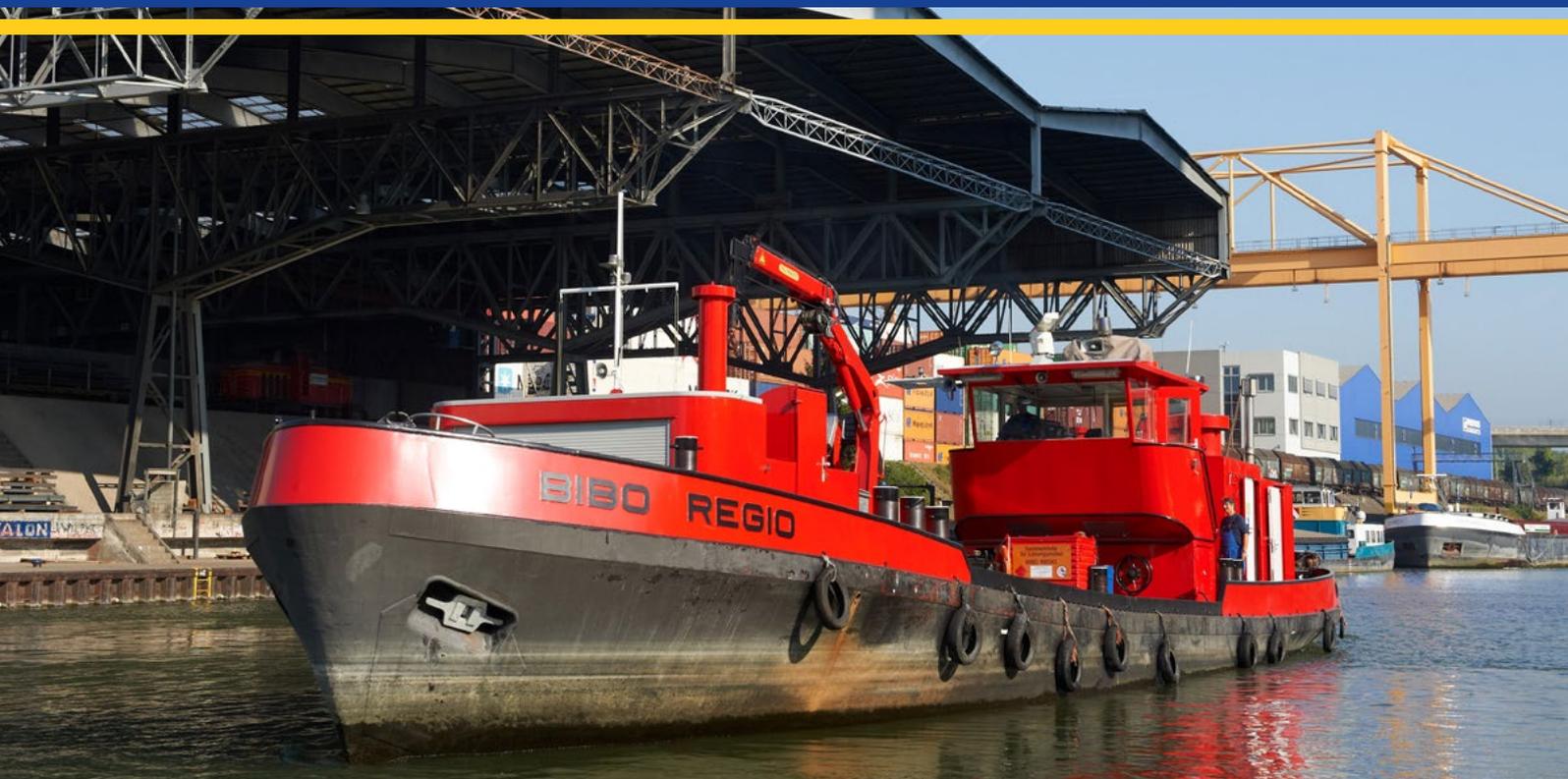




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**POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL STUDIES
FOR THE 21st CENTURY**

Madeleine Herren, Patrick Manning, Philip C. McCarty,
Matthias Middell, Eric Vanhaute

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THE INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN GLOBAL STUDIES: RELAUNCH OF THE PUBLICATION SERIES *BASEL PAPERS*

Dear colleagues

The Institute's publication series *Basel Papers* – well established since many years – will from now on appear online. The Papers will therefore be easily accessible worldwide for readers who are interested in shifting conceptions and transformation processes of Europe since the end of the Cold War. With its four issues per year the series offers insights into ongoing research projects, with the aim of testing concepts and research methods of European Global Studies as the Institute's new thematic focus since 2013.

An increasing number of scholars in various academic disciplines currently aims at overcoming Eurocentric presuppositions and methodological nationalisms. However, these efforts do not deny the position of Europe as a central and formative academic orientation and challenging topic of research. In contrast to former approaches which often focused on Europe as a model of successful modernization and democratization, conceptualizing Europe in the 21st century will be a multi-layered task incorporating a multiplicity of different approaches, perspectives and facets, all of them shaped by dynamic interaction.

The first volume of the relaunched *Basel Papers* series emerged from a cooperation of the Institute for European Global Studies with Matthias Middell, professor of global history and director of the Center of Advanced Study at the University of Leipzig. Matthias Middell participated in the Institute's international fellowship program and shared his experiences in developing global studies as a field of research with a European focus. This field profited substantially from the Leipzig Global and European Studies Institute. Since the initiative of Leipzig, other academic institutions have begun to reconsider the ways how European-based analytical competence can access globalization on an innovative analytical level on the one hand, and how Europe, considered as a promising conceptual framework, can regain academic interest as a new and attractive intellectual challenge on the other. In his contribution of the present *Basel Papers*, Matthias Middell explores the scope of action, the limits and innovative perspectives of Global Studies. Patrick Manning, professor of world history and Director of the World History Center at Pittsburg University is a specialist in cross-disciplinary theory, African studies, and the use of big data on a global scale. Philip C. McCarty from the Global & International Studies program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, recently published on Integrated Perspectives in Global Studies. The research interests of Eric Vanhaute from the University of Ghent are in world-systems analysis and historical information systems among others.

We hope you enjoy reading the newly launched *Basel Papers*. Your comments, suggestions and critiques are very welcome. Please join and recommend our debate about European Global Studies and do not hesitate to contact us.

Madeleine Herren

EUROPEAN GLOBAL STUDIES: THE HISTORICITY OF EUROPE'S GLOBAL ENTANGLEMENTS WITH A FOCUS ON INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Madeleine Herren

KEY WORDS

European Global Studies, global history, twenty-first century, postcolonialism, digital humanities

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Madeleine Herren is a full professor of history and director of the Institute for European Global Studies at Basel University. Her fields of interest include European and global history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the history of international organizations, the development of transnational networks and border-crossing civil society activities, research on encyclopedias, information transfer and information cultures, historiography, and transcultural methodologies of history in the Digital Age.

The Problem: Returning the Focus on Europe

Up until the twenty-first century, European traditions shaped academic disciplines worldwide, and without it even being mentioned at times, Europe became a role model and allegedly self-evident point of reference for non-European topics and contexts. At the end of the twentieth century, however, debates on Eurocentrism and methodological nationalism raised critical awareness and created the preconditions needed to reconfigure established academic approaches. Today, there is a growing consensus among academics that new research designs need to overcome any scientific universalism modeled on European parameters. Such universalism can hide, for instance, in Christian chronologies and Western concepts of periodization, or in the very idea that European law spread on a worldwide scale and retained its universalized validity without ever changing its structural shape or content through such circulation. Despite presumptions of an increasing awareness of these problems, at least two crucial aspects remain unsolved. First, the application of postcolonial insights to European-related problems is still in its infancy, and second, the interference of regional and global forms of connectivity has not been taken into account. Yet, both aspects are eminently important for academic institutions whose programs are labeled *European*, and all the more important as increasingly more European studies institutes are founded, especially in non-Western regions such as Asia.

The Basel Institute for European Global Studies, a former *Europainstitut*, has responded to this challenge with a conceptual new reading of Europe, which has been translated into European Global Studies. While this contribution explains the challenges, constraints, and opportunities of such a concept, the overarching aim is to return Europe to research and teaching. Doing so means establishing a research design that applies the findings and claims of postcolonial and postmodern debates in appropriate ways. The central question therefore becomes how contemporary research can recapture the specificities of European impacts on global settings without falling into the traps of Eurocentrism and methodological nationalism. As a precaution, it is thus advisable to recognize some preconditions when framing European Global Studies. Among them, the definition of *Europe* does not refer solely to a geopolitical entity. Moreover, the scope of study does not stop with multilateral connections between European states, the global impact of the European Union (EU), or the global value of the European economy. As suggested in this paper, *Europe* needs to be critically and self-reflectively reread as an epistemological category, with special attention to divisions and entanglements on both global and regional scales.

Introduced in the nineteenth century, the narrative of Europe as the global powerhouse has come to an end. Contemporary societies face at least three interfering fields of structural change, all of which exceed a European-focused analytical framework. Three developments crucial for understanding the twenty-first

century are (1) the ongoing, critical post-Cold War situation in Europe and the resulting struggle to translate the economic basis of the EU into a process of social and political identity formation and coherence. At the same time, (2) the European situation is closely intertwined with economic situations, which in several respects challenge European-driven models of global economic development, partly shaped by the rise of Asian economies. Furthermore, (3) the struggle for a European identity and the paradigm shift to securing income and wealth as a principle basis for democratic decision-making is confronted by a particular demographic challenge: As predicted by the United Nations (UN) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the number of people older than 65 will exceed those younger than 15 by 2050 worldwide.

The manifold combinations of these three developments transcend national competence, challenge territory-based democratic decision-making, and underscore the need to generate tools for negotiating global questions and topics. Among these challenges, those concerning the environment across national borders are crucial. At the same time, these challenges complicate research agendas, long-established presuppositions, and research rationales. The question whether social dynamics are described as mobility or migration may initially suggest that studying such interference at the regional, national, and global levels can go in highly disparate directions. From a methodological point of view, insights into the mechanics of global entanglements and their regional consequences exceed the value of comparable entities.

What is European Global Studies? Interdisciplinary Challenges and Institutional Backgrounds

European Global Studies refines established concepts by introducing a methodological and theoretical framework that aims to provide analytical insights into divergent, ambivalent understandings of Europe at overlapping local, regional, and global levels. Its interdisciplinary endeavor encompasses reflections on intellectual history and offers insights into circulations, connections and exchange. Research designs related to European Global Studies address the coincidence of entanglement and division. They take the pulse of mutual connectivity – its acceleration in periods of entanglement and its deceleration in periods of division – as a potential means to identify what *globalization* means on a regional level. European Global Studies thus fleshes out interdisciplinary approaches involving legal and economic concepts, as well as political science, all with a focus on these concepts' historical development. Yet, since this endeavor oversteps disciplinary borders, European Global Studies avoids enumerating the disciplines involved to instead invest more energy in establishing a common discourse about how to cross disciplinary borders.

Its debates can integrate fields in which conceptual diversity has reached an advanced stage. For example, legal scholar Peer Zumbansen conceptualizes governance in a way that allows us to raise new

questions and draft new analytical tools that reach beyond the methods, topics, and theories based on essentialized notions of norms, statehood, and sovereignty. He prefers open, ambivalent notions and specified governance as a leading concept, which “points to a reorientation of the language used by a discipline to address architectures of order, hierarchies of norms and values, organizational principles as well as distinct competences and authorities from an uncertain and evolving vantage point.”¹ Other approaches help to specify more in-between notions. To overcome Eurocentrism, scholars of international and transnational law have abandoned classical paradigms of the law of nations to instead address cultural encounters, translations, hybridization, and historical narratives.² These new approaches enable temporary arrangements, extraterritorial authorities, semi-sovereign agencies, and porous borders to move from the fringes of discussions to their centers. The success of Thomas Piketty’s bestseller *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* impressively demonstrates the increasing request for transdisciplinary research that points to the multidimensional character of inequality.³ Such approaches open up mental spaces with which we can question methodological nationalisms in order to problematize Eurocentrism and test relational models across disciplines.

