CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"All historians are world historians now," C. A. Bayly has declared, somewhat provocatively—only to add, "though many have not yet realized it."[1] Indeed, there can be no doubt that global/world history is currently booming. In the United States, and in the other parts of the Anglophone world, it has for several decades been the fastest-growing field within the discipline. This trend has also caught on in parts of Europe and East Asia, where global history is on the rise and finding increasing favor with a younger generation of historians. Journals and conventions are appearing everywhere, and in many settings "global dimensions" have become an almost obligatory feature of successful project proposals. But does this rise in popularity really mean that every historian is a global historian? Just what is it about global history that has made it so popular? And why is this happening now?

There are many reasons for this boom. Most significant has been the increased interest in global processes that followed first the end of the Cold War and then the events of September 11, 2001. Given the widespread fashion for seeing "globalization" as the key to understanding the present, the need to go back in time and explore the historical origins of this process

seems self-evident. In many places, in particular in immigrant societies, global history is also a response to social challenges and to the demand for a more inclusive, less narrowly national perspective on the past. The shift in curriculum from Western Civ to global history in the United States is a typical result of such social pressures. Within the academy, trends of this nature are mirrored by changes in the social, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the profession. And, in turn, transformations in the sociologies of knowledge have reinforced dissatisfaction with the long-standing and pervasive tendency to conceive of national histories as the history of discrete, self-contained spaces.[2]

The communication revolution that began in the 1990s also has had an important impact on our interpretations of the past. Historians—and their readers—travel and experience more of the world than ever before. This increased mobility, further enhanced by the Internet, has facilitated networking and made it possible for historians to participate in global forums—though, admittedly, voices from formerly colonized countries are often barely discernible. As a result, historians today are dealing with a large number of competing narratives, and they see the potential for new insights precisely in this diversity of voices. Finally, the network logic that computer technology encourages has affected the thinking of historians, who increasingly employ a language of networks and nodal points to replace older territorial logics. Writing history in the twenty-first century is not what it used to be.

Why global history? Beyond Internalism and Eurocentrism

Global history was born out of a conviction that the tools historians had been using to analyze the past were no longer sufficient. Globalization has posed a fundamental challenge to the social sciences and to the dominant narratives of social change. Entanglements and networks characterize the present moment, which has itself emerged from systems of interaction and exchange. But in many respects, the social sciences are no longer adequately able to pose the right questions and generate answers that help to explain the realities of a networked and globalized world.

In particular, two "birth defects" of the modern social sciences and humanities hinder our ability to achieve a systematic grasp of processes that span the world. Both can be traced to the formation of the modern academic disciplines in nineteenth-century Europe. First, the genesis of the social sciences and humanities was tied to the nation-state. In their themes and questions, and even in their societal function, fields like history, sociology, and philology remained tied to a country's own society. Beyond that, the "methodological nationalism" of the academic disciplines meant that, theoretically, the nation-state was presupposed as the fundamental unit of investigation, a territorial entity that served as a "container" for a society. The commitment to territorially bounded containers was more pronounced in the field of history than in some of its neighboring disciplines. Knowledge of the world was thereby discursively and institutionally prestructured in such a way as to obscure the role of exchange relationships. History, in most quarters, was limited to national history.[3]

Second, the modern academic disciplines were deeply Eurocentric. They placed European developments in the foreground and saw Europe as the central driving force of world history. Even more fundamentally, the conceptual toolbox of the social sciences and humanities abstracted European history to create a model of universal development. Ostensibly analytical terms like "nation," "revolution," "society," and "progress" transformed concrete European experience into a (universalistic) language of theory that presumably applied everywhere. Methodologically speaking, then, by imposing categories particular to Europe on everybody else's past, the modern disciplines rendered all other societies colonies of Europe.[4]

Global history is one attempt to face the challenges posed by these observations, and to overcome the two unfortunate birthmarks of the modern disciplines. It is thus a revisionist approach—even if it builds on a whole series of forerunners, for issues such as migration, colonialism, and trade have long been of concern to historians. An interest in examining cross-border phenomena may not in itself be new, but now it stakes a new claim. It means to change the terrain on which historians think. Global history, therefore, has a polemical dimension. It constitutes an assault on many forms of container-based paradigms, chief among them national history. As we will discuss in more detail in chapter 4, it is a corrective to internalist, or genealogical, versions of historical thinking that try to explain historical change from within.

At the same time, and beyond issues of method, global history aims to effect a change in the organization and institutional order of knowledge. In many countries, what is called "history" was long equated in practice with each country's own national history: most Italian historians worked on Italy, most of their Korean colleagues studied Korea—virtually everywhere,

generations of students were introduced to history through handbooks narrating the national past. Against this background, the call for global history comes as a call for inclusiveness, for a broader vision. Other pasts were history, too.

And even where history faculties are well staffed and prepared for broader coverage, courses tend to present the histories of nations and civilizations as monads, in isolation. Chinese textbooks on world history, for example, categorically exclude China—for the national past is taught in a different department. The compartmentalization of historical reality—into national and world history, into history and area studies—means that parallels and entanglements cannot come into focus. The case for global history is thus also a plea to overcome such fragmentation, and to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the interactions and connections that have made the modern world.

Global history is certainly not the only game in town, nor is it fundamentally superior as an approach. It is one approach among many, and it is better suited to addressing some questions and issues and less appropriate for addressing others. Its core concerns are with mobility and exchange, with processes that transcend borders and boundaries. It takes the interconnected world as its point of departure, and the circulation and exchange of things, people, ideas, and institutions are among its key subjects.

A preliminary and rather broad definition of global history might describe it as a form of historical analysis in which phenomena, events, and processes are placed in global contexts. There is disagreement, however, on how that result is best achieved. Numerous other approaches—ranging from comparative and transnational history to world and big history, to postcolonial studies and the history of globalization—currently

compete for scholarly attention. Just like global history, they endeavour to come to terms with the connectivities of the past.

