before me and already had the air of an authentic Tuscan, so immersed was he in the beauty and culture – especially the culinary one – of Florence and her hills. Over the years we became friends and I got to know James as a truly independent and creative intellectual and individual. Continuously, James had developed a fascination with alternative forms of narrating history, especially visual ones. I had the opportunity to collaborate with him again within the framework of an international research project on the European public sphere which we coordinated with Anna Triandafyllidou under the direction of Bo Stråth. James created a visual archive of iconic European images for the project.

His continuous interest in art and images inspired him to embrace a new topic on international art fairs within the context of the Zero Hours project. He joined us in Aarhus for meetings and our common international conference on the subject. James' personality always added warmth and humour to any conference or workshop. Working with him was a pleasure. And it was just like that the last time we met in June 2010. Sadly, James' contributions to the inspirational collegial spirit within the *Zero Hours* group and to this book also mark the last time he was able to be among us and his last piece of academic writing. He did not have time to follow up on his new ideas because of a rowing accident on the river Arno near Florence. His boat capsized and the Arno's currents were too strong. James drowned. I dedicate this book to him.

Hagen Schulz-Forberg, Aarhus, February 2013

INTRODUCTION

Time and Again Toward the Future

Claims on Time as a New Approach for Global History

Hagen SCHULZ-FORBERG

*The analysis of the historicity of being tries to show that
this being is not “temporal” because it “stands in history”,
but that, inversely,
it only exists, and can only exist,
historically because it is temporal at its core.¹*
Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*

Consequently, history no longer occurs in, but through, time.²
Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*

Zero Hours are not real. They are a metaphor for expressing a wish to lock certain experiences and practices securely in the past while embracing a new beginning. They serve here as a signature for approaching global history through the varying ways in which global actors break up time. What should be locked in the past in, say, India

¹ My translation. The original reads: “Die Analyse der Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins versucht zu zeigen, daß dieses Seiende nicht ‘zeitlich’ ist, weil es ‘in der Geschichte steht’, sondern daß es umgekehrt geschichtlich nur existiert und existieren kann, weil es im Grunde seines Seins zeitlich ist.” Heidegger, Martin, *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 2006 [1927], p. 376. In the published translation of Heidegger’s work into English it reads: “In analyzing the historicity of Dasein we shall try to show that this entity is not ‘temporal’ because it ‘stands in history’, but that, on the contrary, it exists historically and can so exist only because it is temporal in the very basis of its Being.” See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1962, p. 428. Beside some choices of words, the main difference is my usage of the term ‘historicity’ rather than ‘historicality’. Both terms are almost synonymous, but I find historicity more apt because it includes not only the placing of objects and subjects into history, thus giving them a role in this history, but also because it includes the moulding of the past through actors in the present.

² Koselleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004, p. 236.

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during the 1930s? After the First World War, what kind of art ought to be safely forgotten and banished into the past, as it obstructed a better path into the future? Which concepts serve as the semantic carriers of narratives of new beginnings, of historical change and the perceived need to break up time? How are pasts from which one would need to break away from constructed among economic thinkers? Similar questions are dealt with in this volume. We here treat time not as a phenomenon that disciplines and restructures daily life and labour of global societies, making global sameness through waking up early and going to work. We treat time as interpreted time, as temporalisation of social imagination. To introduce this new approach to global history I will in the following first introduce Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of *chronotopos*³ as a way to understand variations of creating historical narratives in globally different ways. I will also introduce the notion of *uchronotopia* to show how some *chronotopoi* become ideologically charged and unfold into ideal type normative visions. I will then reflect on the impact of global history on writing history in the early twenty-first century and the consequences it has for the periodisation of history, which ultimately has a strong bearing on how the authors of this book conceptualised Zero Hours. In a further step, I illustrate the approach of this volume closer by introducing the notions of *conceptual insecurity* and *drifting meaning*. Following the introduction of these methodological elements I discuss the chosen historiographical approach against the backdrop of the impact of global history and a theory of global modernity. Finally, the results of the single contributions are summarised and the chapters introduced. It can be shown that entanglements between the highly heterogeneous cases emerge on various levels: *institutions, networks, actors, key texts*, and *concepts*.

Zero Hours and the Uchronotopias of Global History

'Let Europe arise!' These were the famous words which Winston Churchill chose to place at the end of his Zurich address on 19 September 1946, also known as the *Tragedy of Europe* speech. After a cataclysmic experience, a new Europe needed to take the place of the old Europe and unfold in the European space in the near and more distant future. Churchill imagined a common Europe as a safe haven for peace not only in Europe, but globally. Churchill, discursively, closed the lid on the war and its atrocities, and proclaimed that France and Germany must cooperate and that all of Europe should stand united. One should forget atrocities and aggressions, and instead remember common values

³ Bakhtin, Mikhail M., *Chronotopos*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2008 [1975]. I here use the German translation.

and mutually achieved progress. After all, Churchill reminded his audience, civilisation needed to be safeguarded in the future.