Despite these aspirations, few scholars actually apply interdisciplinary perspectives and critical approaches in their research on Europe. Though postcolonial debates have highly active since the turn of the millennium, the development of new, self-reflexive epistemologies still stands at its very beginning, as Randeria and Röhmschild point out.⁴ To some extent, traces of the same problem influence debates on global history, in which ways to develop historical narratives beyond those using Western chronologies and ordering principles is an often addressed, albeit unsolved problem. For the fields mentioned, the juncture of established nation-driven concepts and new questions regarding border-crossing interactions and agencies specifies a dynamic sea change that researchers try to fence in with the continual publication of new handbooks.⁵

The institutional framework may partly clarify the missing link between the awareness of the epistemic

1 Peer Zumbansen: Governance: An Interdisciplinary Perspective, in: David Levi-Faur (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford 2014, 83.

2 Bardo Fassbender/Anne Peters: Introduction: Towards a Global History of International Law, in: Bardo Fassbender/Anne Peters (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law*. Oxford 2014, 1-24.

3 Thomas Piketty: *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, MA 2013.

4 Shalini Randeria/Regina Röhmschild: Das postkoloniale Europa. Verflochtene Genealogien der Gegenwart – Einleitung zur erweiterten Neuauflage (2013), in: Sebastian Conrad/Shalini Randeria/Regina Röhmschild (eds.): *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, 2nd edition. Frankfurt a.M. 2013, 14.

5 E.g., David Levi-Faur (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford 2014; Bardo Fassbender/Anne Peters (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law*. Oxford 2014; Prasenjit Duara/Viren Murthy/Andrew Sartori (eds.): *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*. Chichester 2014.

problem and its translation into teaching and research. Some institutes for European studies founded at the end of World War II in Germany acted both as antidotes against the renaissance of German nationalism and as instruments of democratic re-education. Since the Cold War ended, the institutional landscape has transformed substantially. On the one hand, institutes for European studies in Europe have increasingly distanced themselves from understanding Europe as a geopolitical entity in favor of concepts that perceive Europe as a mind map. On the other hand, institutes for European studies have opened and continue to open in Asian countries. Some were launched as regional think-tanks; others were initiated by EU-driven programs; still others made visible newly established EU foreign relations and EU interest in Asia.⁶ Can we expect that the translocal shifting of institutions with European-oriented programs into non-Western contexts supports a new reading of Europe? Do these institutes outside of Europe advance a traditional, non-entangled concept of Europe, all while “shared histories” and traces of mutual influence in a global context continue to be gaps yet filled in research and teaching? As put forward in Basel, the view from outside is not a matter of geography. In fact, the recent transformation of the Basel Europe Institute to the Institute for European Global Studies may facilitate analyzing Europe from a periphery located in the European midst.⁷

Beyond Eurocentrism

In recent decades, *Eurocentrism* has been a catchword used to attack the continuing omnipresence of Western-generated systems in describing and measuring the world. On a more serious level, researchers of several academic disciplines inspired by postcolonial approaches have now taken up the challenge of analyzing the pervasive claims of universalist European mind-sets in multiple ways, particularly by scrutinizing practices of creating boundaries, of generating normative and categorical orders, and of establishing powerful monopolies regarding the representation and interpretation of the world’s past and present.⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty’s seminal study *Provincializing Europe* (2000) has further fueled these debates by critically deconstructing the allegedly self-evident European categories of order and by shatter-

6 E.g., Shanghai Institute for European Studies, Center for European Studies, Fudan University, and the many EU centers launched by US and Canadian initiatives. See: <http://euce.org/centers/worldwide.php> (July 22, 2014).

7 The Basel Institute was founded twenty years ago after the Swiss sovereign voted against the participation of Switzerland in the European Economic Area. Basel, two states within the Swiss confederation with borders to France and Germany, started to worry about possible problems of being cut from important networks of communication, trade, and expertise. See Institute for European Global Studies, URL: <https://europa.unibas.ch/en/home> (July 22, 2014).

8 For a critical overview, see Sebastian Conrad/Shalini Randeria/Regina Röhlich (eds.): *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Frankfurt a.M. 2002; Robert Young: *Postcolonial Remains*, in: *Literary History* 43 (2012) 1, 19-42; Graham Huggan: *Interdisciplinary Measures. Literature and the Future of Postcolonial Studies*. Liverpool 2008. For the field of law: Teemu Ruskola: *Legal Orientalism*, in: *Michigan Law Review* 101 (2002) 1, 179-234. For sociology: Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez/Manuela Boatca/Sergio Costa (eds.): *Decolonizing European Sociology. Transdisciplinary Approaches*. Burlington VT 2010; Julian Go: *For a Postcolonial Sociology*, in: *Theor Soc* 42 (2013), 25-55.

ing the universalist claims of modernization narratives.⁹ For today's research, the interconnected problems of the globalized world as seen in a regional context constitute an enormous challenge that prompts us to interrogate established normative, legal, economic, and political structures of European origin. Yet, often than not, it seems as if Eurocentrism and its vision of generalized success stories of modernization are striking back.

Disciplinary research on Europe's global entanglements is often meant to overcome the limits of the nation state without denying its formative power. As a consequence, national data, national legal frameworks, national policymaking, and national histories have merged with concepts of continental and global governance. Sources capable of revealing global constellations should remain central in scholarly debates, while national data remain far more accessible than those of international organizations or places at global crossroads.¹⁰ Since European Global Studies embarks to grapple with issues of border-transcending relevance – environmental challenges, migration versus mobility, and the circulations of practices, concepts, objects, and traces that encounters and adaptations leave behind – the accessibility of data and sources beyond national collections remains crucial.¹¹ We need to pay special attention to the ways in which societies perceive the world and manage portals of globalization such as airports, railway stations, and World's Fairs, as well as how they control the crossing of borders via the spread of eating habits and commodity chains and trigger or react to disconnections introduced by constraints other than national borders. Societies of smaller nation states may react differently toward the increasing importance of permeable structures and toward neighbors both within Europe and beyond. Without overemphasizing the Swiss case, Switzerland's relations to Europe – at once tense and mutually beneficial – provide a fascinating test case for European Global Studies, given its insistence on national peculiarities while remaining intrinsically tied to globalized economies.

In short, European Global Studies aspires to address the multidimensional dilemmas that result from confronting universalist systems and generalizing approaches within the complexity of global contexts. Instead of attempting to only "provincialize" Europe, the challenge is to "decenter" concepts and practices

9 Dipesh Chakrabarty: *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton 2000. For the discussion of Chakrabarty's concept see Duane Corpis: Introduction to 'A Correspondence on Provincializing Europe', in: *Historical Review* 83 (2002), 143-145; Carola Dietze: Toward a History on Equal Terms. A Discussion of Provincializing Europe, in: *History and Theory* 47 (2008), 69-84; Dipesh Chakrabarty: In Defense of Provincializing Europe. A Response to Carola Dietze, in: *History and Theory* 47 (2008), 85-96; Dipesh Chakrabarty: The Muddle of Modernity, in: *The American Historical Review* 116 (2011) 3, 663-675; Sanjay Seth (ed.): Special Issue. After Europe, in: *Postcolonial Studies* 14 (2011) 2; Duy Lap Nguyen: The Universal Province of Modernity, in: *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (2013), URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2013.816074> (July 22, 2014).

10 The archives of International organizations remain a crucial problem, although UNESCO reopened its archival portal.

11 As an example for such an approach see: Nigel Thrift et al. (eds.): *Globalization in Practice*. Oxford 2014.

labeled *European*.¹² Europe thus remains an important frame of reference, but itself becomes the subject of critical investigation.

The question therefore becomes which dimension this paradigm shift involves. Can a new approach to Europe methodologically build on area studies and thematically focus on local-global interactions? A spatial approach involving Europe as a region in area studies and its conceptual approaches seems increasingly controversial given intense, ongoing debates about how to reconceptualize area studies.¹³ In this context, Arjun Appadurai called for renewed concepts in area studies to integrate multiple dimensions and diverse categories of order and identity in future research designs; after the failure “to build knowledge of and across areas,” one should focus more on research “across regions, classes, disciplines.”¹⁴ According to Appadurai, other problems include the need to consider multimedia source material, the dominant position of material written in English, and the asymmetrical relationship between the humanities and social sciences in terms of textual critique and contextual orientation. To Appadurai, in the future area studies should systematically organize its research to operate beyond disciplinary frames.

In this context, European Global Studies aims to focus on the dilemma that globalization has visibly brought to the fore: the conceptual challenge of a Europe torn between being a topos and providing universalist methodologies, and between traditional constructions of others and an increasing awareness of the absurdity of these constructions, which only mirror the limits and misconceptions of its allegedly generalized categorizations.¹⁵

Methods of European Global Studies: Process-Driven Approaches

Understood as an academic discipline of European origin, history offers an often not fully appreciated benefit: its inherent capacity for self-reflection, of thinking about its own disciplinary contingency. Problematising its own position and referring to time and space as primary categories both serve as underlying features for developing European Global Studies. As for the methodological consequences, if we want to construct a matrix structure for future research activities, then it might be useful to replace historically defined chronologies with processes and discipline-related topics with fields. Such fields may cover social

12 Natalie Zemon Davis: Forum. Holberg Prize Symposium. Doing Decentered History, in: *History and Theory* 50 (2011), 18-202.

13 As an example for ongoing debates on Area studies, see: Claudia Derichs (ed.): Special Issue. Strange Bed Fellows? Area Studies and Disciplines, in: *The German Journal on Contemporary Asia* 132 (2014).

14 Arjun Appadurai et al.: Mission Statement Responses, in: *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 33 (2013) 2, 137-139.

15 As Comaroff and Comaroff made clear, “there is much south in the North, much north in the South, and more of both to come in the future.” See Jean Comaroff/John Comaroff: Theory from the South. A Rejoinder, in: *Cultural Anthropology* (2012), URL: <http://culanth.org/fieldsights/273-theory-from-the-south-a-rejoinder> (July 22, 2014).

dynamics, norms and regulations, values and markets, and visions and beliefs, while the processes could relate to procedures of scaling regions, cultivating differences, making sovereignties, building environment, and performing knowledge. A relational conception offers foci on new questions of overlapping procedural dimensions, as well as on thematic fields of the humanities, social sciences, economics, and law. Central issues include the analysis of social dynamics, of norm creation, of market mechanisms, and of diverse ideological projections, while central themes include, for instance, transcultural expertise and insights into the development of the status and position of international civil servants, the translation of norms and systems of order, the legitimation of transitional political regimes (e.g., in postwar societies or extraterritorial spaces), and ideas of mobility in relation to global social inequalities. The concepts of globalization from below and global-local consequences of such movements stress the importance of bringing in border-crossing societies and individuals beyond only traveling elites. Replacing chronologies by processes can allow us to counterbalance established practices that excluded societies and spaces that did not correspond to European visions of time and progress and therefore have been regarded as backward or underdeveloped.

In short, a relational model focusing on processes aims to overcome the problem of methodological nationalism, to reconsider central assumptions of (European-generated) patterns of research as culturally constructed, and to discern underlying historical contingencies. Such a matrix consisting in dynamic variations of connections does not exclude national entities as objects of research; nor does avoiding both a chronological and a spatial order of things ignore time and space. On the contrary, traditional research frameworks become objects of critical analyses that highlight their role as culturally constructed regimes. However, the matrix suggested consists not only of national data collections and is therefore useful for border-crossing topics such as environmental questions and migration versus mobility, to name two fields of crucial importance for the future.