Each of these different paradigms comes with an emphasis of its own, and we will take up some of the most prominent variants in chapter 3. However, one should not exaggerate the distinctions between them; there are also many commonalities and areas of overlap. In fact, it has proven difficult to define rigidly what makes global history specific and unique. And if we look at the actual usage of the term, the task does not get easier. Any superficial glance through the current literature immediately reveals that the term is used, and hijacked, for a variety of different purposes; frequently, it is employed interchangeably with other terms. Its widespread use betrays both the attractiveness and the elusiveness of the concept, rather than its methodological specificity.[5]

Three varieties of global history

In this situation of eclecticism and theoretical confusion, it may nevertheless be helpful to heuristically distinguish different reactions to the challenge of the "global." Glossing over some of the specifics, they may be said to fall into one of three camps: global history as the history of everything; as the history of connections; and as history based on the concept of integration. As will become clear in subsequent chapters, it is the third approach that holds the greatest promise for global historians who aim to move beyond token gestures towards connectivity. Let's take up the three varieties in turn.[6]

First, one way to approach global history is to equate it with the history of everything. "Global history, strictly understood,

is the history of what happens worldwide," write Felipe Fernández-Armesto and Benjamin Sacks, "across the planet as a whole, as if viewed from a cosmic crow's nest, with the advantages of immense distance and panoptic range." From such an omnivorous perspective, everything that ever happened on the earth is a legitimate ingredient of global history.[7]

In actual practice, this has led to very different strategies. The first is what we could call the all-in version of global history. Its most prominent variant is seen in works of large-scale synthesis that attempt to capture global reality in a specific period. The nineteenth century, for example, has found several sophisticated biographers, while other historians content themselves with a global panorama of a particular year. Yet others have extended the scope and portrayed whole millennia, if not the "history of the world" *tout court*. In the case of big history, the scale is expanded still further, covering the span from the Big Bang to the present moment. Whatever the scale, the general mode is identical: the "global" here refers to planetary comprehensiveness.[8]

In similar ways, historians have chosen to trace a particular idea or historical formation through the ages and across the planet. Particularly convincing examples of this kind are studies on the global history of empire that chart imperial formations and their strategies of population management from Ancient Rome (or from Tamerlane) to the present.[9] But in principle, any subject will do for a global biography. We now have global histories of kingship, and of courtesans; histories of tea and coffee, of sugar and cotton, of glass and gold; histories of migration and trade; global histories of nature and of religion; histories of war, and of peace. The examples are legion.

While the term "global history" may thus suggest worldwide coverage, this is not necessarily the case. In principle, anything can become a legitimate focus for global historians: global history as omnibus. This means that even subjects as diverse as South African mine workers in Witwatersrand, the coronation of Hawaiian King Kalakaua, or a village in thirteenth-century Southern France could be studied for its potential contributions to global history. Once it is established that global history is everything, everything can become global history. This is less absurd than it seems. The situation was not so different in the days when national history reigned supreme. Then, too, even when the scope of a work did not necessarily extend to the nation as a whole, it was nonetheless assumed that it did. No one would doubt, for example, that a biography of Benjamin Franklin or an in-depth study of the automobile industry in Detroit was also a contribution to the history of the United States. Once the overall framework of a national history was established, everything within that container seemed like a natural ingredient.

The same is true for the all-in version of global history. Studies on the working classes in Buenos Aires, Dakar, or Livorno can contribute to a global history of labor, even if they do not explore those global horizons themselves. This is particularly the case if historians take account of, and are inspired by, studies on similar phenomena. Examples include Dipesh Chakrabarty's book on jute workers in Bengal and Frederick Cooper's study on dockworkers in Mombasa.[10] The global history component is of course enhanced when historians conduct their studies with similar cases in mind and include books on related subjects in other parts of the globe in their bibliographies.

A second paradigm in the field puts the focus on exchange and connections. This is the most popular form that research has taken in recent years. The common thread connecting these kinds of studies is the general insight that no society, nation, or civilization exists in isolation. From earliest times onward, human life on the planet was characterized by mobility and interaction. Therefore, such movements are the privileged subjects of a global history understood primarily as the history of entanglements. This infatuation with connectivity complements, and thus corrects, what we could call the frugality of earlier frameworks in which the intellectual journey came to a halt at the borders of the nation-state, empire, or civilization.

There is no limit to the range of topics that can be studied from such a perspective—from people on the move to circulating ideas and trade across distances. Again, the reach of the networks and connections may vary and does not have to be planetary. Everything depends on the subject matter and the questions asked: trade in the Mediterranean, the Hajj across the Indian Ocean, chain migrations between China and Singapore, or diplomatic missions to the Vatican. In all of these instances, the interconnectedness of the world, which can be traced back over centuries, is the starting point for global historical research.[11]

Both versions of global history discussed so far apply in principle to all places, and to all times. The third and narrower approach is different, for it presumes, and explicitly reflects on, some form of global integration. At its core are patterns of exchange that were regular and sustained, and thus able to shape societies in profound ways. There have always been cross-border exchanges, but their operation and impact depended on the degree of systemic integration on a global scale.

This third model (it will be described in more detail in chapters 4 and 5) is the direction pursued by most of the more sophisticated recent studies—and it is the paradigm that will be explored in this book. Take as one example Christopher Hill's work on the emergence of modern history writing in France, the United States, and Japan in the late nineteenth century. In it, the author does not focus on the relations between traditional history writing and modern national narratives, as a more conventional study might. Neither is the focus primarily on the connections between the three cases. Rather, Hill places all three nations in the context of domestic changes and global transformations. All three societies faced internal upheavals—the United States was recovering from Civil War and France from defeat at the hands of Prussia, while Japan was reshaping its polity in the wake of the Meiji Restoration. At the same time, all three were enmeshed in the fundamental restructuring of world order by capitalism and the imperialist state system. At this juncture, history writing served as a way to conceptualize the different position of each nation within this larger and hierarchical order, and to make the emergence of each as a nation-state seem necessary and natural. Analytically, then, Hill's emphasis is on the global conditions that made possible and shaped the historical narratives emerging in the three settings.[12]

In much the same way, other historians have explicitly situated particular cases in their global contexts. They seek to explain "the contingencies and ground-level processes of human activity with[in] the structures that are at once the products and the conditions of that activity."[13] In this reading, the global becomes the ultimate frame of reference for any understanding of the past. In principle, such contextualization is not confined to the most recent past, but can be applied to earlier pe-

riods, though in such cases the degree of integration may be rather weak. As the world has evolved more and more into a single political, economic, and cultural entity, causal links on the global level have grown stronger. And as a result of the proliferation and perpetuation of such links, local events are increasingly shaped by a global context that can be understood structurally or even systemically.

Process and perspective

Global history is both an object of study and a particular way of looking at history: it is both a process and a perspective, subject matter and methodology. Janus-faced, it resembles other fields/approaches in the discipline, such as social history and gender history. In practice, both dimensions are usually linked, but for heuristic purposes, we can keep them apart. This will enable us to differentiate between global history as the perspective of historians, and as a scale of the historical process itself.[14]

Global history is one perspective among others. It is a heuristic device that allows the historian to pose questions and generate answers that are different from those created by other approaches. The history of slavery in the Atlantic World is a good example. Historians have inquired into the social history of the slave population, into their working conditions, and into the ways in which they formed communities. By employing a gender approach, they have been able to tell new stories about families and childhood, sexuality and masculinity. The economic history of slavery has been especially prolific, focusing on productivity rates, on the standards of living of slaves compared to those of other workers and indentured servants,

and on the macroeconomic impact of slavery on plantation production. However, the experience of slavery and the slave trade can also be placed in a global context. This would underscore a different set of issues: the creation of a transatlantic space in the "Black Atlantic"; the repercussions of the trade on societies in West Africa; the connections of the Atlantic trade to complementary slave routes across the Sahara and the Indian Ocean; a comparison with other forms of enslavement, and the list goes on. Global history as a perspective highlights particular dimensions of the slave experience, while being potentially less attentive to others.