Nothing is a more representative signature of modernity than to cut off time and seal it in the past, to proclaim a new beginning in the present and to project a better tomorrow onto the future, to thus make history.⁴ This discursive historical practice is summarised with the metaphor of the Zero Hour in this book. Indeed, the ever-new construction of our past, sequenced and ordered in explanatory narratives, is not merely a testament to present conditions and predilections. It bears witness to a future that ought to be; just like Churchill's emphatic call for a new beginning for Europe.

In 1920, twenty-six years before Churchill's speech in the aftermath of the Second World War, Léon Bourgeois, eminent French politician, international lawyer and the first president of the League of Nations, received the Nobel Prize for Peace. Despite the very recent experience of another devastating war, despite the short-lived effects of the Wilsonian moment,⁵ and despite the disappointing disavowal of the League of Nations by the United States, he found similar glimpses of hope for European and global civilisation underneath the rubble. Yes, the Great War came as a shock and a source of disillusion to Western intellectual and political self-confidence. Yet, there were too many signs of rejuvenation, Bourgeois believed – to ignore these signs would mean abandoning hope. “The victory had been, above all, a victory for law and order, and for civilization itself,” he wrote.⁶ The end of civilisation had been avoided and a new clear goal lay ahead: a global legal order represented and enforced by the League of Nations. The present experience of the Great War needed to be seen as a hint towards mankind's task in time: to build a good global order. “To climb by all roads originating from all points of the world to the pinnacle where the law of man itself holds sway in sovereign rhythm – is this not the ultimate end of mankind's painful and centuries-long ascent of Calvary?”

No matter how cataclysmic or catastrophic experiences of the present may be, they retain the discursive possibility to remain cathartic. To be sure, dystopias thrive just as well and especially after the First World

⁴ Cf. Hunt, Lynn, *Measuring Time, Making History*, Budapest, Central University Press, 2008, for a foundational reflection on how making history is part of an emotional practice of sense-making.

⁵ For the coinage of the term see Manela, Erez, *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

⁶ Bourgeois, Léon, *Nobel Lecture*. Retrieved from 'http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1920/bourgeois-lecture.html', 15 May 2013.

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War, a feeling of moral and general decline was eminent (see Christoffer Kølvråa's chapter in this volume). In such moments, history becomes reorganised in new narratives, optimistic and pessimistic, forward-looking and past repressing. There are manifold categories for such historical moments: revolutions, wars, inventions, movements, encounters and more are among them in all shapes and forms. What is characteristic of experiences calling for a reassembly of historical narratives is mainly that they are surprising. Surprising in the sense that they are unexpected and fall outside established semantic settings within which the everyday usually takes place. They are discursively challenging and lead to a *conceptual insecurity* among contemporaries. Established ways of dealing with challenges, of solving problems lose their grip, their explanatory power and ultimately their legitimating power. They lose their claim on the future. Globalisation was and still is to some degree an experience tied to conceptual insecurity. The financial crisis ensuing since 2008 is without doubt such an experience, at least within the Western semantic universe. It has led to a tremendous insecurity about the ways in which the economy should run, or be run, and has led to debates about what society should be like and to a feeling of insecurity about one's future. The recently growing interest in social inequality stands in direct connection to the experience of the financial crisis.⁷

New beginnings discursively accompany all breaks in time. 'Never again' is never without 'this way ahead', a discursive security package to make 'never again' a certainty. These futures are connected to the past through the experience of the present. For Reinhart Koselleck, the *spaces of experience* and the *horizons of expectations* are interdependent units of modern legitimacy narratives (see Christoffer Kølvråa's theoretical reflections in his contribution). Can this particular way of temporalising experience in ever-new historical narratives serve as an entry point to global history? Is the claim on time, this archetypical signature of modernity, a global condition? Are variations of temporalisation and thus of historicity a creative and fruitful way of addressing global variations of temporalities?⁸ This volume examines a variety of concepts and spaces according to the specific function they have in discourses of

⁷ Surely, this is not the first time in history that an economic crisis unfolds into a discussion of social inequality. The deep-cutting economic crisis of the U.S. from 1893 had a similar effect on political and social debates, for example, even famously finding reflections on stage with the Broadway piece on *The War of Wealth* by C.T. Dazey.