Examples and Challenges

Actors not connected to national agencies such as international organizations provide useful test cases.¹⁶ A database that gives all of the names of people on the payroll of the League of Nations and thus displays the multilayered connections of people involved in international organizations provides the possibility of discussing the potential of a European global approach. The setting allows questions about not only the scaling of regions, but also the newly introduced professional category of international civil

¹⁶ See www.lonse.de. Project: Subaltern Diplomacy, 1930-1960, in: Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context". URL: <http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en/research/a-governance-administration/a13-subaltern-diplomacy.html> (July 23, 2014).

servants, whose legal status has remained highly controversial due to the taxes they have (not) had to pay, the transfer of pension money, or whether international organizations could claim legal protection in times of war. Placed within the abovementioned matrix, the material collected for the database documents a certain time frame, yet exceeds the usual chronological narrative in connecting legal frameworks or administrative histories of global governance with the daily life of those working for international organizations. In this context, the interactions between norms and regulations with processes of making sovereignties are of special importance. The relational approach highlights the porosity of national sovereignty, on the one hand, and the ambivalence of extraterritoriality and national claims on the other. Moreover, the approach foregrounds sources rarely considered by historians until now. For example, the Staff Regulations of the League of Nations set the requirements for the so-called “home leave” of international civil servants. If we read these regulations along the lines of transcultural research across national and disciplinary boundaries, then they become contested documents that provide interesting insights into the tense interference between universal legal regulations, economic considerations, and contemporary ideas of Eurocentrism and Europe’s global importance. Following the Staff Regulations, international personnel had to declare what they considered to be their home. In a field of international experts, this question was sometimes difficult; in the late 1930s, it was sometimes even impossible to answer, especially when we recall the example of Austrians with Jewish background who had lost German citizenship with the *Anschluss* of 1938. Moreover, home leave could depend on the location and distance from their place of employment, which was Geneva. Areas enumerated in the paragraph addressing home leave in the Staff Regulations developed a spatial concept of globality, in which Europe encompassed French and British colonies in Africa, yet excluded the Soviet Union. In the case of Asia and the US, national ties counted less, since they were beyond 100 degrees to the West; according to staff regulations, the home leave of staff from those regions was paid only each third year. Interference between territoriality and mobility presumed by the League of Nations when hiring staff members becomes visible in the border-crossing networks of international civil servants that followed a different rationale – that, of course, people did not have citizenships or homes in the expected way. Chinese employees came from Paris, not from Beijing or Nanjing, and the system was completely helpless when international civil servants lost national citizenship.

Though only one example among many, international organizations provide interesting source material with which to document a field that does not fit into a world of nation states and, as such, clearly shows the need to develop analytical tools suited for a multilayered, complex focus on problems beyond national and disciplinary frameworks.

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GLOBAL STUDIES: A HISTORICAL APPROACH

Patrick Manning

KEY WORDS

human agency, global studies, methods, temporal dynamics, world history

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Global Studies can provide a large-scale and interdisciplinary look at the present and past, reaching across disciplinary parochialisms and taking advantage of advances throughout the social sciences in order to locate and explain social interactions. Global Studies emphasizes contemporary, interdisciplinary analyses of global affairs and, in so doing, has great implications for understanding historical change. This essay is to urge greater attention to temporal change and historical analysis within Global Studies.

The field of Global Studies, as it expands and develops, exhibits a remarkable and comprehensive set of strengths. These strengths go beyond the willingness to work across spatial limits and disciplinary boundaries, to include substantial attention to social-science theory and to system-based analyses of social situations. Global Studies has provided a framework for broad explorations in theory, within the social sciences and cultural studies, both through efforts to link the macro and micro perspectives of individual disciplines, and through explorations of theoretical links and contrasts from one discipline to the next. In addition, Global Studies not uncommonly adopts a systems approach to its global-societal subject matter, invoking sub-systems and interconnected levels and scales to give a picture of humanity in general. More specifically, these have included particular attention to culture as an aspect of globalization, as well as to the importance and the interactions of governance, economy, and social movements; Global Studies also creates analytical space for connection to issues in health and climate. In sum, the contemporary dimensions lend themselves with great promise to policy studies. For contemporary globalization and Global Studies, the time frame is important but short-term.

Yet global analysis and policy formulation require additional attention to temporal change. The emphasis in this essay is on the further benefits that can be brought to Global Studies by adding greater attention to temporal dynamics or – put otherwise – by linking world history to Global Studies. Arguably, each will benefit from the other. For world history, the great advances in temporal analysis of global change are undermined by insufficient attention to interdisciplinarity and theory. In turn, attention to world history can strengthen Global Studies by adding a substantial time-dimension to global analysis: one of the main problems in contemporary Global Studies is too little consideration of the temporal dimensions of globalization. My point here is to trace the growth and the benefits of historical approaches within Global Studies, and to make the case for making Historical Global Studies into a recognized subfield within Global Studies.

Especially during the 1990s, Global Studies came to prominence as an academic pursuit with concern for contemporary social change – particularly so in economy, culture, and technology.¹ Matthias Middell

1 Roland Robertson: *Globalization. Social Theory and Global Culture*. Newbury Park, CA 1992.

has been a founding figure in the educational practice of Global Studies at the advanced level.² Manfred Steger has been a leading interpreter of contemporary social processes at the global level.³ Mark Juergensmeyer has focused on the social sciences broadly and religion in particular within the context of Global Studies.⁴ Economist Jeffrey Sachs has been a successful institution-builder for a vision of Global Studies focusing overwhelmingly on a contemporary and future-oriented time frame, though emphasizing natural sciences and economics to the exclusion of all other social sciences.⁵ These are figures who have developed major dimensions of the Global Studies paradigm.

The Global Studies paradigm arose in the company of other global visions, and developed its specificity in interaction with them. Neoliberalism arose at much the same time as a finance-centered yet ahistorical ideology that achieved dominance among corporate leaders. World-systems analysis grew up within historical sociology, applying systems logic for earlier times. World history and global history arose as broad and pragmatic studies of numerous issues over long time periods. Within the fields of world history and world-systems analysis, the academic trajectories led logically to developing a stronger interdisciplinary and theoretical emphasis, plus a growing interest in an interdisciplinary study of the present.

Empirical Patterns: Temporal Dynamics in Global Patterns

The academic trajectory of Global Studies led logically to developing a strong temporal emphasis within the analysis of globalization. Anthony G. Hopkins and Christopher A. Bayly made a prominent argument for studies of globalization in history; André Gunder Frank as well as Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall made parallel arguments within world-systems analysis.⁶ Further, historians have retrieved the global thinking of earlier generations – among Europeans, such global thinking arose after World War II, after World War I, after the Napoleonic wars, and at a pause in the European struggles of the early eighteenth century.⁷

This section introduces some empirical examples to illustrate patterns of temporal change in global society. The cases are divided into two categories, contrasting those where the *structures* of society appear to

2 Matthias Middell/Lluís R. Aulinas: *Transnational Changes to National History Writing*. New York 2012.

3 Manfred B. Steger: *Globalism. The New Market Ideology*. Lanham 2002; Manfred B. Steger: *Globalisms. The Great Ideological Struggle of the Twenty-first Century*, 3rd edition. Lanham, MD 2008.

4 Mark Juergensmeyer: *Thinking Globally. A Global Studies Reader*. Berkeley 2013.

5 Jeffrey Sachs: *Common Wealth. Economics for a Crowded Planet*. New York 2008.

6 Anthony G. Hopkins: *Globalization in World History*. New York 2002; Christopher Chase-Dunn/Thomas D. Hall: *Rise and Demise. Comparing World-Systems*. Boulder, CO 1997.

7 Matthias Middell: "Lust am Krim." *Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung Walter Markovs*. Leipzig 2011; Patrick Manning: *Navigating World History. Historians Create a Global Past*. New York 2003.

be dominant factors with those where human *agency* (in the form of cultural choice) has affected global patterns. For cases centering on social structures, the examples address cycles of economic inequality and the impact of climate change on globalization; the examples addressing human agency include the rise and fall of slavery, systems of governance, and patterns of gender relations.

The current global extremes in socio-economic inequality are increasingly well known. Almost as well known is the eighty-year cycle in inequality for the United States: the peak proportions of wealth and income held by the richest few in industrial countries at two moments – in the late 1920s and at the present moment. The same calculations show that the 1960s were the moment at which US inequality in income and wealth were lowest – a statistic that fit with the high proportion of union memberships, the advances in civil rights, and the re-launching of the feminist movement. In the framework of Historical Global Studies, this phenomenon can be extended beyond a single powerful nation to be considered globally and over time. Thus, the 1960s were a high point in decolonization and populism worldwide, and a high point in advance of the welfare state. One may ask if there were earlier such peaks in inequality, whether they were similarly global in scope, and what mechanisms of change underlay this cyclical behavior. If one assumes a cycle with a dependable period of about 80 years, one would look for earlier peaks in the 1840s, the 1760s, and the 1680s; one would look for low points in inequality in the 1880s, the 1800s, and the 1720s. This sort of analysis naturally links up with the study of long-term, global economic cycles associated with the name of Kondratieff, a set of debates that included André Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein.⁸ Pursued through Historical Global Studies, however, the analysis would include attention to social and not just economic change, and it would focus more on identifying the forces propagating the cycle. The contemporary dimension of such Historical Global Studies analysis is central: in predicting a decline in social inequality in the decades to come, we need a better set of explanations of that change, accounting for long-term as well as short-term factors.

We turn next to the temporal changes in climate as a factor in global society. If the cycle in inequality is arguably the result of economic forces beyond human consciousness, the exogenous forces for global change are even more forceful for the case of climate. Researchers now have the ability to document temperature and humidity for most regions of the world as they changed over long periods of time. For this reason, Global Studies should be able to link temporal and spatial changes in climate to social, economic, and even cultural change. The El Niño cycles of the 1980s and 1990s, powerful expansions of warm ocean and high atmospheric pressure in the Western Pacific, brought about the scientific analysis

8 Nikolai Kondratieff: *The Long Wave Cycle*. New York 1984; André G. Frank: *Crisis in the World Economy*. London 1980; André G. Frank: *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*. Berkeley 1998; Immanuel Wallerstein: *World-Systems Analysis. An Introduction*. London 2004; Immanuel Wallerstein: *The Modern World-System in the Long Durée*. Boulder, CO 2004.

that finally revealed the underlying climatological dynamics. Within a few years, climatologists had documented El Niño episodes over a period of thousands of years, but also revealed their recently increasing severity. Human intervention, especially the expanded use of fossil fuels that expand the heat-absorbing atmospheric methane and carbon dioxide gasses, brings destabilization of complex climate systems in the oceans and atmosphere.⁹ To this degree, we must now see climate change as at least partially endogenous, “forced” (as they say in climate studies) by human interventions.

The two preceding examples of global-historical dynamics have emphasized cycles, regular and irregular, arising from forces beyond individual or societal human choice. In the next examples we consider temporal changes in which cultural or civilizational choices become embedded and reproduced within a region so that they become resistant to overall global patterns. The nature and extent of slavery in societies is an example of such a distinction. The global pattern can be illustrated through a comparison of three regions: China, sub-Saharan Africa, and the region from the Mediterranean to North India. While it may be assumed that small-scale enslavement existed in every human society, slavery developed into a large-scale social institution only for certain times and places. In ancient times slavery developed most fully in Mesopotamia and spread west and east thereafter to the Mediterranean and North India, so that this larger region remained the core area of large-scale slavery for nearly three thousand years. Slavery from the Mediterranean to North India was reproduced by steady capture of more slaves within this core area. In addition, captives were drawn increasingly from adjoining regions – Central Asia, Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa – although these peripheral regions did not develop slavery significantly at home.¹⁰ For China and for other regions outside the Mediterranean and West Asia, however, slavery did not expand to a great degree, even where state systems became very powerful.

Then, from the seventeenth century, slavery expanded dramatically in the Americas, drawing far more heavily than before on African captives. The global system of slavery had thus shifted substantially: slavery continued in its old core area, but it now expanded to the whole eastern fringe of the Americas and it also expanded within Africa as a result of growing slave trade. The great anti-slavery movement of the nineteenth century, while widely effective, did not yield complete abolition of slavery in key parts of the world. Slavery declined slowly in the old core area, while slavery in Africa expanded greatly during the nineteenth century, declining only in the twentieth century. In sum, this example suggests two lessons on the power of social choices in history. First, social decisions to accept or reject slavery as a major aspect

⁹ James Hansen: *Storms of My Grandchildren. The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity*. London 2010.