An important consequence of treating global history as a perspective, like gender history or economic history, is that research does not have to encompass the entire globe. This is an important caveat. The rhetoric of the global may suggest limitless coverage; but many topics are best displayed in smaller frames. This also means that most global history approaches do not attempt to replace the established paradigm of national history with an abstract totality called "world." The aim is not to write a total history of the planet. It is often more a matter of writing a history of demarcated (i.e., non-"global") spaces, but with an awareness of global connections and structural conditions. Many recent studies considered benchmarks in the field do not cover more than two or three locations. Global history, then, is not a synonym for macro-history. The most interesting questions often arise at the juncture where global processes intersect with their local manifestations.

On the other hand, however, global history is not *only* a perspective. A global history approach cannot be projected indiscriminately; it makes more sense for some periods, places, and processes than for others. Any attempt to contextualize

globally needs to consider the degree and quality of the entanglements in its purview. The implications of the Vienna stock market crash in 1873 were not the same as those of the economic crises of 1929 and 2008—the degree to which the world economy and the media were integrated in the 1870s had yet to attain the level that would prevail in the twentieth century. In this respect, global history as perspective is often implicitly tied to assumptions about the ability of cross-border structures to have an impact on events, and on societies. We will return to this tension between process and perspective in the chapters that follow.[15]

The dialectic between perspective and process is a complex one. On the one hand, a global perspective on the tea trade makes more sense for the 1760s than for the Middle Ages, when global dynamics were of less influence. On the other hand, global connections seem to be particularly salient to us, in our globalized present, more so than they were for historians a few decades ago. To further confound matters, the resulting global perspective makes the eighteenth century appear more global than it was. Global perspectives and the course of global integration are thus inextricably interrelated.[16]

Heuristically, however, it is helpful to keep perspective and process apart. After all, the approach is much newer than the process; global history as a paradigm is of fairly recent origin, while the processes it studies reach far back into the past. As the two chronologies do not neatly correspond, it is useful to separate them analytically. Moreover, this is a field still very much in the making. For this reason, historians who attempt a global approach need to be self-conscious about methodology, and the chapters that follow will put the emphasis on this issue. Even if we assume that there is a process somewhere "out

there," it is crucial to ponder the methodological challenges of uncovering it, and the implications of our choices.

Promises and limits

The global history trend is unlikely to slow down any time soon, and it has already helped to bring about some significant changes in historical scholarship. One clear indication of this is the fact that the major history journals, such as the *American Historical Review* and *Past & Present*, have increasingly published work in this new field. No longer merely a niche or sub-discipline, it has become mainstream, extending to both research and teaching. Specialized journals, book series, and conferences have created forums where scholars are encouraged to exchange ideas and discuss research. These forums do not exist merely in parallel to the rest of the discipline. They are not exotic. While "world history," the global history of earlier decades, was most often an occupation of established and generally older historians, today even dissertations may pursue a global agenda. The approach has also influenced teaching, in both specialized seminars and even entire degree curricula. It is also interesting to note that debate over this approach has made its way to very diverse quarters. Environmental and economic historians are as interested in the global historical context as are social and cultural historians. Indeed, all aspects of historical scholarship can be subject to a global perspective.

In the light of the interconnectedness of today's world, it is difficult to imagine that this trend might reverse itself. At the same time, there remain many obstacles to overcome. Institutionally, creating space for the new approach may prove an

arduous process. Even in Western Europe and the United States, it can by no means be taken for granted that the discipline of history, so heavily dominated by the history of the nation, will be receptive to undertakings with a global historical scope. And even in settings where global perspectives have garnered general support, they compete with other approaches for funds and faculty positions. A new hire in global history might mean sacrificing a position in medieval history or in some other time-honored field related to the national past. Global history comes at a cost.[17]

The rise of global perspectives is unarguably an important development that helps us move away from a merely partial view of reality. As the relevance of territorial boundaries has been called into question, history has become more complex. In retrospect, some older studies may now appear to us like broadcasts of a football game that show only one of the two teams, to say nothing of other factors, such as the audience, weather conditions, and league ranking. Global history, by contrast, allows a wide-angle view of processes that were for a long time undetectable by the knowledge systems of the academy, or were at least considered irrelevant.

In important ways, then, this is a welcome and in some respects even liberating development. But as the old adage goes, change has its price. A global history approach is not a panacea or a free pass. Not every research project requires a global perspective; it is not always the global context that is most central to the issue. Everything is not linked and connected to everything else. It would be a mistake, certainly, to regard global history as the only valid approach—either in terms of its historiographical perspective or in the reach and density of the entanglements it explores. In every situation, a range of forces are at play, and it is not cross-border, let alone global, processes

that are *a priori* the most important. Many phenomena will continue to be studied in concrete, precisely demarcated contexts. Likewise, we must not lose sight of those historical actors who were not integrated into extensive networks, lest they fall victim to the current obsession with mobility. That said, it would nonetheless be difficult to turn back and forsake the insights that the global turn has generated.

CHAPTER 4

Global history as a distinct approach

The recent trend towards global perspectives is a broad movement. As we have seen in the last chapter, a whole range of approaches contribute, each in its own way, to our understanding of a past viewed outside the framework of the nation-state. Beyond this multiplicity, however, and building on these other variant modes of engaging the world, a more distinct global history approach has begun to emerge. In this chapter, I will introduce a number of characteristic traits that many recent forays into the field share. Taken together, they form the methodological core of what global history signifies as an approach. Special emphasis will be given to the notion of global integration, or structured transformations on a global level.

We can best understand the features of global history when pitting them against an ideal type—an admittedly oversimplified portrayal—of the older tradition of world history. We should keep in mind, however, that this juxtaposition of world and global history is a heuristic move. It suggests a clear delineation between an older approach and a sophisticated modern approach, while in practice many historians use the two terms interchangeably.