⁸ For an elaboration on the historicity of the future see Hölscher, Lucian, "Über den Fortgang und das Ende der Geschichte. Rudolf Bultmanns Eschatologie im Abstand eines halben Jahrhunderts", in *idem, Semantik der Leere. Grenzfragen der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2009, pp. 183-195.

temporal sequencing. It is far from complete. Like much of contemporary global history, it is case-based to illustrate a wider claim. And yet, despite the limited scope, transnational connections between concepts and actors emerge across the cases (see below).

When time is broken up and history rewritten, this also theoretically implies that all history, anywhere and anytime, is always contemporary.⁹ History is a possibility, not a certainty. As Heidegger reasons, this understanding of history raises possible resistance. “History shall thus have the possible as its topic? Does not its whole ‘sense’ long for ‘facts’, for what it was really like?”¹⁰ Indeed, the old Rankian call for describing what it was ‘really like’ is disputed by Heidegger. Instead, he strongly promotes the understanding of history proposed by Wilhelm Dilthey, namely to see history as part of contemporary meaning-making and not as an undisputed array of events, ideas, and experiences, innocently connected by the thread of passing time. All events, ideas and experiences are temporalised according to the interests, interpretations and investigative perspectives of contemporaries. The signposts, mainly called facts, along which history is narrated, are part of a reservoir of ever-changing possibilities of history – globally so.

History needs to be always understood in the plural both in regard to the plurality of parallel, synchronic histories and in regard to the plurality of ever-changing contemporary diachronic perspectives on and usages of history. This is just as true for global history. Manifold ways of dealing with the past abound. Historians do not have a copyright on history. In fact, all forms of temporalisations produce their own historicity. Individuals, families, groups, societies and nations all have their modes of temporalising, of making sense of their experience as they act in the present and move towards an open future, which they hope to stabilise through their goals and dreams. What is more, not only do different modes of temporalisation exist in regard to who is constructing history, but also in regard to how history is constructed. Historiography, already very diverse in its different traditions and grasps on history, is merely one genre. It is the academic and scientific way of asking and answering questions related to experiences and changes made over time. There are many more, for instance memory.

To capture the manifold ways of temporalising history, I would like to point to Bakhtin’s notion of *chronotopos*. In a unique way, Bakhtin combines time and space in his analysis of the novel. His main claim about what makes a *chronotopos* is that genre has a decisive influence on

⁹ Cf. Hartog, François, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2002.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 394. Again, my translation.

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how time and space interrelate in a narrative. The concept he introduces is much more complex and yet precise than for example Paul Ricoeur's general division between natural time, understood as time that simply passes, and human time, understood as narrated, interpreted and appropriated time.¹¹ *Chronotopos*, according to Bakhtin, is a 'form-content category'.¹² It describes ways of appropriating historical time and historical space as well as historical actors and agency into literary representations in detailed ways simply because of the abundance of genres at hand. Similarly to variations of representing time, space and actors in the novel, different genres of appropriating history exist: historiography, memory, both individual and collective, but also documentary film, diaries, a picture book, political texts such as a constitution or legal preambles all follow temporal and thus historical logics of their own that are bound to their specific characteristics as a genre. Additionally, from a global perspective, Chinese, Indian, African, or indeed any other form-content category narrating change over space and time can be understood as different genres of historical *chronotopoi*. When the perspective is thus broadened further, global history appears as a field of seemingly infinite ways of producing *chronotopoi*, narratives about spatio-temporal unfolding. And exactly this is of interest in this volume; the different ways in which *chronotopoi* are narrated in Chinese, Indian, European, North American and African settings on the one hand, and how certain themes unfold in different historical settings on the other hand. Here, we look at the conceptual fields of border, revolution, art, health and economics.

Often enough, history is not only temporalised differently, poured into variations of *chronotopoi*, but as it is temporalised it becomes a utopian narrative. Reinhart Koselleck illustrated the shift to modernity with the shift from imagining the ideal society in contemporaneity, only located in a distant land or on some shrouded island, to imagining the ideal society in the same or at least similar space but in a different time. In fact, these imaginations should be called *uchronia* rather than *utopia*, he pondered.¹³ When looking at how ideal type scenarios, normative horizons towards which history should develop, from the perspective developed above, *chronotopos* becomes *uchronotopia*. The new normative orders towards which societies should strive and against which individual agency is reflected are legitimised by the usage of *chronotopoi*

¹¹ Cf. Ricoeur, Paul, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1984.

¹² Bakhtin, *Chronotopos*, p. 8.