¹⁰ Patrick Manning: Africa's Place in Globalization. Africa, Eurasia, and Their Borderlands, in: *Journal of Globalization Studies* 5 (2014) 1, 65-81.

of the social order can be remarkably long-lasting in their influence. Second, social choices on slavery can sometimes change as a result of widespread and perhaps global pressure. Thus, sub-Saharan Africa changed its practice and came to rely heavily on slavery from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Further, the emancipation movement reversed the long commitment to slavery in the core area, as well as in the Americas and in Africa. After that time, slavery continued at the level of individual oppression, though no longer socially recognized.¹¹

Governance is another social arena for which social choices have been influential over the long term. The main recent debate on governance for recent centuries has been that on democracy and representative government.¹² The dominant interpretation has focused on Western Europe, where local governance forms developed into constitutional monarchy and into parliaments and electoral democracy. This same interpretation suggests that the history of governance in other parts of the world can be reduced to the global diffusion of European democracy – or local resistance to it. Such an approach, however, neglects the many local systems of conciliar or representative government, and the frequency with which newly-established monarchies drew on previous systems of local government. The village councils of Japan and China; the panchayats of India; the numerous African systems of clan, lineage, and small-scale monarchy; and the *cabildo* of Spanish colonies all suggest that the world has many traditions of popular consent and participation in governance. In temporal terms, such political systems have supplanted each other at a leisurely pace, far slower than the rise and fall of individual rulers, so that the global history of democracy and autocracy, when explored in detail, is more likely to be one of complex evolution than of simple diffusion of European innovations.

A third debate over human agency in global social change addresses the temporal dynamics of women's history and gender relations. The recent literature documents the presence and the agency of women in a wide range of social situations. Still, such studies have yet to yield much advance in understanding the historical dynamics of gender relations. The limited success of deterministic models, such as Gerda Lerner's vision of the creation of patriarchy, suggests that there is either complex variation or fundamental eclecticism in gender relations:¹³ aside from the unmistakable focus of women in child care, occupational and social roles of men and women have varied greatly across social and temporal lines, though within a constant of overall male dominance. This suggests that cyclical or episodic models of gender relations should be explored in more detail. Such an analysis reveals that, at moments of social change or dis-

11 Patrick Manning: *The African Diaspora. A History through Culture*. New York 2009.

12 John Gerring/Strom Thacker: *A Centripetal Theory of Democratic Governance*. New York 2008.

13 Gerda Lerner: *Women and History*. New York 1987, 1994 (2 vols.).

ruption, men and women have struggled and bargained over social roles, with changes in legal, social, and political roles emerging in response to the level of organization of each gender. Thus, one would look not for a long-term advance or worsening in women's position in society, but for periodic shifts in either direction. To set this sort of dynamic in a global perspective, one would seek out episodic global shocks but also cyclical social changes, and then ask how gender relations in one society or another have shifted as local forces respond to crisis and opportunity. At one level, the study of this issue involves a lot of historical data collection and comparison. At another level, it should rely heavily on the study of recent years: gender relations in multiple societies have been studied carefully over the last fifty years, so that we should be able to document numerous short-term fluctuations in gender relations and use them as a basis for seeking out historical parallels. With a better sense of the short-term fluctuations in gender relations, plus a sense of their distribution over time and space, we can return and work at a higher level on the question of long-term, species-level shifts in gender roles.

This range of cases is intended to suggest that temporal dynamics at the global level are complex, varied, and that their analysis requires organized documentation and analysis. These dynamics, inherited from the past, continue to unfold in our lives of today. Deeper investigation into Historical Global Studies can help to project future patterns of change in these and other areas. The hope of such large-scale social analyses is to develop a more detailed sense of the interactions in social change over time, through exploring the full range of major social issues for past times as well as in the present.

Frameworks and Methods for Explorations of Global Historical Dynamics

To follow up the eclectic and empirical exploration of global dynamics above, I turn now to tools for structuring our understanding of the temporal dimensions of social processes. Here are two categories of analytical structures: frameworks for analysis and methods of investigation. These tools can be applied to the work of eliciting the temporal patterns in global issues.

First, here is a typology of temporal moments and interactions: the nuances separating these distinctive *types* of temporal change make it easier to develop statements of the varying *paths* of temporal change. *Episodes*, meaning short-term exogenous change, notably in climate and disease, affect human society from without. *Cycles*, meaning periodic fluctuations in key economic, social, or cultural factors, affect human society from within. *Growth*, meaning the expanding scale of human society in population and productivity, is a long-term pattern often interrupted in the short run. *Innovation* refers to developments arising from human agency, either at elite or popular levels – arising endogenously through social processes or exogenously through individual genius. *Conflict and violence*, at both individual and social levels (and defined from instantaneous acts to long-term processes), have undergone particularly complex

fluctuations and long-term changes. *Inequality*, the social differentiation in wealth and power, continues to grow in practice, even as the ideology of social equality expands in human philosophy. *Macro-level cultural choices*, including basic social values and aesthetic preferences as well as religious beliefs, develop within social groups but sometimes spread to wider social groupings. The paragraphs to follow provide historical illustrations of these dynamics.

Second, here are some analytical axes along which the interconnection of contemporary and Historical Global Studies may lead us to new understandings of processes of social change, and to a greater emphasis on the commonalities of human society over time and space. They require both an agent and a time frame to be fully defined. *Connections and parallels*: while world historical studies have given great emphasis to connections among past events and processes, the expanded study of early times in history has raised the importance of parallels. Thus, when ceramics and chiefship are seen to have been invented in many social situations, one is required to give more analytical attention to understanding the inherent, common logic with which humans address their problems. As a result, one must recognize that many recent developments, interpreted through connection and diffusion, may in fact arise from parallels. *Initiative and response*: much historical interpretation focuses on initiatives, especially by those who become leaders – dividing the world into those with and without agency. But agency does not exist in a vacuum: each action is generally a response to the conditions in which one finds oneself, so that the studies of initiative and response need to be connected rather than segregated, as they often have been. *History from below*: historical studies commonly give primacy to elites, in response to the bias in available documents and in social outlooks adopted by historians. Recent studies of the power of contemporary social movements may make it easier for historians to locate earlier agency from below: in interplay with contemporary Global Studies, historical social change can be interpreted more in terms of the bargains struck by elites and commoners and less as the direct result of elite initiatives.¹⁴ *Hierarchy and/or networks*: hierarchies and social networks have each developed within society over time. In general, hierarchies may have developed earlier, but networks have been developing more recently. In the eastern hemisphere, it seems clear that hierarchy developed most clearly in Eurasia, while networks developed within sub-Saharan Africa. Within the last century, the two trajectories have been brought into much closer contact.

This list of analytical tools deployed by Historical Global Studies stops far short of applying them to develop a comprehensive interpretation of the past. But the list of tools, in combination with the preceding brief discussions of the issues to which they might be applied, provides an idea of the scope, the methodology,

¹⁴ Charles Tilly/Lesley Wood: *Social Movements*, 1768-2012. Boulder, CO 2012.

and the interpretive frame of historical Global Studies. That is, for each arena of society, what are previous patterns of change and rates of change? Do the patterns of change recur or do they shift with time?

Experiences in Institutionalizing and Teaching Historical Global Studies

The ideas on historical approaches to Global Studies, as expressed here, have developed through the work of numerous individuals: for instance, historian Dominic Sachsenmaier worked for some years as part of the Global Studies Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The Center for Global and European Studies at the University of Leipzig has been outstanding in sustaining global historical studies within a comprehensive graduate program in Global Studies. A current experiment in partnership of Global Studies and world history is under way at the University of Pittsburgh, where the Global Studies Center and the World History Center have undertaken a formal collaboration including the sharing of instructional, outreach, and research programs. The paired centers share in the teaching of undergraduate courses in Global Studies and in World History, and they collaborate in the organization and teaching of a graduate course in interdisciplinary methodology. The two centers share membership in international organizations: they hold a joint membership in the worldwide Global Studies Consortium and they participate actively, though officially through the World History Center, in the Network of Global and World History Organizations. Among the projects of this collaboration is that of creating a world-historical archive. In this framework, and to speed-up the process of global historical analysis, the World History Center and collaborators at several other institutions have begun to work on creating a global historical dataset, intended to collect and display data on social science, health, and climate data at regional and global levels for the past four centuries. In a sense, this can be seen as a social-science analogy to climate modeling.

The combination of Global Studies and world history can yield stronger interpretations of history, better contemporary analysis, and improved policy recommendations. The two fields will surely retain their distinctiveness, but much is to be gained by developing the experience of using each field to explore the other. Work at this global and historical scale is too great in quantity to do all at once, but collaborative work can advance the scope of work, and academic diplomacy among fields can speed the exchange of information and the location of important new problems. Historical Global Studies, as the interplay of interdisciplinary social and cultural studies in contemporary and historical time frames, appears ready for development.

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COMMUNICATING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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KEY WORDS

global studies, globalization, interdisciplinary studies, global research methods

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¹ Philip C. McCarty (ed.): *Integrated Perspectives in Global Studies* (revised first edition). San Diego 2013.

One common approach to explaining the emergence of the field of Global Studies is to start with the rapid increase in economic globalization in the 1990's post-Cold War era. The focus of scholarship at that time was centered primarily on locating and describing the complex processes of globalization as well as the impacts those processes were having on people around the world. The academic encounter with globalization happened in the context of increasing interdisciplinary scholarship that had been impacting the academy since the 1970s. This intellectual trajectory portrays Global Studies as an interdisciplinary project that engages with complex and interrelated global-scale issues.²

One unfortunate side effect of focusing scholarly attention on the interdisciplinary roots and extreme levels of abstraction and complexity of global issues is a kind of analytical paralysis. I have heard complaints that the field of Global Studies claims to be the study of everything, or that the field simply lacks focus. Such complaints are a clear indication that global scholars aren't doing enough to convey the value of Global Studies beyond their inner circle of colleagues. To borrow a phrase from marketing, we need to do a better job of defining our product. What are we selling to our students? Is mind-boggling, paralysis-inducing complexity all that we have to offer? I think not. Global scholars need to be able to say more clearly and precisely what the field of Global Studies is and what it has to offer. Global Studies is not just the study of everything. It does have focus. It does offer unique perspectives and it does have great explanatory power.

Some of my colleagues say we shouldn't be trying to define Global Studies too rigidly. They enjoy the freedom of a nebulous or poorly defined interdisciplinary field and don't want to be constrained by a rigid set of restrictive norms. Others worry that I might be trying to define a canon of readings or worse turn Global Studies into another ossified discipline. As a devout interdisciplinary scholar I assure you that I am not interested in creating new disciplinary boundaries. My goal is simply to be clear about the field's inherent value and to make Global Studies more accessible to a wider audience. Let sophisticated global theorists soar into stratospheric levels of abstraction, but at the same time we must remember that we have to make Global Studies applicable to the real world. We shouldn't let the complexity of the issues we face prevent us from reaching out to broader audiences with a clear and coherent message.

The question "What is Global Studies?" is more than a purely academic question because Global Studies programs are not developing in a vacuum. Global Studies programs must earn a place within existing institutions, established fields of inquiry and faculties that are already under pressure from shrinking budgets and increasing student demand. As with any new interdisciplinary field, our programs must be

2 Philip C. McCarty: Globalizing Legal History, in: *Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History. Journal of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History* 22 (2014), in press; Matthew Sparke: *Introducing Globalization. Ties, Tensions, and Uneven Integration*. Chichester, West Sussex 2013.

able to hold their own against traditional disciplines such as economics, history, political science and sociology that offer their students coherent analytical frameworks, clear issues that are framed in ways that can be understood, questions that can be answered, and powerful methodological tools with which to answer them. This is not to say that Global Studies should ask simplistic questions or offer simplistic explanations for the complex issues we deal with. However, if Global Studies programs are to establish legitimacy and compete for resources, they do need to offer some clarity about the kinds of questions that global scholars ask, the kinds of analytical frameworks employed, and the kinds of answers one can expect to find using global perspectives.