The concept of world history has a history that reaches back several centuries. Today, it remains the name of a school

subject in many countries, generally designating a narrative that encompasses the entire world or that looks comparatively at large geographical regions. World histories thus usually follow a macro agenda, typically striving for a full picture of the planet's past—or, as is characteristic in many non-Western countries, they deal with "the rest of the world," with everything that happened outside one's own nation. There are also world histories of specific topics: world histories of empire, of state-formation, of courtly encounters, and world histories of sugar, of tea, and of cotton. In most cases, they trace these institutions and goods not only across the planet, but through time as well, sometimes taking the story all the way from antiquity to the present.[1]

As their points of departure, macro-perspectives of this sort operate with large-scale comparisons of societies or, more typically, whole civilizations. In most older world histories, interactions and exchange between these enormous building blocks were not ignored, but the main focus was on the different trajectories of the civilizations, whose dynamics were primarily depicted as generated from within. These parallel histories were then linked by increasing diffusion from centers of power to the periphery. In the modern period, this diffusion typically assumed the form of a transfer from the West to "the rest." A Eurocentric bias has thus been a rather common feature of world histories for a long time, as the title of William McNeill's influential book, *The Rise of the West*, made no attempt to conceal.[2]

Features of global history

The older world histories typically employed a methodology that combined comparisons of separate civilizations with a

search for links between them, the latter explained by processes of diffusion. The thinking behind these histories crossed theoretical and ideological divides—ranging from modernization theory to Marxism and to narratives of civilization—but the mix of comparison and diffusion was remarkably constant. By contrast, the keyword most immediately associated with the term "global" has been "connections." A whole cascade of related terms—"exchange" and "intercourse," "links" and "entanglements," "networks" and "flows"—are mustered to convey the fluidity and volatility with which interactions take place across borders. In lieu of a rather stubborn reliance on macrocomparisons, global histories have elevated mobility to the throne.

This is why most shorthand definitions of global history have confined themselves to the happy marriage of comparisons and connections, taking the best of what traditional world history had to offer and combining it with a sensitivity for the more flexible and fluid dimensions of historical change. "Global connections and comparisons" greet us from the cover page of C. A. Bayly's seminal *Birth of the Modern World*, and the shibboleth that connections cum comparison are "the stock-in-trade of global history" is reiterated in virtually all attempts to define what is specific about the approach.[3]

And indeed, a focus on transfers and interactions is a crucial ingredient of all recent attempts to understand the global past. The mobility of goods, the migration and travel of people, the transfer of ideas and institutions: all these processes are the stuff that has helped produce the globalized world in which we live, and they are the privileged objects of study of many global historians. As we will see below, however, connections alone are not sufficient to explain the originality of the approach; connections need to be embedded in processes of

structural transformation, and this on a global scale. Before we come to this point, I will first sketch a set of methodological choices that are recurrent features of current global history, beyond its emphasis on connections. They will be only briefly outlined here, as most of the issues are taken up at greater length in subsequent chapters.

First, global historians are not concerned with macro-perspectives alone. Many seek to situate concrete historical issues and phenomena within broader, potentially global contexts. The emergence of the notion of "culture" in 1880s Bengal is, accordingly, as legitimate a subject of global history inquiry as the full planetary history of the entire nineteenth century.[4] Second, global histories experiment with alternative notions of space. They typically do not take political or cultural units—nation-states, empires, civilizations—as their points of departure. Instead, they pose analytical questions and go wherever their questioning leads them—across the Bay of Bengal, to nodal points in a network, to religious and ethnic diasporas, and so forth.

This implies, third, that global histories are inherently relational. This means that a historical unit—a civilization, a nation, a family—does not develop in isolation, but can only be understood through its interactions with others. In fact, many groups only jelled into seemingly fixed units as a response to exchange and circulation. Attention to the relationality of the past also challenges long-accepted interpretations of the history of the world as the "rise of the West" and the "European miracle." Many older world history texts locate the driving force of world history in Europe and chronicle the spread of European achievements to the rest of the world: world history as a one-way street. By contrast, recent studies stress the constitutive role played by interactions between regions and

nations, as well as between Europe and the non-European world, in the development of modern societies. Development in Europe and the West cannot be explained from within, as an autonomous process, but must be seen, at least in part, as the product of various processes of exchange.[5]

Fourth, as a discipline within the humanities, global history forms part of the larger "spatial turn." One consequence is that the relations of constellations in space to other locations—become more important. Global historians pay particular attention to the way individuals and societies interact with others—and less on endogenous change. As a result, spatial metaphors—such as territoriality, geopolitics, circulation, and networks—tend to replace an older temporal vocabulary of development, time lag, and backwardness. This also implies a rejection of the teleologies of modernization theory; i.e., a criticism of the notion that societies are transformed, as it were, from within, and that the direction of social change—from tradition to modernity, for example—is predetermined.

A direct outcome of this is emphasis on the synchronicity of historical events. This is the fifth point. To be sure, global historians by no means ignore the issue of continuities or path dependencies. As C. A. Bayly and others have argued, globalization in the modern age built on trajectories influenced by earlier patterns of entanglement.[6] However, by dissociating from the long-term perspectives typical of the history of civilizations and by not privileging conventional notions of continuity, many global historians suggest that greater precedence be given to simultaneity. As is immediately clear from the examples of the Arab Spring revolts, synchronous constellations and external forces are often as important drivers of social change as long prehistories and traditions.[7]

Sixth, and crucially, many global histories are self-reflective on the issue of Eurocentrism. This is one of the defining features that set this approach apart from most older variants of world history writing. We will take up this issue in more detail below (chapter 8). In practical terms, it generally means that greater emphasis is placed on area-studies expertise in history departments than was typical in the past. It also implies, seventh, that the positionality of thinking about the global past is explicitly recognized. Historians may write about the entire planet, but they do so from a particular place, and their narratives will partly be colored by the dynamics of that location. Looking back, it is obvious that a world history written in late sixteenth-century Mexico City would be wildly different from one written in Istanbul.[8] But even today, the "world" may appear very different when viewed from Accra, Quito, or Harvard Yard.

Integration and structured transformation

The final point, to which we now turn, concerns the notion of integration. This is a crucial aspect, so we will dwell on it at some length. To focus on global integration is a methodological choice that distinguishes global history from other approaches that operate on large scales. There are two important aspects to this choice: global history perspectives go beyond mere studies of connectedness by examining large-scale structured integration; and global historians pursue the problem of causation up to the global level.

To begin with the first point: Many world/global historians content themselves with studying interactions and connections.

"Connectedness is part of the human condition, at least as far back as we can trace human activity," John Darwin has recently reminded us, only to conclude: "The particular concern of the global historian is, or should be, with the history of 'connectedness'—and especially with those forms of connectedness that are oceanic and trans- or intercontinental."[9] Others have chimed in, maintaining that "the world has never been the site of discrete, unconnected communities, that crosscultural interactions and exchanges have taken place since the earliest days of human existence on planet Earth."[10]

But a focus on connections alone is not enough to make good global history. For, while exchanges of goods, persons, and ideas and interactions between groups and societies, even across long distances, have been a feature of human life on the planet from the beginning, some of the links within this global "human web" were crucial to the social make-up of a society, while others remained accidental and ephemeral.[11] The magnitude of their impact depended not least on the degree to which the world was, at the time, integrated—materially, culturally, and politically.