¹³ Koselleck, Reinhart, "The Temporalization of Utopia", in *idem*, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 84-99, p. 87.

and *uchronotopias*. Temporalisation is inherent in every critique. Every undermining of existing, incremental or encrusted order calls for a counter-narrative that builds on a reinterpretation of history and a projection of a better society into the future. These narratives of normative change exist in grand, sweeping, ideological mode as well as in less triumphant and all-encompassing ones. One characteristic of all narratives of normative change is, however, the claim to universal, uncontested truth without which no legitimacy can be gained. Concepts are the building blocks of these narratives of normative change.¹⁴

The conceptual approach to the understanding of the *uchronotopias* of global history allows for methodological consistency between the cases of this volume. It provides access to a variety of empirical observations that enable a sophisticated, albeit limited, inductive analysis of the entanglements between the different cases. Themes and spaces are under scrutiny, revealing how different semantic traditions and different social, cultural and political settings lead to different ways of breaking up time in order to reassemble it to provide an explanatory and legitimising narrative for present agency and the future.

Ultimately, it is always the future that makes the past. The future as it is wished for, as it should be or as it is expected to be, that is. To return to Heidegger one last time, “history [...] does not take its point of departure in the ‘present’ and in what is ‘real’ today, in order to grope its way carefully back into the past, but also the *historical* acquisition of the past originates *from the future*. The ‘choice’ of the possible object of history *is already made* [...]”¹⁵ Claims on time, which become claims on normative order, are looked at in this volume and taken as a methodological route through which we hope to contribute to the writing of global history.

¹⁴ For a similar conceptualisation of the idea of normative change and the role of narratives, see Forst, Rainer and Klaus Günther (eds.), *Die Herausbildung normativer Ordnungen. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, Frankfurt am Main, Campus, 2010. In their introduction (pp. 11-30) the authors map out their research approach. Pages 15-27 are particularly interesting for the Zero Hours perspective – here Forst and Günther reflect on the structures of normative orders and the role of globalisation in current renegotiations of normative orders.

¹⁵ My translation. Italics and inverted commas in the original. “Die Historie nimmt daher [...] ihren Ausgang keineswegs in der ‘Gegenwart’ und beim nur heute Wirklichen, um sich von da zu einem Vergangenen zurückzutasten, sondern auch die *historische* Erschließung zeitigt sich *aus der Zukunft*. Die ‘Auswahl’ dessen, was für die Historie möglicher Gegenstand werden soll, *ist schon getroffen* [...]” Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 395. Note again that I use the term ‘historicity’ instead of ‘historicality’ in my translation.

The Impact of Global History

Recent developments in global history have significantly changed the practice of international and comparative history in areas that make up its core identity. First, the nation as the starting point and basic unit of all comparison has been called to the bar. Often, this is phrased as a twofold critique of both methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism. In fact, the recent so-called spatial turn has in many ways effectively phrased this critique and called for a new, fresh departure into global history.¹⁶ Second, using events as established ways of making sense of change over time are under intellectual pressure even more than during historiography's deconstructive decades of the 1980s and 1990s. As a result of such changes in the academic practice of history, a transnational methodology and general perspective emerged.¹⁷

In some cases, *transnational* has simply been added as if a synonymous adjective to comparative.¹⁸ Transnational history has also come to serve as an interchangeable term for what used to be called institutional, international or diplomatic history. Mostly, however, it has been a term

¹⁶ Cf. Middell, Matthias and Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: from the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization", in *Journal of Global History*, 2010, 5:1, pp. 149-170.

¹⁷ Academic publishers increasingly open series on transnational history. Here, Palgrave Macmillan's *Series in Transnational History* should maybe be mentioned as path-breaking. For recent scholarship see, for example, Conrad, Sebastian and Dominic Sachsenmaier (eds.), *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s-1930s*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; Engel, Ulf and Matthias Middell (eds.), *World Order Revisited*, Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2010; Gluck, Carol and Anna Tsing (eds.), *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2009; Mazlish, Bruce, *The Idea of Humanity in a Global Era*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Budde, Gunilla, Sebastian Conrad and Oliver Janz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006; Sluga, Glenda "Editorial – the Transnational History of International Institutions", in *Journal of Global History*, 6:2, 2011, pp. 219-222. Transnational approaches to global analyses are not only practiced by historians. For a recent approach within law see Joerges, Christian and Josef Falke (eds.), *Karl Polanyi, Globalisation and the Potential of Law in Transnational Markets*, Oxford Portland, Hart, 2011.