Another way to say this is that global scholars need to convey the power that global perspectives have to address pressing global issues. We need to demonstrate that we can provide practical real-world solutions. We need to communicate this potential not only to our students and to each other, but to scholars in other disciplines that are rapidly adopting global perspectives. To succeed in institutional settings, the field of Global Studies must make its core questions and issues accessible to campus administrators and funding agencies. Ultimately, we must reach beyond the academy to communicate the power and utility of Global Studies to the public and policy makers.

Why Are Global Studies Important?

One of the first and most crucial things that global scholars need to communicate is the importance of the field itself, and why engaging with issues from integrated global perspectives is essential to understanding the world today. Most of us assume that there are many reasons why the field of Global Studies is timely and important but too often we leave these assumptions unstated. The list below is an attempt to elaborate some of the reasons why I think the field Global Studies is crucial to understanding the contemporary world. This list is no doubt incomplete and I encourage others to add, revise and otherwise comment on these topics.

- **Global-Scale Issues.** Global Studies exists because scholars have discovered that there are economic, political and social issues that are truly global in scale. Issues such as economic development, environmental change, and immigration all have at least one thing in common: they reach beyond the limits of the nation-state. These issues are global in scale in the sense that they ignore political boundaries and are impacting all nations, albeit to varying degrees. This is important because up until relatively recently the largest unit of analysis was the nation-state itself. This limitation made it difficult for scholars to see the larger integrated world economic system within which various state and non-state actors operate. As a starting point, global perspectives enable a global systemic analysis that is not limited to national or international analyses.

Further, I argue that these kinds of issues are global in scale because they manifest *at multiple levels simultaneously*. Distinct manifestations of these kinds of global issues can be found simultaneously at the local, regional, national, and transnational levels. Global-scale issues such as these call on us to shift our focus not just from the national to the global, but to the entire local/global continuum.³ The ability to grasp global-scale issues, to integrate larger global systems analysis into a multilevel analysis of the entire global/local spectrum, to see the global through the local and vice versa, is a new way of understanding the world.

- **Powerful Analytical Tools.** Global perspectives offer unique insights and new analytical capacities. By situating the global-local spectrum in deep historical contexts, global perspectives have the potential to reveal temporal and spatial connections we could not have otherwise seen or even imagined. We can begin to trace the connections between empires, colonialism, modern imperialism and new forms of neo-imperialism in the world today. Global perspectives suggest that important connections exist between events and processes, even when events appear to be disconnected and separated by time, space, or even our own categories of thought.

A global synthesis supports the development of new analytical concepts. Take for example the labor movement, human rights, environmental and women's movements. These movements are often studied within the context of a single nation. Even when these movements are studied as international social movements, they are treated separately. In contrast, a global perspective would analyze these different movements as interrelated global social movements. Taking it a step further, a global perspective could link them all together as parts of a larger *anti-systemic movement* that addresses various facets of inequality and unfairness in the global geopolitical system.⁴ I would argue that global perspectives provide a framework for understanding global social movements as related systemic movements. This understanding could in turn support the formation of entirely new levels of *global intersectional solidarity* with the potential for large-scale impacts needed to effect worldwide change.

- **New Solutions to New Problems.** Global perspectives offer new ways of thinking that have the potential to bring new solutions to the new kinds of global-scale problems that our rapidly globalizing world faces. Pressing global issues such as climate change, economic development, regional violence and resource depletion are among the new global-scale issues that call for new ways of thinking and new solutions. Identifying global-scale issues, finding patterns in and connections between global issues, and then proposing new ways of addressing these global issues is one of the

3 Jan Nederveen Pieterse: *What Is Global Studies?*, in: *Globalizations* 10 (2013) 4, 499-514.

4 William G. Martin (ed.): *Making Waves. Worldwide Social Movements, 1750-2005*. Boulder, CO 2008.

core functions of Global Studies.

- **New Solutions to Old Problems.** In some cases global perspectives can provide new ways of understanding problems that have to date been overlooked. For example, global-historical analyses of the international regulatory system indicate that there may be inherent limitations in the modern international treaty system. These limitations hinder the development of strong multilateral institutions, effectively destabilizing the geopolitical order and increasing the tendency toward both regional conflict and violence by non-state actors. Until we break out of the International Relations paradigm, we cannot begin to identify, integrate and analyze global systemic and regulatory issues that operate both above and below the level of the nation-state.⁵ By shaking up the way we think about international issues, global perspectives have the potential to bring new ways of thinking to old and enduring problems, such as immigration and sex trafficking, that are notoriously difficult for nation-states to deal with.
- **Recovering Critical Perspectives.** Global perspectives are important because they have the potential to recover critical voices that are too often pushed out of the discourse of globalization. A focus on the economic processes of globalization can overemphasize the dominant processes of capitalism, global markets, international trade, development and regional trade agreements. A macroeconomic analysis displaces the local and further marginalizes voices from the periphery of the global economy. Global perspectives that encompass the entire local/global continuum necessarily encompass the voices of women, minorities, the unemployed, postcolonial subjects, people in the global south, people living in poverty, immigrants, refugees and other displaced persons, among others.⁶ By definition then, global perspectives include multiple intersectional dimensions of discrimination – gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, health and citizenship. Any global analysis must include marginalized voices, many which bear witness to unfairness in the global system that includes gross inequality, extreme poverty, human rights abuses, exploitation of human and natural resources, environmental degradation, governmental corruption, regionalized violence and genocide. It is only by deliberately making room for these critical voices that Global Studies gains the potential to *recognize* and *engage* with the many facets of the most serious global issues facing the world today.
- **Practical and Policy Applications.** The critical engagement of integrated global perspectives with multifaceted and multilevel global-scale issues is not simply an academic exercise. Global perspec-

5 See "Transnational Topographies of Power" in James Ferguson: *Global Shadows. Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham, NC 2006.

6 Eve Darian-Smith: *Global Studies – Handmaiden of Neoliberalism?*, in: *Globalizations* 12 (2014) 2, in press.

tives are important because they offer unique insights into real world problems. For example, in her book *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, author Anna Tsing analyzes the processes of cross-cultural communication and miscommunication that contribute to deforestation in the rainforests of Indonesia. The actors involved in her study include the indigenous people of the region, relocated peasant farmers, environmental activists, legal and illegal loggers, local politicians, government agencies, international scientists, resource speculators and investors, multinational corporations, and the United Nations funding agencies. The “friction” Tsing describes is the result of their collective interactions, their miscommunications, and all that gets lost in translation. Where the government of Indonesia lifted logging bans, intending to allow limited legal access, it also enabled increasing penetration of illegal logging and property rights violations that it could not monitor. The result was a type of dysfunction at the local and national levels that left the rainforests and indigenous people of Indonesia vulnerable to massive over-exploitation by global markets.

The policy implications of this kind of functional/dysfunctional analysis are many. For example, one could use this approach to argue that governments that lack resources should avoid making their natural resources available to unfettered exploitation. Where local governments lack the resources to monitor, enforce, restrict, and benefit from the extraction processes that are detrimental to the environment and local populations, they should rely on the types of regulations that are easier to enforce such as banning of all drilling, mining, fishing, and hunting in clearly delineated zones until such time as those activities can be properly monitored and controlled.

Studies such as Tsing’s indicate that the insights that result from global perspectives may be most valuable when deployed at the places where the different political, economic, cultural and legal elements of global systems interact. By focusing on processes of exchange, and the interactive processes of communication, translation and interpretation, from region to region and from global to local, global perspectives can look beyond the nation-state to highlight and interrogate the various functions and dysfunctions within larger global systems. And to the degree that geopolitical and economic forces play a part in creating problems such as international immigration and global resource depletion, analyzing larger systems is essential for understanding and acting on these problems.

- **Global Civics and Citizenship.** The field of Global Studies is important because it has the power to transform our students’ understanding of current global issues. Every day our students are confronted with headlines that present the world as a dizzying array of apparently disconnected and chaotic events. Integrated global perspectives encourage students to identify persistent patterns across time and space. For example, students may grapple with the challenge of sustainable economic develop-

ment in the global south. A global analysis of economic development can include regional histories of colonization, multinational development policies, national politics, demographic and environmental changes, local institutions, customs and agricultural practices. In the process students are likely to encounter the power and limitations of the modern development paradigm. In a similar way, students can engage with the multiple historical, economic, geopolitical and cultural factors that shape global issues such as immigration, poverty, regional violence and ethnic conflict. In this way global perspectives offer students a unique and coherent way of understanding ongoing global affairs.

Global perspectives empower our students not just to understand the world but also to act as citizens of the world. From a global perspective the various political, ethnic and religious nationalisms can be understood in the context of deep histories of colonialism and imperialism, and within the context of larger global governance issues such as human rights and global commons. Teaching students to reach beyond nationalism to embrace the wider humanity and global citizenship can transform their fundamental understanding of the individual's role in society and our collective place in the world.

Dealing in Complexity

Recounting the convoluted history of the field of Global Studies and the complexity of multifaceted global problems is intellectually satisfying, but it often doesn't help us communicate beyond our own rather small academic circles. I would like to suggest a different approach, one driven primarily by my immediate need to communicate with a diverse group of students. I teach Global Studies at a research institution where the introductory Global Studies course is very large, approximately 300 or 400 in every class. The course meets multiple general education requirements for students in different disciplines scattered across the humanities, social and natural sciences. The class also typically includes about 50 international students visiting from abroad.

One might think that communicating the convoluted history and conceptual development of the field of Global Studies to such a diverse student audience would be difficult. And it is, or at least it was, until I realized that for the most part my students do not need to hear it because they are already sold on it. To start with they are not burdened by the essentially modernist disciplinary training that scholars typically receive and they are enthusiastic supporters of interdisciplinary scholarship. In fact, many actively seek new interdisciplinary approaches. In addition, they already know that global issues are timely and important. For these students, the interdisciplinary study of global issues seems a reasonable path to understanding the highly integrated world they live in. They show up on the first day of class understanding that the academy needs to develop new approaches to the new kinds of complex global problems that the world faces today. A good many of my students sense that grappling with global issues is the most

direct path to becoming global citizens and making positive change in their world. In short, globalization is not new to them and a field dedicated to understanding it simply makes sense. Their world has always been global.

As distressing as it may be to acknowledge that our field is not really new anymore, the realization can also be liberating and challenging. It is liberating to find that students are already on board with interdisciplinary approaches to global studies and that we do not need to justify what we do. The challenge is to move beyond the globalization debates and try to present Global Studies as a coherent analytical paradigm.⁷ If Global Studies is taken-for-granted by our students, then what does it mean to approach the world from Global Studies perspectives? What are the common approaches that global scholars take? These questions are challenging enough. The greater challenge, however, comes from the fact that I teach Global Studies in a research institution. My students must not only learn to see global perspectives, they must also use them as a coherent analytical framework in their own research on ongoing global events and issues. The difficult question is how should our students go about deploying global perspectives to design and implement a coherent research project?

By happy coincidence teaching research design in Global Studies turns out to be a topic with which I have some experience. In the 1990's I was trained in multiple disciplines, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Since then I have been teaching Global Studies and global research methods at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In addition, during our summer sessions my colleagues and I take students from different disciplines to places such as Mexico and Australia to learn how to do global research in the field. Out of necessity we have developed an approach to teaching global perspectives and methods that allows students to design and implement their own research projects with very limited time and resources. Our field training experience provides evidence that global perspectives can be communicated effectively without making reference to the field's complex history, the inherent difficulty of doing interdisciplinary work, or even the mind-boggling complexity of global issues. In fact, students often develop better projects when we do not dwell on these complexities and proceed as if designing and implementing a global research project is a perfectly normal thing to do.