What does that mean? Take the example of the introduction of Western clocks to Japan. When European clocks, high-tech products of their time, were first brought to Tokugawa Japan in the seventeenth century, they were seen primarily as exotic gadgets. Their import had no effect on the social regime of time. Quite the contrary. While European clockmakers took pride in the fact that their watches ran evenly, irrespective of the cycles of the sun, in Japan the same clocks had to be converted to accommodate the traditional order of time, for the length of Japanese hours depended on daylight and consequently varied throughout the year. The mechanical clocks had to be readjusted twice a day, and seasonal dials were

installed to undo, as it were, the new clocks' independence from the cycles of nature. In the seventeenth century, then, this technological transfer remained essentially ornamental.

The situation changed dramatically after 1850, when East Asia was incorporated into the political and economic orbit of the West. Now, Western temporality was seen as a central ingredient of all reform projects, and attempts were made to introduce "new times" to Meiji Japan. New technology such as trains, new factories with their novel ways of organizing production, and new forms of social organization, including schools and the army, all required a new time regime. Western watches and clock towers emerged as the symbol of the modern; punctuality and notions of progress translated Western time into everyday practices, and the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1873 abolished the traditional methods of time reckoning and prepared Japan for global synchronicity. If we compare these two transfer processes, it becomes clear that the difference between them lies less in the transfers themselves than in the larger geopolitical conditions in which they were embedded. The sparse trade contacts of the seventeenth century, conducted by the Dutch and carefully controlled by the Japanese, had been replaced in the nineteenth century by an imperialist world order under British hegemony. In this changed context, cultural imports were no longer incorporated into local cosmologies, but assumed the force to fundamentally transform everyday practices.[12]

Connections in and of themselves are only a starting point. Their significance can vary greatly, so that, depending on a whole range of circumstances, the same clock can take on very different levels of importance. Global historians need to remember that global connections are preceded by conditions and that it is essential to thoroughly understand these conditions before

they can hope to understand the connections themselves. Exchange, in other words, may be a surface phenomenon that gives evidence of the basic structural transformations that made the exchange possible in the first place. Effective global history needs to remain aware of the systemic dimension of the past, and of the structured character of social change.

Lest this sound too abstract, let us look briefly at another example. When critical intellectuals in Vietnam, Japan, or China began to read Marx, this was, rather logically, seen as evidence of the transcultural circulation of ideas. Accordingly, traditional histories charted the translation process, studied the reception of Marxist ideas, and looked for the impact of Marx's texts on reformist thinking in Asia. While these were important facets of the problem, the more important causal links, it turned out, lay elsewhere. In this case, connectedness proved to be itself the result of social changes that had created the conditions under which reading Marx in Vietnam began to make political sense. In the last instance, the influence of Marx could not be reduced to the power of his arguments alone. Rather, aspiring young intellectuals were shaped by the forces and concerns that dominated the times, and the way in which they translated, cited, and highjacked Marx's texts was structured by these conditions. Connections—reading Marx—were thus primarily an effect of prior social, political, and cultural transformations (and not the source of these transformations).

The original mistake in this example involved, but was not limited to, a failure to take the influence of power into consideration. If issues of hierarchy and of exploitation are sidelined, a preoccupation with connections may blur and indeed hinder an accurate understanding of the contours of the global past.

Failure to note power structures confers agency on everyone who is involved in exchange and interactions, and by celebrating mobility runs the danger of ignoring the structures that control it. Cross-border movements were able to bridge differences between societies, but they may also exacerbate conflicts. European aristocrats on the Grand Tour and African slaves on the Middle Passage all crossed political and cultural boundaries, but it does not take much imagination to realize that subsuming them both under "connections" is highly ideological. Frequently the people who wielded real market power stayed put and benefited from being able to ship the huddled masses of their poor across the Atlantic and the Pacific.

This leads us to the second point that merits attention here. Unlike other perspectives on past connections, global history addresses the question of causation up to the global level. In many older world history texts, the analytical status of links and interactions was less than explicit. In some works of transnational history, too, they ultimately remain external to the core argument, and thus ornamental. However, as the world grew increasingly integrated, social development could no longer be understood without some notion of interdependence, or structured difference. "Britain and India came to have very different histories in the nineteenth century," David Washbrook reminds us, "but this was a result of the very closeness of their relationship, not their distance—social, cultural—from each other. They existed as two sides of the same coin, but each with a very different face."[13] A global history that aspires to be more than an ecumenical and welcoming repository of happy stories of cross-border encounters, then, needs to engage systematically with the issue of structured global transformations and their impact on social change.

Our use of the term "global" here should not be misconstrued as necessarily implying a planetary reach. For each issue under study, a separate determination must be made as to how far exactly large-scale processes and structures extend. In much existing work, historians have prematurely confined their inquiries to fixed containers and geographical constraints. It would be equally fallacious to go to the opposite extreme and presuppose globality in every instance. What "global" suggests, therefore, is an openness to pursuing links and the question of causality beyond conventional containers and spatial units; it denotes "simply the methodological concern with experimenting beyond familiar geographical boundaries."[14]

If "comparisons and connections" serves as the conventional shorthand for global history, then we must add a third "c": causality, pursued up to a global scale. The decision to focus on large forms of structured transformation and integration is a choice that sets global history apart from other approaches, such as comparative and transnational history. The emphasis on global integration will almost certainly raise a host of questions. Does this choice make it impossible to write global history about eras before integration, and before modernity? Will this choice narrow the range of possible topics by insisting on an identifiably global causality? Does it compel global historians to study this global level explicitly? I will take up these issues in the following chapter.

Beyond connectivity: competing narratives

In order to better understand the significance of a noninternalist approach, and of the analytical role of global integration, it may be helpful to briefly compare the perspective

of global history with three influential but contrasting ways in which historians have hitherto understood and interpreted transformations on a planetary scale. Somewhat schematically, we can label them as Western exceptionalism, cultural imperialism, and the paradigm of independent origins. I will briefly sketch these three narratives and point out their shortcomings when compared to a global history approach.

The first metanarrative, still firmly entrenched in many textbooks and general overview works, assumes a general process of modernization that originated in Europe and was then gradually disseminated around the globe. The defining features of this notion of modernity are familiar: the functional differentiation of social spheres, such as the economy, politics, the social, and culture; and a gradual rationalization of all these spheres, giving birth to a capitalist and industrialized economy, the nation-state, and meritocratic bureaucracies; the replacement of hereditary estates by a class society and the modern individual; and the overcoming of traditional and religious cosmologies through what Max Weber called the "disenchantment of the world."