¹⁸ Cf. Kocka, Jürgen and Heinz-Gerhart Haupt (eds.), *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2009, where the two editors dismiss transnational critique of comparative history simply as 'not convincing' in their introduction (p. 20). To illustrate a move from comparative national history to a transnational history of empires, networks and actors see Budde, Conrad and Janz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte*. The book illustrates the methodological tensions brought by the transnational approach as the established German scholars of comparative history, Hartmut Kaelble, Manfred Hildermeier and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, all opt for the comparative method as the best one – even for transnational history.

through which the practice of diplomatic history (see Kenneth Weisbrode's contribution in this volume) as well as international and institutional history is rethought innovatively. The history of the League of Nations, for example, or of other international institutions is operationalised as transnational history today.¹⁹ However, *transnational* denominates a quite different terrain than those of established comparative, institutional or diplomatic perspectives,²⁰ which often pit national cases against each other or retell the story of an institution and its (mainly male) actors. Nevertheless, transnational history seems to be well on its way to becoming the methodological twin of *global history*: Global history has an increased bearing on established ways of writing history. It is influential well beyond its own core camp. Mainly, this influence has brought about a general widening of perspectives historians employ upon their original field of expertise as well as a trend towards inserting national or local histories into more complex transnational and translocal contexts.

Of course, many aspects of global history sound like truisms. That the world is connected beyond the national level is not a very surprising finding and indeed does not constitute much of an academic claim. The concept of globalisation has in the recent past seen historians from many subfields of the discipline engaged in a discussion about when the phenomenon we now call by this name began. Thereby, a race back

¹⁹ Cf. Clavin, Patricia, *Securing the World Economy. The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Clavin's study illustrates how the transnational becomes a new vantage point for many established fields within historiography. Clavin's work shows how international history deals with the challenge of the transnational. For recent work on international history and institutions inspired by a transnational approach see Kott, Sandrine "Une 'communauté épistémique' du social? Experts de l'OIT et internationalisation des politiques sociales dans l'entre-deux-guerres", in *Genèses*, 71:2, 2008, pp. 26-46, for an exemplary approach to the International Labour Organisation; and see also the recent work on the EU by Kauppi, Niilo and Michael Rask Madsen (eds.), *Transnational Power Elites: The New Professionals of Governance, Law and Security*, London, Routledge, 2013; for an innovative socio-historical approach in this book see the chapter by Knudsen, Ann-Christina L. and Karen Gram-Skjoldager, "Elite Transformations and Diffusion of Foreign Policy: A Socio-historical approach to the emergence of European power elites", in *ibid.*, pp. 81-99.

²⁰ As the foundational text for conceptualising transnational history as entangled history, see Werner, Michael and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity", in *History and Theory*, 45:1, 2006, pp. 30-50. For an elaboration and overview of transnational and entangled methodology see Pernau, Margrit, *Transnationale Geschichte*, Munich, UTB, 2011.

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through time chasing globalisation even to Antiquity can be observed.²¹ Mostly, this stream of historical writing was already inspired by a transnational thinking beyond the nation.

Recently, more comprehensive understandings of global history have brought the nation back into the rationales of historiography. Today, the nation may not be the starting point of historical analyses anymore, but it is certainly among the most important spaces and forms of politics; and simply recognised as such; nothing more, yet nothing less. Indeed, it can be said that the nation-building process, which began in the early nineteenth century was a historical reaction to global trade and power relations. The nation became and remains the most successful and most recognised polity form that is stable and simultaneously flexible enough to frame political struggles, contestations, and negotiations among its citizens and to continuously readdress and at least try to answer the social question; this is not to say that nations are capable of effectively solving all questions thrown at them. Indeed, the spatial tension between global economic spaces and national social spaces is one of the signatures of global history since the nineteenth century.²²

Furthermore, global history is often characterised by normative positionings chosen by historians themselves rather than by their historical findings. Of course the historian, as a participant in the hermeneutic practice, is a knowledge-generating actor who is not innocent or objective, but always discursively rooted in his time and context, interest-driven and subjective. There is a difference, however, between recognising the role of the historian in processes of research and interpretation and proclaiming certain 'dos and don'ts' for historians in an *a priori* fashion. Most prominently, this is exemplified by a vivid and oftentimes exaggerated anti-Eurocentrism. Certainly, Eurocentrist thinking needs to be overcome, and the more global perspectives are embraced the more it comes to the fore how deeply Euro- or

²¹ Cf. Jennings, Justin, *Globalizations and the Ancient World*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011; Moore, Karl and David Lewis (eds.), *The Origins of Globalization*, New York, Routledge, 2009. There are many further examples of scholarly efforts at placing the origins of globalisation at a certain point in time. Similarly, the different characteristics of global relations are divided into periods. Probably the most convincing and most well-known is the division between archaic globalisation and modern globalisation. For a convincing elaboration of this division see, for example, Bayly, Christopher A., *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Malden, MA, and Oxford, Blackwell, 2003.