My approach assumes that teaching students to engage in global research is much the same as teaching them to do research using any other analytical framework. Most global research projects fall within a broad analytical paradigm that includes integrated global perspectives, addresses a range of uniquely global issues or problems, uses defined analytical concepts, and employs a range of accepted methodological approaches. Another way of saying this is that we teach students to understand the world in

⁷ Philip C. McCarty (ed.): *Integrated Perspectives in Global Studies* (revised first edition). San Diego 2013.

ways that encourage certain kinds of questions and analytical approaches. The same could be said for any other field of inquiry.

The examples of global research below draw heavily on the kinds of integrated global perspectives that I have outlined in more detail elsewhere.⁸ The following examples focus on the way these global perspectives are adopted and deployed by students investigating global issues.

- **Fair Trade Research:** My students have questioned whether or not buying “Fair Trade” coffee at a major chain of coffee shops helps coffee growers in the global south. Students are encouraged to consider this question from a variety of perspectives. The issue can be examined as a commodity chain that stretches from the local growers, through wholesale distributors, through regional trade organizations, into the global market, to local retailers, and ultimately a wide array of consumers around the world. A global analysis would assume that people at different points on the commodity chain make sense of the idea of Fair Trade in different ways. Students with limited resources can study the issue of Fair Trade from the global market perspective or from the perspective of any person at any one point on the local/global continuum, or even at multiple points along that continuum. Deploying a multi-site research strategy, they can interview people involved in different aspects of the process, including coffee plantation workers, plantation managers, business owners, regional distributors and consumers. By teaching our students to focus on the places where global issues become tangible in the lives of specific people we encourage our students to study abstract global issues from multiple and often divergent perspectives.
- **Millennium Development Goals:** Many students are interested in economic development, human rights and global governance issues. Combining such wide ranging concepts into a graduate thesis project can be challenging. However, adopting global perspectives makes it possible to turn these issues into a viable research project. For example, students interested in these issues have developed sophisticated research projects that analyze the ways different indigenous groups strategically deploy the UN Millennium Development Goals to influence state and federal government policy. The same strategy can be used to study the way NGOs and civil society organizations use UN legal frameworks for human rights (e.g. CEDAW) as political leverage at the local level. This kind of approach makes it possible for students to explore the ways the various development, rights and governance goals are negotiated by different actors at multiple levels.
- **Immigration Research:** In recent decades developments along the southern border of the United

⁸ Philip C. McCarty: Globalizing Legal History, in: *Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History. Journal of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History* 22 (2014), in press.

States have led to increasing tension with immigrants from Mexico. Until recently, mainstream media have assumed that immigrants from Central and South America are driven almost exclusively by economic factors. The “immigrant problem” in the US has been understood almost exclusively through the lens of nation-to-nation labor migration. Several years ago students interviewing immigrants were among the first to recognize that the push factors driving immigrants from Central and South American regions to North America were changing. They noted that an increasing number of “labor migrants” were actually young people fleeing a new kind of drug violence ravaging not just Mexico, but the entire region. Now, several years on, media have finally made the public aware of increasing waves of unaccompanied children crossing the US’s southern border to escape drug violence.

Global perspectives make it increasingly clear that issues once associated with the Global South are now impacting the United States. Suddenly, the prospect of having UN refugee camps on US soil doesn’t seem as bizarre as it did only a few years ago. Adopting global perspectives can change our understanding of immigration from that of a rational-actor driven by individual economic calculations, to a more sophisticated systemic analysis. Immigration can be understood as a symptom of structural underdevelopment and non-state violence that reaches well beyond the boundaries of any one nation to impact the entire hemisphere.⁹ Recasting voluntary economic immigrants as involuntary political refugees could change their status under international human rights law. This would make the US government’s treatment of immigrants a global ethical and humanitarian issue. It also has the potential to dramatically alter the public debate and future policies about immigration in the US – not insignificant insights for a Master’s student!

The overarching goal of this essay is to help scholars communicate the importance and far-reaching potential of Global Studies to wider audiences including students, faculty, campus administrators and the public. I have argued that in recent years Global Studies has coalesced into a set of integrated perspectives with important analytical implications and practical applications. I have further argued that we can communicate global perspectives as a coherent analytical framework that students can comprehend and deploy in their own research projects. If our students can grasp global perspectives well enough to proceed with sophisticated investigations of complex and ongoing global-scale issues, what is holding us back?

⁹ Mary Kaldor: *New and Old Wars. Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Stanford, CA 1999.

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WHAT IS GLOBAL STUDIES ALL ABOUT?

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KEY WORDS

de- and re-territorialization, global studies, global history, globalization, transregional studies

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Global Studies programs emerged since the mid-1990s as a reaction to the ongoing debate about global connectedness. Globalization became a buzzword in international media and seemed to describe something new.¹ This “discourse of newness” sparked academic interest in social change in many disciplines. Initially, this interest focused very much on economic entanglements and global markets; the question of the cultural effects of globalization followed immediately.² Globalization, as many scholars are convinced, cannot be addressed without bringing together findings from different disciplines.³

Thus, Global Studies emerged as an interdisciplinary field of interest,⁴ often institutionalized in forms of centers where scholars from social sciences, cultural studies and history started to cooperate and bring together their competences to train first cohorts of enthusiastic students who saw the opportunity to enter the labor market with knowledge about global trends. This process took off in some research universities in the US and soon found a fruitful echo in Europe and Asia. From the first contacts between these newly established Global Studies programs onwards, it became clear that they shared a common interest in globalization but also developed different epistemological perspectives. These were related to their positionality towards different political projects dealing with the global condition. While the term globalization generally has a rather positive connotation in the American academic culture (as well as in many European ones), one may find much more critical voices among African scholars, who often even openly reject “globalization” both as a social reality and as an academic object of analysis. It is evident that such reactions are connected to the observation of different effects on individuals and whole societies of what is often described as a neoliberal expansion of market mechanisms, but what is in fact more often even an exercise of asymmetric power relations. However, there is much more than a north-south divide. We may observe similar hesitation to use the term globalization in France, since it is read as undermining the nation state’s sovereignty. Obviously, “globalization” does neither mean the same thing to all these observers, nor do the observations have the same outcome in different parts of the world.

We may even distinguish two completely different layers when it comes to the use of the word “globalization”.⁵ On the one hand, it is used to describe a seemingly objective process of increasing connectedness due to growing flows of people, goods, capital and ideas. On the other hand, it may mean the

1 Olaf Bach: *Die Erfindung der Globalisierung. Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Wandel eines zeitgeschichtlichen Grundbegriffs*. Bamberg 2007 (new edition Frankfurt a.M. 2013).

2 Manfred B. Steger: *Globalization*. Oxford 2009.

3 Roland Robertson/Jan A. Scholte (eds.): *The Encyclopedia of Globalization*. New York 2007; Helmut K. Anheier/Mark Juergensmeyer (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*. Thousand Oaks 2012.

4 Mark Juergensmeyer (ed.): *Thinking Globally. A Global Studies Reader*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2014.

5 Manfred B. Steger: *The Rise of the Global Imaginary. Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror*. Oxford/New York 2009.

competition of different social actors (states, companies, political and social movements, individuals) to adjust political means – old and new – to a new round of such flows, which may require a new outlook due to change in technology, transportation, communication, etc. Globalization in this second understanding is not the quasi-natural process that allows no alternative and forces people to adapt to new circumstances, but it is a conscious political strategy to deal with the challenge of changing connectedness and mobility in the world. Such a strategy never exists alone, but it is confronted with competing strategies – some may use the term globalization to describe their goals, while others use different terminologies. Accordingly, “globalization” can only be observed in the plural and as a game of competition for dominance and even hegemony. To us, it therefore seems helpful to distinguish between the “global condition” and “globalizations”; the first refers to the structural preconditions under which such strategies became and become meaningful, the latter encourages a close analysis of individual and collective reactions to the global condition.

With the term global condition we refer to qualitative change in world history. This change leaves no society around the globe in a state where it is any longer able to disconnect from the integration into global flows without losing a decisive potential for development. Global Studies therefore starts with the assumption that societal development is not only (and from a certain point in time no longer primarily) dependent on internal configurations of this society (as approaches in classical sociology usually presume), but can only be explained by its relationship with external factors and its capacity to face the challenge of such growing integration into world markets, world politics, and global cultural features and ideologies. As authors such as Charles Bright and Michael Geyer⁶ have argued, this moment can be identified in the midst of the 19th century: at this point, for the first time in the history of mankind, new technologies and means of communication enabled a rapid circulation of information and thus made global markets that were increasingly fed by industrialized production possible. At the same time, a revolution in transportation allowed for new migration patterns to emerge.⁷ Against some expectations of the time, the global condition has not led to any linear process of growing integration into one global system. On the contrary, it is the source for ongoing conflict, both within societies and between states.

This has to do with the fact that the global condition has set free an ever accelerating dialectic process of de- and re-territorialization. Territoriality is a socio-spatial formation that emerged relatively late in modern history and has changed at several historical junctures. On the one hand, territoriality replaced historical

⁶ Charles Bright/Michael Geyer: *Globalgeschichte und die Einheit der Welt. Weltgeschichte als Globalgeschichte. Überlegungen zu einer Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Comparativ. Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung* 4 (1994) 5, 13-46; Charles Bright/Michael Geyer: *World History in a Global Age*, in: *American Historical Review* 100 (1995) 4, 1034-1060.

⁷ Jürgen Osterhammel: *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Munich 2009.

configurations that are often described as imperial.⁸ These imperial forms are based on larger transitional zones between neighboring societies without clear-cut borderlines and an interwoven network of rulership, property and loyalty. They regulate the relationship between different subjects, which are unaware of a universalized notion of sovereignty shared by all members of the community. On the other hand, based on the idea that post-territoriality will emerge, it has been argued that territoriality is not the last spatial configuration in history.⁹ Whether one shares the concept of post-territoriality or not (obviously, the transformation implied by the term is not yet completed¹⁰), the discussion about it indicates that territoriality is a historically specific formation that slowly becomes a model for the social organization of the world from the mid-17th century onwards and dominant since the mid-19th century up to the 1970s.¹¹

However, it is necessary to make two reservations. First, territoriality in form of the modern nation state was capable of integrating all alternative spatial configurations into a hierarchical pattern for a certain amount of time. The regional became the sub-national, and border-transcending activities were interpreted as inter-national. Remaining imperial patterns were integrated into new forms of national self-organization of colonial powers in often contradictory ways: strategies of assimilation and integration were eventually complemented by gradually granting citizenship to the colonial populations. Former networks of trade and communication – which were much more instrumental between and for individual places often located within different territories – were integrated during the processes of industrialization and were thus connected to the hinterlands of national economies. Nevertheless, each of these alternative spatial configurations continued to exist and act as a potential for different regimes of spatial organization. Second, while territoriality has been employed as a model in all parts of the world, the emergence of well-functioning nation states cannot be observed everywhere. Noticeably, opposing tendencies have been at work, and their representatives – from inside and from outside – have remained strong enough to weaken the process of a complete territorialization.¹²

While authors who insist that globalization is a very recent phenomenon claim that territorialization and globalization are directly oppositional processes, proponents of global history argue that territorializa-

8 Jane Burbank/Frederick Cooper: *Empires in World History. Power and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ 2010.

9 Arjun Appadurai: Sovereignty without Territoriality. Notes for a Postnational Geography, in: Patricia Yaeger (ed.): *The Geography of Identity. Notes for a Postnational Geography*. Ann Arbor 1996, 40-58.

10 Manuel Castells: *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Vol. 1: *The Rise of the Network Society*; Vol. 2: *The Power of Identity*; Vol. 3: *End of Millennium*. Oxford/Malden 1996-1998.

11 Charles S. Maier: Transformations of Territoriality 1600-2000, in: Gunilla-Friederike Budde/Sebastian Conrad/Oliver Janz (eds.): *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*. Göttingen 2006, 32-55.

12 Saskia Sassen: When Territory Deborders Territoriality, in: *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1 (2013) 1, 21-45.

tion was at times a strategy to regain control over ongoing processes of globalization.¹³ The increasing speed of communication processes, the growing importance of emerging world markets, and the intensification of long-distance migration in the middle of the 19th century prompted the search for new sources of authority and coordination in reaction to this global condition. But this was nothing else than one period among many in a process of de- and re-territorialization¹⁴ – a process that is addressed mainly in new political geography,¹⁵ but not yet completely understood in its entire complexity.