In principle, these were seen as universal developments, but in actual practice they emerged in Europe first and were then conveyed to the rest of the world. Such a diffusionist reading—epitomized by William McNeill's *The Rise of the West*—lay at the heart of many older world histories, especially when guided by modernization theory, but also in many of the Marxist variants of world histories. "For the last thousand years," as David Landes has summarized this narrative, "Europe (the West) has been the prime mover of development and modernity."[15] Such triumphalist formulations have become much less common, so that most accounts now replace the unabashed Eurocentrism of earlier days with a recognition

of the various forms of negotiation and adaptation that attended the process. At its core, however, the basic assumptions of this narrative are still in place: Europe/the West is seen as the locus of innovation, and world history is essentially understood as a history of the diffusion of European progress.[16]

Against this formerly dominant view, a second interpretation emerged that was based on a radically critical reading of the dissemination of Western modernity. This view is associated with postcolonial, subaltern, and some Marxist perspectives. In it, modernity remains essentially European and is still equated with the march of universal reason. But the spread of modernity is seen not as emancipatory but as a process of deprivation.

There are two different, but related arguments involved. The first is the hypothesis that it was Enlightenment universalism that lay at the root of the West's expansionist urge. It was only a small step, the critique runs, from positing universal standards to deciding to intervene and to implement these standards, by force, under the auspices of a paternalistic civilizing mission. The second argument is related. The spread of Western modernity is understood as a form of cultural imperialism with the potential to eradicate alternative worldviews. Critical scholars have interpreted the spread of Enlightenment tenets in the nineteenth century as a process of coerced and often brutal diffusion, made possible and driven by highly asymmetrical relations of power.[17]

Both approaches discussed so far—emancipatory modernization and cultural imperialism—are essentially diffusionist and take the European origins of modernity for granted. What is more, they rest on the supposed absence of substantial cultural and social development elsewhere as one of their

axiomatic tenets. In recent years, however, the European claim to originality, to exclusive authorship of modernity, has been called into question. Historians have begun to look for parallels and analogies to the European "march of civilization," for autochthonous processes of rationalization that did not depend on, but led to similar results as, developments in Europe. This is the third paradigm sketched here, and it forms part of a larger scholarly debate on the origins of modernity. It was born out of a desire to challenge diffusionist notions of modernization, and to acknowledge the social dynamics that prevailed in many societies before their encounter with the West. The aim was to replace older notions of traditional societies and "people without history" with a broader understanding of multiple modernities. But in the end, this approach posits an identical telos—a modern, capitalist society—even if this goal is not achieved via transformations inspired by contact with the West, but rather builds on indigenous cultural resources: a teleology of universal disenchantment, realized in each society internally, but across the globe.

All three approaches converge in their methodological bias for national and civilizational frames. Their many differences notwithstanding, all rely on internalist logics in their attempt to explain what must be understood as a global phenomenon. If we are going to take the challenge of global history seriously, we need to move beyond these three approaches and focus on the connectivities and processes of integration that have shaped and reconfigured societies globally. Sanjay Subrahmanyam has argued that modernity is "historically a global and *conjunctural* phenomenon, not a virus that spreads from one place to another. It is located in a series of historical processes that brought hitherto relatively isolated societies

into contact, and we must seek its roots in a set of diverse phenomena."[18] From such a vantage point, it is less instructive to search for alleged origins—European or otherwise—than to focus on the global conditions and interactions through which the modern world emerged. This is why notions of global integration and system-like dependencies are crucial: changes in one location within the integrated world ripple through the system to affect other parts as well.

It is clear that the four approaches discussed above—world history, postcolonialism, multiple modernities, and global history—cannot be neatly separated, but overlap in many respects. They are, in other words, ideal types. For heuristic purposes, however, it is helpful to keep them apart analytically. Let us very briefly look at a few issues and see how these different paradigms may lead to very different results (indeed: to different questions)—before then using the case of nationalism to illustrate in greater detail the analytical surplus that is characteristic of a global history approach vis-à-vis the three other paradigms.

A first example is the case of human rights, on which a substantial historiography has recently emerged. A standard world history perspective would hold that the rights of man have a European genealogy that reaches back to humanism, and even a bit earlier, before coalescing into a program with global reach during the French Revolution. These rights with their universal claims then traveled beyond their place of origin and gradually gained acceptance around the world.[19] A postcolonial reading would instead emphasize the parochial and culturally specific notion of human rights and the indiscriminate way in which it was used to marginalize, and indeed efface, alternative concepts of entitlement and equality that

were less dependent on the concepts of nation and the individual. A third approach, that of multiple modernities, insists on indigenous cultural and political resources that allowed multiple notions of human rights to emerge in many different places, largely independent of each other. Building on these three approaches, recent forays into a global history of human rights focus instead on the emergence of human rights as a truly global discourse. Historians have thoroughly explored the global scope of human rights discourse by placing the emphasis less on the French Revolution and more on the appropriation and universalization of a language of rights in Haiti a few years later.[20] In the twentieth century, the 1970s appear as a pivotal moment, when the decline of socialism and nationalism as political ideologies paved the way for the rise of human rights claims to the status of a hoped for "Last Utopia." The intellectual origins of human rights, in this reading, are of less importance than the synchronous global conditions of their overall acceptance, and of their fusion with local genealogies in very diverse locations.[21]

A similar case can be made in the field of international law. For a long time, historians have seen the Law of Nations, as it emerged in the wake of Hugo Grotius, as well as the subsequent development of international law, as a rationalization of international relations. Against this belief in the benevolent spread of a European accomplishment, critical scholars have pointed out the close connection between the Law of Nations and European imperialism, and have judged ostensibly universal claims to be no more than a thin veil concealing colonial ambitions.[22] Third, in their quest to identify independent origins for international law in today's global order, scholars have begun to mine the cultural and legal history of

various societies to show that parts of what is currently held to be common sense are contributions from alternative non-Western traditions. A global perspective would want to address more specifically why international law emerged when it did, why it was appropriated by different actors around the world, and in what ways it can be understood as a response to a global challenge. A preoccupation with the inventors and intellectual patent-holders, in other words, would lose its primacy, while the actual practice of international law moved to center stage.[23]

We can extend the heuristic differentiation of these four approaches to virtually all fields of historical inquiry. Was the concept of race a European invention, a tool of empire, a notion that grew from various indigenous roots—or a response to global challenges? Was the Enlightenment the accomplishment of European salon culture, a Western imposition, the product of many indigenous cultures of rationalization—or rather a way in which social elites around the world came to terms with new global realities?[24] Or think of attempts to historicize the global history of fascism. World historians have tried to define the term by drawing up a laundry list of necessary features: a charismatic leader, mass mobilization, an ideology of ultra-nationalism, and so on. All of these features, however, were derived from the European experience. Other instances of fascism, in Japan or Argentina, for example, would seem to fall short of the requirements; in fact, even German National Socialism did not live up to the model set by Italian Fascism, and vice versa. By using global history as a corrective lens for this slightly myopic analysis, historians have paid more attention to transfers and direct contacts and have thus been able to reveal to what extent Italy and Germany served as models and inspiration in many places around the world.