²² Cf. Polanyi, Karl, *The Great Transformation*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2001 [1944], and more recently Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, which shows how nation-building is best understood as an exogenous phenomenon as well as an endogenous one.

Westerncentric thought really has been engrained in the practice of historiography.²³ Merely to move away from Europe or the West, to ignore it, or to methodologically fixate on reciprocity between European and non-European countries and actors is not a convincing alternative, however, as these choices are more normatively than empirically founded. In a way, the historically indisputable European hegemony during high imperialism does not need to be ‘written out’, but needs to be analysed and contextualised by employing new questions and methodologies.²⁴

Thus, methodologically refined approaches need to be developed which allow searching for, showing and following reciprocities, entanglements, when and where they exist, and which allow a meaningful dialogue between micro and macro. Historiography also needs to engage with wider social and political theories more openly. Here, the core identity of historiography – source-based, inductive theory building – is more helpful than an effort at translating social science theories into historical case studies. Reciprocities should be looked for inductively, rather than to deductively prescribe them with an artificial equality model. Again, the historian’s predilection for source-based theory should in no way be misunderstood as a new call for *Wie es eigentlich gewesen* in the Rankian sense. The role of the historian as the interpreter of historical sources remains crucial. The basic presupposition of an equality of all histories, be they European or not, which is embraced in this book, may be better served this way. This volume hopes to contribute to an unfolding empirical turn in global history by neither neglecting the necessity of theory building that facilitates a better grip on the vast material at hand nor ignoring the inalterable fact that historians in many ways construct their own field of research through the questions they ask and the methods they embrace.

Global history is mostly practiced by European or North American scholars who all proclaim to move beyond a Western-centric approach. Textbooks and leading articles are rarely written by colleagues from, for example, African universities, neither do they appear as publications

²³ Chakrabarty, Dipesh, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000, deserves lasting credit for positioning a milestone of postcolonial critique unavoidable for current global history.

²⁴ In a similar vein argued by Rosenberg, Emily S. (ed.), *A World Connecting, 1870-1945*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2012, in her introduction, and further elaborated by Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette M. Burton, “Empires and the Reach of the Global”, in *ibid.*, pp. 285-433, who show that European empires were not the only globalizing force, but that non-European empires as well as non-imperial actors and regions need not be neglected as they had their own ways of connecting globally.

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from Arab publishing houses. Rather, academic credibility and the channels of publications in the field follow the same old Euro-American routes. The new purchasing power among Chinese universities that allows for calling eminent professors from chairs at U.S. universities to new positions in, for example, Shanghai or Hong Kong has not yet reached the publishing world.²⁵ While going beyond Europe and beyond methodological nationalism, global history has moved in a certain type of scholarly waters. It has often simply enlarged the number of national comparative cases, rewritten and thus discursively reconfirmed regional stories, identities and entities. It has furthermore embraced historical network analysis, a connected history approach or told stories of encounters or clashes. A creative process in rewriting colonial history is furthermore noticeable, motivated by an effort at paying more attention to local agency as well as the patchiness of colonial rule, which was in no way equal to a complete dominance of colonial space.²⁶ Increasingly, historians have decided to adopt a theme-driven writing of history.²⁷ The latter form seems to be among the most convincing, empirically founded and least normative approaches in which much of global history's critique of the arrogance of established Western historiography finds a constructive answer.²⁸

The impact of global history on established forms of historiography can already be said to be profound. In its new, transnational form, global history is able to integrate most forms of historical writing and provides fresh perspectives on established histories. The process of rethinking national historical narratives as well as international histories based on a liberal paradigm is still ongoing, however. Here, entangled and transnational history provides methodologically what the postcolonial critique provides theoretically: a profound impact on the practice of almost all forms of historiography concerned with the modern and contemporary period.

²⁵ Cf. Sachsenmaier, Dominic, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, for following some of the recent trends and movements in what Sachsenmaier calls a global sociology of knowledge.

²⁶ Cf. Tambe, Ashwini and Harald Fischer-Tiné (eds.), *The Limits of British Colonial Control in South Asia: Spaces of Disorder in the Indian Ocean Region*, London, Routledge, 2009.

²⁷ Here, two monographs may be referenced as exemplary in the field: Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, and Osterhammel, Jürgen, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, Beck, 2009. The recent edited volume in a new series on global history is another very impressive example for new global historical scholarship: Rosenberg, Emily S. (ed.), *A World Connecting*.