In the economic field, these dialectics are caused by the ambition of economic actors to expand into new markets while, at the same time, protecting their own market against competitors. In politics, they are mainly driven by the aim of political actors to use means of sovereignty for an ongoing territorialization of societies, while being forced to accept that an increasing amount of problems can only be solved through international cooperation and transnational interaction. And in the realm of culture, the global condition resulted in the search for (territorially bounded) identity as well as a growing interest in seemingly foreign elements of culture, which one has to learn about in order to make one's own society more competitive.

When looking back at the history of the last two centuries, we become aware that, on the one hand, there is always a fascinating variety of flows challenging established formats of business, statehood, cultural attitudes, etc.; but on the other hand, we also see ongoing attempts to regain control over these flows. Therefore, neither the fact that nation states emerged and were consolidated simultaneously with global markets¹⁶ and global migration systems,¹⁷ nor the persistence of imperial structures in the same period, come as a surprise. Not only the organization of flows but also their control and regulation underwent permanent innovations. And of course, they have not been restricted to the level of individual states and societies, but also had and have to be up-scaled to levels transcending the national, such as

13 Charles S. Maier: Consigning the 20th Century to History. Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era, in: *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), 807-831; Sebastian Conrad: *Globalisierung und Nation im deutschen Kaiserreich*. Munich 2006.

14 Saskia Sassen: *Das Paradox des Nationalen. Territorium, Autorität und Rechte im globalen Zeitalter*. Frankfurt a.M. 2008.

15 John A. Agnew: The Territorial Trap. The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory, in: *Review of International Political Economy* (1994) 1, 53-80; John A. Agnew: Political Power and Geographical Scale, in: Yale H. Ferguson/R. J. Barry Jones (eds.): *Political Space. Frontiers of Change and Governance in a Globalizing World*. Albany 2002, 115-129; John A. Agnew: Sovereignty Regimes. Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics, in: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95 (2005) 2, 437-461; John A. Agnew: *Globalization and Sovereignty*. Lanham 2009; John A. Agnew: Territory, Politics, Governance, in: *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1 (2013) 1, 1-4; Neil Brenner: Between Fixity and Motion. Accumulation, Territorial Organization and the Historical Geography of Spatial Scales, in: *Environment and Planning D. Society and Space* 16 (1998), 459-481; Neil Brenner: Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies, in: *Theory and Society* 28 (1999), 39-78.

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17 Timothy J. Hatton/Jeffrey G. Williamson: *The Age of Mass Migration. Causes and Economic Impact*. New York et al. 1998; Adam McKeown: Global Migration 1846-1940, in: *Journal of World History* 15 (2004) 2, 155-189.

international agreements, transnational value chains, and new regionalisms. But the level at which control becomes deregulated and flows are regulated anew is to the advantage of certain players and to the disadvantage of others – therefore, it is inevitably a matter of conflict.

In contrast to the continuously repeated expectation that the “world becomes flat”¹⁸ as a result of deterritorializing trends, Global Studies focuses on the dialectics of flows and controls exercised by different actors under the global condition, as well as on the resulting conflicts at all spatial levels. While some scholars in Global Studies focus more on the increasing connectedness as the main characteristic of the world under the global condition, others are more interested in the ways various social actors react to these flows by replacing old forms of regulation by new ones. Both converge in the interest in how social change is increasingly caused by interaction between societies instead of being mainly generated by internal factors.

While many academic disciplines started to investigate transnational and global phenomena, it turned out to be rather difficult to draw convincing theoretical conclusions without challenging some of the traditional features of these disciplines: neither Eurocentric approaches nor the persistence of an interpretation of societies as containers within which social change happens seem to be appropriate. Global Studies relies on a variety of transformations in the traditional disciplines. All these transformations are to some extent a reaction to “globalization” and there is no need for them to converge into something like an institutionalized program of Global Studies. However, the emergence of new political geography (or critical geography) – which appeared first at the margins of classical geography and developed into an increasingly recognized sub-discipline –, the growing popularity and prominence of global history within historiography, the increasing interest in the study of migration, transnationalism and diaspora within sociology, or the interest that interculturality, creolization, cultural transfers, cultural encounters and similar processes find among scholars of cultural studies at large are all parallel phenomena that can be explained, to some extent, by internal dynamics of the disciplines concerned: they are all interested in profiting from the increasing attention globalization has received over the past two decades (growing audiences for publications, growing chances to get funded, or growing opportunities to get heard by society or the political class). But at the same time, these new trends conflict with long-established epistemologies within these disciplines. Some of the methodological quarrels even cross the boundaries of single disciplines, as we can see from the debate about the comparison and analysis of cultural interaction, which became

18 Thomas L. Friedman: *The World Is Flat. The Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century*. New York 2005.

central not only for historians but also in social sciences and Area Studies.¹⁹

Whether or not Global Studies will manage to integrate such trends that transcend the limitations of classical disciplines depends very much on the respective institutional configurations. If it is able to do so, Global Studies has the potential to develop more and more from an interdisciplinary field, where different approaches meet, into a discipline in its own right. As a comparison among universities with successful Global Studies programs demonstrates,²⁰ it is rather easy – especially if there is a fee structure that supports a market oriented university policy – to establish such programs at the undergraduate level, and thus to respond to the increasing demands of the next generation.²¹ While many colleagues from neighboring disciplines, who represent dissenting tendencies within their own departments, felt attracted by the collaborative character of such programs, they were often not willing to follow the process through – an explanation why graduate and PhD-programs in Global Studies were developed much slower than the programs for undergraduates. In Europe, universities followed different logics, mainly due to the coincidence with the so-called Bologna process, a reform process that offered universities incentives when developing new programs, especially when addressing an international audience. The incentive structure that was at work in the Anglo-Saxon system (namely, the search for fee-providing undergraduate programs) had no effect in continental Europe. Here, European and national support systems helped MA- and even PhD-programs to come to the fore.²² These processes are by far not completed yet, but they are quickly institutionalized both at the levels of individual universities and national as well as international associations; they receive growing recognition in society, indicated by high levels of acceptance for Global Studies graduates in the labor market; and they stimulate a lively scholarly debate. Experience at Leipzig University shows that the massive shift in the ways German universities are funded since the mid-1990s (from regional state-funding that was based on the distribution of students among the existing disciplines to increasing proportions of resources for research and teaching from federal and EU sources and based on project funding) created a window of opportunity for new fields to get institutionalized as

19 Michel Espagne: Sur les limites du comparatisme en histoire culturelle, in: *Genèses* (1994) 17, 112-121; Johannes Paulmann: Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer. Zwei Forschungsansätze zur europäischen Geschichte des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* (1998) 267, 649-685; Matthias Middell: Kulturtransfer und Historische Komparatistik. Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis, in: *Comparativ. Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung* 10 (2000) 1, 7-41; Hartmut Kaelble/Jürgen Schriewer (eds.): *Vergleich und Transfer. Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Frankfurt a.M./New York 2003; Michael Werner/Bénédicte Zimmermann: Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity, in: *History and Theory* 45 (2006), 30-50.

20 See the information provided by the Global Studies Consortium, a world-wide association of graduate programs in Global Studies. URL: globalstudiesconsortium.org (13.08.2014).

21 A forerunner in this respect was the University of California at Santa Barbara which saw an increase in its student's intake from six to 600 during the first year in the late 1990s.

22 See the website of the pan-European Global Studies program coordinated by Leipzig University. URLs: www.globalstudies-masters.info and <http://gesi.sozphil.uni-leipzig.de/masters/globalstudies> (13.08.2014).

emerging disciplines: the fact that collaborative efforts by alliances of disciplines have been increasingly supported by such funding makes cross-disciplinary cooperation a win-win-situation for all participating departments.

To study the world's various regions under the global condition implies a strong cooperation between Global Studies and the different Area Studies. The latter introduce the essential linguistic skills and knowledge about regional specificities in social structures and cultural patterns to the investigation of global processes. But what is true for social sciences, cultural studies and historiography applies to Area Studies, too. In order to contribute to the agenda of Global Studies in a meaningful way, it has to be considered that they too have transformed over the past twenty years.²³ The context of the Cold War, during which Area Studies had specialized in the observation of the "other", is no longer a valid point of reference.²⁴ The very concept of areas came into crisis since it was often thought of as a container, similar to what happened to the notion of society in the social sciences and in history. Nowadays, Area Studies appear to develop into transregional studies,²⁵ looking into the interconnectedness of world regions and into the development of regions that were previously not among the classical "areas", like oceans and larger seas as zones of interaction.²⁶

Of particular interest for the research agenda of Global Studies is the spatial turn in Area Studies, which implies that areas or regions are not naturally given but socially constructed and as such the result of conflicts about the application of certain regimes of territorialization to the world.²⁷ These social constructs are as powerful as the invention of nations: they project legacies of former global inequalities upon the current world and shape the ways we are used to seeing it. Postcolonial theory has helped to bring the ideological legacies in conventional Area Studies to the fore and has pushed its internal renewal to an extent that they shift more and more towards transregional studies, sharing many of the characteristics of

23 Neil L. Waters: *Beyond the Area Studies Wars. Toward a New International Studies*. Hanover, NH 2000; Arjun Appadurai: *Globalization and Area Studies. The Future of a False Opposition. The Wertheim Lecture 2000*. Amsterdam 2000; David L. Szanton (ed.): *Politics of Knowledge. Area Studies and the Disciplines*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2004; Birgit Schäbler (ed.): *Area Studies und die Welt. Weltregionen und neue Globalgeschichte*. Vienna 2007; Vincent Houben: *The New Area Studies and Southeast Asian History*. Göttingen 2013; Matthias Middell (ed.): *Self-Reflexive Area Studies*. Leipzig 2013.

24 David C. Engerman: *Know Your Enemy. The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts*. New York/Oxford 2011.

25 Jerry H. Bentley/Renate Bridenthall/Anand A. Yang (eds.): *Interactions. Transregional Perspectives on World History*. Honolulu 2005; Matthias Middell: Area Studies under the Global Condition. Debates on Where to Go with Regional or Area Studies in Germany, in: Matthias Middell (ed.): *Self-Reflexive Area Studies*. Leipzig 2013, 7-57.

26 Jerry H. Bentley/Renate Bridenthall/Kären Wigen (eds.): *Seascapes. Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*. Honolulu 2007.

27 Christian Grataloup: *L'invention des continents. Comment l'Europe a découpé le Monde*. Paris 2009; Association de la revue *Monde(s). Histoire, Espaces, Relations* (ed.): *Les inventions des continents*. Thematic issue of *Monde(s). Histoire, Espaces, Relations* (2013) 3; Jörg Döring/Tristan Thielmann: *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*. Bielefeld 2008; Barney Warf/Santa Arias (eds.): *Spatial Turn. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. London 2009.

Global Studies. The relationship between Area Studies and Global Studies is therefore open for further discussion. Whether or not collaborative features become dominant once again seems to depend very much on local configurations. A methodology of transregional studies (still to be developed in greater detail) will serve as a bridge between those approaches that start from analyzing global trends and those looking into “regional” strategies to cope with the global condition. “Globalizations”, understood as a bundle of political reactions to the challenge of border-transcending flows as well as to the need for innovative forms of getting control over them, are at the very heart of transregional studies.

All in all, Global Studies is at the same time the product of new scholarly interest in the historicity as well as the current features of the world’s development under the global condition. It is a product of trends in many disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, converging in the analysis of the causes and effects of de- and re-territorializing processes. It mobilizes knowledge gained and methods developed across many of these disciplines when opening to the study of global flows and the various attempts to regulate, channel and control them.