Moving beyond comparison and transfer history, finally, a more systematic focus on global integration would begin with the shared global situation of the interwar years, and the quest, by many societies, for a "third way" between classical liberalism and communism, a quest that led many governments to experiment with new forms of social organization and mobilization. From such a perspective, the absence of this or that item on the laundry list—Was there a mass party challenging the establishment, or only mobilization "from above"? for example—is of less importance than understanding different cases as related, but differentiated ways of coping with structural transformations and a changing international order.[25]

Case Study: Nations and Nationalism in global history

In this final section, let us look in greater depth at the historiography of nationalism, as it is here that we can observe most clearly how new global perspectives have been able to complement and modify earlier ways of situating the nation within world history. In some respects, the nation is an unlikely candidate for such an endeavor. Not too long ago, in the 1990s, when "globalization" became the "in" word, some pundits were quick to predict the end of the nation-state altogether. In the realm of scholarship, its future prospects were equally bleak. Transnational and global histories were written with the explicit purpose of moving beyond the nation-state. But this moment of crisis—or was it one of euphoria?—soon abated, and gave way to the recognition that nation-states had staying power and would continue to be relevant, albeit in an altered setting. It has also become clear that global history is

not about consigning the nation/nation-state to the dustbin of history, but rather about reassessing its historical role and better explaining its emergence and significance.

How do these more recent approaches compare with earlier attempts to place the nation in the world? To a certain extent, it is no exaggeration to say that the theory of nationalism operated on a global scale from its very beginnings. Thus, the explanatory approaches inspired by early modernization theory—most notably by Ernest Gellner—were universal in scope. They posited the formation of nations as an effect of the ongoing transition from traditional to modern societies. While nationalist activists typically emphasized the distinctive character of a given nation, Gellner discarded all claims to uniqueness by postulating a universal law of development: industrial manufacturing destroyed the hierarchies of agricultural society in order to guarantee the mobility of labor and thus continuous growth. Nationalist self-legitimation may have stressed a shared history, a common language, and common cultural patterns, but for Gellner, nationalism was "the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society [. . .], in place of a previous complex structure of local groups [. . .]. That is what really happens."[26]

In this view, all nationalisms were, despite their superficial variations, essentially the same, and nationalism everywhere was an effect of socioeconomic modernization that could be explained in entirely endogenous terms. That being the case, there was no obstacle to comparing the experiences of far-flung locales with one another. By contrast, more recent approaches have instead highlighted connections and transfers. They have concluded that the worldwide prevalence of nationalism in the nineteenth century cannot be ascribed to internal factors alone, but must be understood as a result of diffusion as well.

Although Benedict Anderson has received attention chiefly as a proponent of a constructivist approach to nationalism, his most important methodological contribution has been his description of the modular character of the nation. By this he meant that after its initial creation, the form of the nation could, in principle, be transferred to other settings as a kind of template. This form developed first in the Creole societies of the Americas, and then in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. Concepts and models of nationalism were generated there and subsequently became available globally as a kind of toolkit. From this point onward, all emerging nationalisms were shaped and influenced by this same paradigm.[27]

Compared to earlier models inspired by modernization theory, Anderson's approach marked an important step forward, since the global spread of nationalism could now no longer be regarded as something akin to a clockwork result of the laws of social development. The concrete mechanisms by which the national form spread, however, remained little examined. Anderson's interest was in the development of nationalism in Europe and the complex conditions under which this became possible. When it came to the rest of the world, he focused on how the form was used and modified. He essentially took its transferability as a given.[28] But how can we understand the dynamics of transfers if we limit our attention to the origins of the form that travelled and to the nature of that form, but do not explore the conditions of possibility that made its transfer attractive to its recipients?

Anderson's approach met with criticism from postcolonial historians, who for their part placed greater emphasis on the concrete imperial conditions under which nationalist movements developed in the colonized world. In his much-cited book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, Partha

Chatterjee argued that nationalism in the colonial world must inevitably remain a phenomenon derived from Europe, a "derivative discourse." While it was true that nationalist movements were directed against foreign rule, on an ontological level—Chatterjee claimed—they continued to be indebted to the parameters of the dominant, which is to say imperial, discourse.[29]

In addition to this, the book contains a second argument. In substance, Chatterjee claims, anticolonial nationalism is fed by opposition to the West, which often takes the form of an emphatic stress on the national spirituality of the non-Western in contrast to Western materialism. And indeed, the dichotomy of a spiritual East versus a material West was a standard ingredient of political discourse in Asia in the late nineteenth century. Chatterjee goes on to expound this argument further in *The Nation and Its Fragments*, which is to some extent a revision of his first book. Here, Chatterjee divides nationalism into a material, external sphere and an inner, spiritual one. On this spiritual level, "its true and essential domain," he sees the nation as already sovereign, long before it achieves political sovereignty. This inner domain appears as the realm of the true cultural expression of a nation. In other words, even if the "national form" (Etienne Balibar) is transferable and the national discourse remains derivative on the formal level, the substance of nationalism nevertheless is geographically and culturally specific and cannot be derived from the European imperial model.[30]

To what degree, we may now ask, is this particularity of the content of nationalism itself the product of global constellations? It is a valid question for, to a certain extent, Chatterjee's approach remains indebted to the endogenous model: while he acknowledges the transfer of the nation as a form within

the context of imperial power, the specific nature of the substance of colonial nationalism is explained with reference to local cultural resources, and in particular to older, precolonial traditions. Chatterjee has been accused of idealizing and reifying these precolonial cultural resources.[31] From a global history perspective, however, two further criticisms are of greater importance. First, Chatterjee's analysis remains entirely focused on the binary relationship between the colonized nation and the colonizers. This is a limitation that his account shares with the general thrust of the postcolonial paradigm. The dynamics of Indian, Chinese, or Thai nationalism were part of a global constellation. The paradigm of a local "reaction" to stimuli from Europe and the United States, important though it is, remains narrow in scope, just as the privileging of references back to autochthonous cultural traditions fails to tell the whole story. By cleaving to a postcolonial narrative, Chatterjee risks disregarding the larger global context, and overlooking the way in which historical actors in many regions from the late nineteenth century onward increasingly made reference to a global totality. Nationalism and thinking in national categories developed within this context of global integration.

And, second, he excludes as a factor the degree to which the substance of nationalism, too, not only referred back to endogenous traditions, but was also a product of the global constellation. Rather than making an analytical distinction between a (universal, transferable) "nation-form" and the culturally specific manifestation of its content, then, the aim must be to reconstruct both levels, each in its global context. After all, the larger geopolitical reality often was a crucial factor in determining which of numerous local traditions were mobilized for national projects.[32]

What is needed, then, is a deeper embedding of the ways in which the nation was defined, understood, and put into practice in global contexts—building on and going beyond the insights gained from comparative studies, histories of diffusion, and postcolonial approaches. A number of recent forays into the global history of nationalism have shown just how fruitful such an approach can be. Let us look at two studies that exemplify this trend.