²⁸ Clearly, the postcolonial critique and the subaltern approach need to be seen as integral parts of a global history perspective today.

Periods in Global History

One of the most interesting effects of global history – indicative of its overall influence – is the evaporation of periodisations. Established, mainly Eurocentric, temporal brackets increasingly lose their role as the unquestioned frame of historical investigation and as a heuristic tool. That a historical study unfolded within such periodical markers as 1789, 1848, 1914, 1918 and 1945, that a long nineteenth and a short twentieth century existed was until recently not perceived as heuristically problematic. It was a rather unquestioned entry point into historical inquiries. Periodisations speak a clear interpretative language, however. By peeling off skin after skin from established ways of narrating national, international and world history,²⁹ historians have increasingly left well-worn periodisations behind that were based on national histories and on Western hegemonic viewpoints on historical eras respectively. Certainly, among mainly American historians of the non-Western world, established periodisations of European or Western origin have been challenged already in the 1950s and 1960s. Here, turning points in Chinese history, mainly 1921 and 1949, emerged as new flagpoles for a non-Western history. The Opium War, an established event so far, has been integrated in a wider Chinese century of military loss and cultural and political change.³⁰ Other examples of mainly Asian history are abundant. The task for global history, of course, remains. How can a non-Western and a Western periodisation be told simultaneously? To simply cut Europe and the West out of the picture is not the answer. Rather, it would need to be included in order to give non-Western history a truly equal standing and to reveal that a clear-cut West simply does not exist in history and appears more as a fragmented yet interlinked group of societies and their politics.

Currently, the results of global historical inquiries are increasingly inserted into broader periodisations, in which years become rather imprecise markers in time, almost symbolic, which do not necessarily refer to a single event, but to a plethora of overlapping phenomena. 1945 remains almost the only established, single-event marker in global history. Periodisation as a form of framing historical analysis has also been recast by suggesting varieties of periodisations instead of one

²⁹ Cf. the exemplary effort at distinguishing contemporary global history from established forms of world history by Mazlish, Bruce, *The New Global History*, New York, Routledge, 2006.

³⁰ For new results about the origins and early practices of world and global history see the comprehensive analysis of Naumann, Katja, *Laboratorien der Weltgeschichtsschreibung. Lehre und Forschung an den Universitäten Chicago, Columbia und Harvard von 1918 bis 1968*, PhD dissertation, Leipzig University, 2012.

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overriding sequence of changes in time. These varieties of periodisation emerge from specific questions asked, from the specificity of certain themes in history, and they thus make the historian's task of following, describing and trying to make sense of change over time part of the historical reflection on a certain question or theme rather than its starting point. Today, with the global history paradigm as a backdrop, periodisations appear as thematic stories emerging from the interaction of the historical issue studied and the questions asked by the historian.

Consequently, in recent scholarship a new broadly defined era of increased global integration and globalisation has emerged. Within the nineteenth century, the 1820s³¹ and the 1870s³² have been proposed as new historical watersheds – as have the 1880s, a time Jürgen Osterhammel understands as a *Schwelendekade*, a transitory decade linking an older global condition with a new one³³ – rather than the 1848-49 European revolutions, and, in the twentieth century, the 1940s and the 1970s; rather than the First World War, the Russian Revolution,

³¹ See e.g. Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, who proposes the time between 1780 and 1820 as a time of converging revolutions, followed by a decade which inaugurates a period between revolutionary changes.

³² Rosenberg, *A World Connecting*, writes that her volume “deals with the transitions and networked connections of the changing industrial-commercial-imperial age between about 1870 and 1945”, p. 25.

³³ Osterhammel, *Verwandlung der Welt*, pp. 109-114. Osterhammel highlights seven new historical conditions for the time following the 1880s: 1) the breakthrough of fossil energy usage on a global industrial scale, 2) the geographical expansion of industrialisation beyond Western countries, 3) a new global economic situation emerging from 2), namely the rise of huge transnational corporations (see also Chandler, Alfred D. and Bruce Mazlish (eds.), *Leviathans: Multinational Corporations and the New Global History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4) High Imperialism, or new imperialism, characterised by territorial control and the final cutting up of Africa and South Asia, 5) a political consolidation within Western polities, 6) a radical break within the intellectual and aesthetic traditions of the Western countries with a global influence lay the foundations of the twentieth century, 7) the rise of critical self-awareness in non-Western countries and political discourse inaugurating colonial resistance. Conrad and Sachsenmeier, *Competing Visions of World Order*, also suggest the 1880s as the decade of global change. The fact that periodisations in global history are broad is underlined by Osterhammel's work itself. In his *Globalization: A Short History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, co-written with Niels Petersson, the 1870s, instead of the 1880s, appear as the transformative decade and 1880 marks the beginning of what is called “politicised globalisation” (pp. 28-29 and 82ff.).