The first example is Andrew Sartori's *Bengal in Global Concept History*. From the 1880s onwards, Sartori sees Bengali intellectuals grapple with a notion of culture that has many family resemblances to Herder's concept of *Kultur*, and also to related propositions from Russia and Japan. The overall problematic is how to account for the relationship between the parts and the whole, or in other words, how to explain the similarities between these different versions of culture discourse without losing sight of the specificity of Bengali debates. To recall the ideal types outlined above: Was Bengali culturalism the result of a transfer of ideas from the West and their subsequent local appropriation? Was it the product of uneven relationships of power and thus a form of colonization of minds? Or should we emphasize the indigenous cultural resources and traditional genealogies of a specific Bengali understanding of culture?

In his global history analysis, Sartori moves beyond all these interpretations. Though his work is clearly influenced by postcolonial readings, he finds them ultimately mired in assumptions of cultural incommensurability and intent on discarding the concept of "culture" itself as a Western derivative, as a form of cultural imperialism. For him, similarities are not the simple effects of diffusion and power differentials; rather, he sees Bengal as one location, among many, in which a notion

of "culture" was employed in response to global challenges. "The history of the culture concept in Bengal," he insists, "can be treated neither as a local deviation from nor as a late reiteration of an essentially Western intellectual form, but will rather be investigated as a spatially and temporally specific moment in the global history of the culture concept."[33]

The turn to culture can be read as a turn away from an earlier version of liberalism characterized by rational individualism and economic self-interest. Against this liberal gospel, the notion of culture was embraced by social groups that formulated a nationalist critique of British rule and economic hegemony. In Sartori's reading, the global structures to which these eminent intellectuals responded were primarily economic. In the wake of the financial crisis of the 1840s, trade and industry were increasingly monopolized by British merchants, while native capital was invested only in property and real estate, thus disconnecting Bengali society from the dynamics of commerce. In this situation, the notion of culture became part of a quasi-Romantic discourse among Hindu elites as they sought to affirm their organic connection to the land and to the agrarian workforce.

More generally, and much more abstractly, Sartori links the debate on liberalism versus culture to the expansion of capitalism. He argues that culturalism emerged around the world as a reaction to the particular kinds of alienation and subjectivity that labor relations and forms of production under capitalism generated in particular areas. The specific notion of culture was, to be sure, suffused with local particularity, but the alleged traditions were not only thoroughly worked over by capitalism but also pressed into the service of social practices in a capitalist regime. Thus, culturalism cannot be fully accounted for as the effect of intellectual transfer; rather, it

must be understood as a series of unique responses to the same global problematic.

The second example is Rebecca Karl's *Staging the World*, a study of nationalism in late Qing China. For Karl also, the notion of China as a nation could only take hold at a specific historical moment, at the moment when China discovered the new "world" for itself. This moment did not consist merely in China's perception of regions outside the Sino-sphere, outside China's area of influence, but rather in an awareness of the world as a structured whole, increasingly made up of sovereign (nation-)states and dependent colonial countries. This new understanding of the "world" as a totality of units connected through globe-spanning forces like imperialism and capitalism then replaced the millennia-old mental dichotomy between the Middle Kingdom and barbarism.

What does this mean in concrete terms? Rebecca Karl is particularly interested in the way in which events that once appeared marginal from a Chinese perspective—the annexation of Hawaii by the United States, the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century, the American conquest of the Philippines, British rule in Egypt, and so forth—became objects of intense debate in China around 1900. Within the traditional cosmology of the Qing court, these locations were indeed peripheral, at the fringes (and sometimes squarely outside of the reach) of Chinese "civilization." At the turn of the century, however, Chinese reformers began to realize that the political and economic threat that China faced was not so different from the plight afflicting these smaller nations. While Hawaii may have been remote in cultural terms, the modern logic of geopolitics placed it in a situation very like that of the Qing Empire. The colonization process was no longer simply a concern of distant

and exotic peoples, but now threatened even China in similar ways. As a result of globally effective structures, commonalities were no longer culturally, but rather geopolitically determined. They were now the result of the colonial threat and of China's peripheral position in the capitalist world economy.[34]

The central thesis of Karl's book is that the perception of China as one nation among others and as a part of "Asia"—understood here primarily in terms of a shared marginalization within the hegemonic imperial order, and less in terms of cultural or ethnic commonalities—only became possible within the context of global integration. "China only became both specifically national (and not an empire) and regionally Asian at the same time as, and only when, China became worldly."[35] The establishment of the nation was thus equally a diachronic projection and a response to China's incorporation into the world. As the title of the book suggests, it wasn't diachronic stages of development that were responsible for the emergence of dynamics of nationalism, but a synchronic "staging of the world"—a performance on a global stage.

Both Sartori's and Karl's books are written by scholars whose contributions to global history are largely resident in their particular areas of expertise, modern India and modern China. While other global historians focus on networks of nationalists, compare nationalist movements in different locations, or aim at a planetary synthesis, these studies focus on a particular location that they then analyze through its global entanglements.

More important, both books are examples of a broader historical movement that attempts to understand global structures not only as the necessary context, but also as the necessary precondition for the emergence of particular forms of

nationalism.[36] Both authors focus predominantly on political economy, and they posit a sometimes highly abstract notion of capitalism as the driving force of history. Equating a global totality with capitalism will appear too rigid to some, and critics have taken both authors to task for what they see as dogmatic reliance on overly abstract notions of capitalist expansion. But the possible shortcomings of our two examples do not diminish their value as illustrations of just how integral a nuanced understanding of the global can be. As we have seen above, we can conceive of and explain global integration in a variety of ways. In the context of this chapter, Sartori and Karl are relevant because they see the global not as an external, and additional, context—but rather as constitutive, shaping the objects of study while being shaped by them.

Taken together, the set of methodological preferences outlined in this chapter and the emphasis on the concept of integration, constitute a rejection of explanations that slight or even completely disregard external influences and factors. This is the methodological core of global history understood as a distinct approach. Conventional social theories generally operate within what can be called an internalist paradigm. In past grand narratives of modernization, historical phenomena were explained endogenously, from within, and typically analyzed within the boundaries of a society. This focus on internal change has been the hallmark of virtually all social theories to date. Whether inspired by Marxism, Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, or the work of Michel Foucault, social theories essentially treated societies as self-generating and assumed that social change was always of a society's own making.

Global history, by contrast, steps outside this internalist or genealogical framework. It pays particular attention to interactions and entanglements across borders. And it recognizes

the impact of structures that extend past the boundaries of individual societies. Global history thus acknowledges the causal relevance of factors that do not lie within the purview of individuals, nations, and civilizations. Its ultimate promise is a perspective that looks beyond the dichotomy of internal and external altogether.