or the Second World War.³⁴ One period that has emerged in global history recently is thus the time between the 1870s-80s and the 1930s-40s. This periodisation is most often proposed by historians with a background in area studies, imperialism or (post)colonialism, who today play an influential role in the field of global history, as do economic historians who have dealt with global questions in their own field for longer than most other fields of historical inquiry.³⁵ This period, sometimes referred to as High Imperialism, is characterised as a time in which a globality of communication has been reached, in which industrialisation unfolded globally and in which the exchange and translation of political, economic and social concepts as well as the mobility of their proponents has reached global scope.³⁶ Accordingly, notions of race, nation, class, empire, Social Darwinism and ethnicity, among others, were spread and appropriated globally.

Among such historical narratives, the First World War is not understood as a historical watershed anymore. Rather, it becomes part of a broader story of sweeping historical change in which the competition of global empires and those striving to be among them or break away from them is the significant phenomenon and the war, though seemingly immobile and stuck in the trenches of Belgium and France, becomes inserted into a global story rather than a purely European one. Of course, the Great War had enormous historical impact. It is not to be denied. But, rather than asking, yet again, how it came about, whether it was Germany's fault and a prequel to the Nazi terror, the global

³⁴ Again, Osterhammel and Petersson, *Globalization*, have proposed the 1970s as a periodisation marker, mainly because of the economic crisis. Indeed, the 1970s appear increasingly as a decade of fundamental shift, a decade which, in retrospect, is increasingly conceived of being pregnant with the changes of the late 1980s and 1990s. See for example the new interest in the history of human rights and the claim that the 1970s constitute the decade in which human rights had their real breakthrough onto the global stage, prominently argued for by Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2010, and recently Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig (ed.), *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011. In the field of international history, Westad, Odd Arne, *Global Cold War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, finds the 1970s to be the decade at the end of which agency within the former colonies had gained momentum significant enough to be counted as a counterforce in global politics.

³⁵ Indeed, while a certain enthusiasm among colleagues unites global historians and has created a very respectful and mutually accepting field in which participants are very open to learn from each other, the new rift in the field of global history as in the wider field of global studies may emerge on a theoretical and methodological level between what can be termed a cultural studies camp and a social science camp.

³⁶ For a study on conceptual appropriation of the social and the economic in Asian languages, see Schulz-Forberg, Hagen (ed.), *Concepts in Global History. The Social and the Economic in Asia, 1860-1940*, London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014.

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historian's curiosity is focused on the wider historical realities of colonialism and the global ripples of the war. On the level of international institutions and international law, for example, historians have coupled the colonial past and the imperial mindset, characterised by a broad idea of a civilising mission, with the history of post-war international institutions and concepts. This connection brought to the fore a clear link between colonialism and the core ideas informing the League of Nations.³⁷ The role of the Soviet Union and the communist alternative to liberalism thus also becomes inserted in a more global and more complex story. Rather than inserting 1917 into the Western narrative of a bipolar ideological struggle, the Russian experience crucially informs colonial actors with alternative normative horizons and concepts on which to build self-determination and national independence.³⁸ Increasingly, this colonial widening of the bipolar perspective allows for inserting fascism and National Socialism into the picture as these regimes were regarded as valid alternatives to both Western liberalism and Russian communism in the colonies (see Maria Framke's chapter in this volume).

For this volume, as for the whole Zero Hours project, the First World War remains a crucial historical experience, but not in itself nor as an isolated historical event. Together with new global institutionalisations, such as the League of Nations, the unravelling of European empires and the rising contestation of colonial ones, the restructuring of European and non-European nation-state territories according to the Paris Peace Treaty, the emergence of self-determination as a new global concept in an ever more integrated global communicative network, the Great War is here understood as part of a *global confluence* of events, experiences and expressions that constitute a complex situational impulse absorbed by historical actors and translated into agency in different ways at different points in time. It is not seen as the only event responsible for shaping the 1920s-40s. Yet, I contend that the term interwar period can still be useful in a global historical context. The 1920s and 1930s did not make up a so-called Second Thirty Years War nor a European civil war. Such a terminology clearly speaks a Eurocentric language and projects an

³⁷ See Anghie, Anthony, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, and more recently Mazower, Mark, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009.

³⁸ See Manela, Erez, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonialism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, and for a more recent critical history of the concept of self-determination see Fisch, Jörg, *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker. Die Domestizierung einer Illusion*, Munich, C.H. Beck, 2010.