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HISTORICIZING GLOBAL STUDIES. ABOUT OLD AND NEW FRONTIERS OF WORLD-MAKING

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KEY WORDS

global studies, globalization, longue durée, scales, agency

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This discussion paper questions the research field of Global Studies from a world-historical point of view. It points to the practical and ideological limits of the foundational concept of globalization (1), it proposes a historical frontier-perspective in order to understand global change (2), it adopts a critical stance towards Global Studies (3), and it introduces a research framework for a critical and inclusive Global Studies project (4). This paper draws heavily on my personal experiences as a (recently converted) world historian and on ongoing debates within the Ghent Center for Global Studies. It is therefore part of an argument under construction, solely reflecting my personal views.

1 Old Frontiers: From Globalization Studies ...

Present-day Global Studies/Global History is sometimes translated as the study/history of globalization. This is not very helpful. We must not forget that globalization is a neologism, popularized in the 1980s as a reference to the accelerated internationalization of the financial sector. In the 1990s, globalization developed into a generalized container term that aimed to unite the historical processes of increasing interaction and interconnection.¹ In this way it is a make-over of the older homogenizing, world-making concepts of civilization and modernization, and thus part of the hegemonic discourse of developmentalism and the expansion of global capitalism.² Two questions/debates still obfuscate the 'global' research field of globalization: What do we actually describe and understand?

The notion of globalization incorporates a scientific concept (what?), an ideological project (why?) and a human process (how?). Consequently, 'globalization and its discontents' has been and still is a scientific battlefield. It is primarily about whether contemporary globalization is, in fact, unique. The debates on the uniqueness and impact of the globalization process are not merely academic but also, and even more so, politically relevant. It is clear that the depiction of globalization as an irreversible social transformation that erodes the power of states and increases the power of companies and individuals has important consequences for social analysis and political action.³ The ideological battle over the interpretation and appreciation of globalization points to the limits of the use of the concept as a scientific tool. Nevertheless, in the past decades, globalization has become a dominant perspective aiming to analyze and explain global change, to understand social shifts in time and space. Actually, the most powerful criticism is that it does neither: it fundamentally misrepresents the historical dimension of time and space. The flood of literature on globalization makes it difficult to discern what 'globalization' as a historical, time-related

1 Justin Rosenberg: *The Follies of Globalisation Theory*. London 2002; Jürgen Osterhammel/Nils P. Petersson: *Globalization. A Short History*. Princeton 2009; Peter N. Stearns: *Globalization in World History*. London/New York 2010.

2 Bruce Mazlish: *Civilization and Its Contents*. Stanford 2004.

3 David Held et al.: *Global Transformations. Politics, Economics and Culture*. Cambridge 1999.

concept actually entails. Globalization is neither a new phenomenon, nor a particularly useful concept in explaining ‘global change’.⁴ The ongoing integration of countries in the global political plain has led scholars to generally agree that globalization is altering the structure of the world polity, though the extent of this change is a matter of intense debate. World historians are more skeptical concerning both the alleged convergence of global power relations, and the role ascribed to globalization therein.⁵ The systemic mechanisms underlying stratification in global capitalism highlight continuity over change, and underlie the view that global power relations are not converging towards a more equal structure. The perceived changes to the global system of power relations are not sudden, and reflect a combination of cycles and trends over the *longue durée*. A world historical paradigm urges scholars to critically reflect on allegations of large-scale structural change, and on the role appointed to globalization.⁶ The differentiation between cyclical rhythms and secular trends entails that alleged changes to the global system of power relations might, in fact, not be as new as is generally perceived.

2 New Frontiers: ... To the Study of Interactions, Scales and Systems

A global perspective strives to capture the big picture, but the big picture is not the entire story. So, how big is this picture? How big is this world? A ‘world’ is not a constant; it is bound by human activity. It refers to social change that can only be understood in specific contexts of space and time. For that reason, no single delineation can be absolute. On the contrary, choosing a space and time perspective (where? when?) is linked to an intrinsic choice (which social change?). Consequently, Global Studies cannot apply exclusive frameworks of space and time, cannot draw fixed boundaries.⁷ We speak of scales. These scales overlap from small to large so they do not exclude each other. We also speak of zones of contact and interaction: frontiers. This is where different social systems come together. Scales and contact zones or frontiers are central concepts of analysis in contemporary world history and Global Studies.

There are many scales both in spatial and chronological perspectives. A global perspective does not depart from a primary scale, one scale from which all others derive. The primary structure of human society is not the national state, nor the family, the village or the global economy. A global view departs from an interaction between the scales on different levels. Every ethnic group is made up of families, and they

4 Frederick Cooper: What Is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian’s Perspective, in: *African Affairs* 100 (2001) 399, 189-213.

5 Kevin O’Rourke/Jeffrey Williamson: *Globalization and History. The Evolution of a Nineteenth Century Atlantic Economy*. Cambridge 2001.

6 Colin Flint/Peter J. Taylor: *Political Geography. World-Economy, Nation-State and Locality*. 6th edition. London 2011; Christopher Chase-Dunn/Bruce Lerro: *Social Change. Globalization from the Stone Age to the Present*. Boulder 2014.

7 Peter Dicken: *Global Shift. Reshaping the Global Economic Map in the 21st Century*. London 2003.

are usually part of a larger culture or civilization. That is why human actions cannot quasi-automatically be derived from a smaller scale (individual decisions) or a larger scale (economic networks or political organization). In other words, every scale measures something else. Human behavior can never be fully explained by macro processes, and these processes are not simply a sum of countless (micro) human decisions. Every scale has autonomy, but only partial autonomy due to its interaction with and dependence on other scales. This requires a diversity of research methods; a world perspective cannot and must not be detached from more focused research with a more limited spatial and chronological view. We distinguish between scales and patterns of space and time. Social change is the result of constant interaction between and within these scales. The interaction between scales generates contact zones or frontiers.⁸ This frontier-perspective leaves space for action, interaction and agency. It shows how social change takes place, how it is incited, and within which limitations. In this way, a Global Studies approach connects the time of the 'event' with that of the 'world', thereby showing the complexity of the human journey. The combined action of place and time creates a constant dynamism, with shifting zones of transition. These frontiers are not defined boundaries or borders. They are constantly shifting zones of contact between different social spaces and social systems. Contact zones originate via the interaction between social systems with their own characteristics. They disappear when the interaction ends or when one system is incorporated by another system. Frontiers can be an external and internal part of a changing system. The delineations between social groups and the extent to which they are included or excluded, also create transition zones. Synergies develop in such spaces, as do reactions. There is room for collaboration, but also for resistance. Frontier zones are permanently reproduced by converging and dialectical processes of homogenization (the reduction of frontiers) and heterogenization (the creation of new frontiers). They originate, shift, and disappear. The study of these interacting scales and frontiers avoids a static micro-approach/macro-approach and defies essentialist categorizations, and fixed or pre-defined zones and social systems. Place and time are historical, dynamic and multilayered.⁹ The frontier-focus in Global Studies requires research into similarities and differences, into connections and systemic changes. External and internal frontier zones play a first-rate role in social change. They build walls as well as bridges. They determine exclusion and inclusion. They enforce new rules but also give space for resistance. The new frontiers also expose the big paradox in the current globalized world. Borders have not disappeared. They have been redefined with global networks of money and communication, but also with new regional identities, national walls against migration and immense zones of economic underdevelopment. This makes our world: connection and interaction, assimilation, conflict and resistance, in a space that is big but not equal.

8 Eric Vanhaute: *World History. An Introduction*. London/New York 2013.

9 Fernand Braudel: *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme, XV-XVIII Siècle*. 3 parts. Paris 1967-1979; Immanuel Wallerstein: *Historical Capitalism, with Capitalist Civilization*. London 1995.

3 Debating Global Studies: Nine Propositions

Debating Global Studies and global history is debating the world of yesterday and the world of today. This means that the research community of Global Studies must become global itself: connecting knowledge from different parts of the world, including insights outside the global academic elites, and adding other world languages to the canon. More than before, the experience of Global Studies must be placed within the experiences of a rapidly changing, ever more interconnected, but also ever more unequal world. By debating its roots, causes and consequences, the academic community is part of this transitional process.¹⁰ Evaluating, deconstructing and reconstructing Global Studies are central tasks. For me, nine personal reflections mark the contours of this debate.

1. A global perspective is about connections, but not only about connections.¹¹ A central *raison-d'être* is found in the deconstruction of state-centred stories. State-centred units of analysis are deconstructed; connection is the main concept that recreates them. New metaphors, such as flows, networks, webs and new epithets such as trans, inter, cum and meta aim to translate the experience of border-crossing interconnections. Connections, however, are created and redefined in a world that is not flat. Inequality defines the direction and the impact of connections. They have to be analyzed within, rather than next to, a systems-perspective of connected and diverging zones. Societal relations configure the world on different levels or scales. In order to understand how they influence each other, we need a scheme of analysis that integrates connections and networks with that of (differing) scales and (overarching) systems.¹²
2. A global perspective needs to have global ambitions. Seeking to pose new questions obviously includes the ambition to formulate new answers. Big questions seek big answers; answers that deal with 'big structures, large processes and huge comparisons',¹³ and that seek for 'cosmopolitan meta-narratives'.¹⁴ Across the wide diversity of themes, perspectives, methods and angles, scholars in Global Studies should build global vocabularies and common concepts that facilitate the debate

10 See amongst others Giovanni Arrighi: *The Long Twentieth Century. Money, Power and the Origins of Our Times*. New York 1994 (updated edition 2010); Robert B. Marks: *The Origins of the Modern World. A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham 2007; Jack Goldstone: *Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History 1500-1850*. New York 2008; Peer Vries: *Escaping poverty. The Origins of Modern Economic Growth*. Vienna 2013.

11 Patrick Manning: *Navigating World History. Historians Create a Global Past*. New York 2003; Peer Vries (ed.): *Global History*, special issue. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 20 (2009) 2 (with contributions from P. Vries, E. Vanhaute, J. Osterhammel, J. Darwin, J.A. Goldstone, D. Christian, H. Floris Cohen); Peter N. Stearns: *World History. The Basics*. London/New York 2011.

12 Eric Vanhaute: *World History. An Introduction*. London/New York 2013.

13 Charles Tilly: *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. New York 1989.

14 Patrick O'Brien: *Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History*, in: *Journal of Global History* 1 (2006), 3-39.

about the general ambitions that unite us.

3. Practical barriers are manifold and often huge. They often dominate discussions within the community of Global Studies scholars, and with good reasons, but at the same time they prevent the exchange of ideas about what connects us rather than what divides us. Most problematic is the need for collaborative and cross-disciplinary research networks; an ambition that clashes with existing disciplinary practices related to funding and evaluation. Dependence on national research foundations and lack of experience with international funding organisations remain serious obstacles to the expansion of Global Studies as a research field. More time and effort has to be invested in the international, co-operative training of graduate students, researchers, and Ph.D. students (including language training), and in communication platforms outside the established institutions and languages. We need more institutional anchoring of Global Studies worldwide.
4. The Global Studies' audience is very diverse; it includes our academic peers, students, the general public, policy-makers, civil society, etc. Our means of communication are just as diverse; they include bestselling authors on the one hand, and reports written by high-profile research groups on the other. Most of the successful literature that is useful for interpreting the world happens to be the outcome of individual projects that were not created with a global perspective per se. Other publications with a clear-cut, global ambition often do not reach the general public. Ever-present questions should be: Who are we writing for? Why should people know this? What is Global Studies good for? What are we missing if we exclude the global dimension? Global Studies is never self-evident. It has to have 'exposure', not only to sell itself but also to keep us awake and alert.
5. Most of us will agree that 21st-century global perspectives have to be 'decentered'. A central paradox in World Studies is that, as a product of the center of modernity, it tries to understand and deconstruct its roots that are situated squarely in civilization history, modernization theory and Eurocentrism. We must, however, avoid new south- or east-centric master narratives, as much as we do not want to fall into the post-modern trap of ever-changing but equal 'truths' and 'universalities'. Decentering the human story does not imply a 'politically correct' flattening of experiences around the world, nor does it need to become a basket of 'alternative', anti-hegemonic local stories and area studies. In order to avoid that it decomposes into a set of separate stories, Global Studies urgently needs to take up the debate about unifying paradigms; about the paradigms that bring us together, rather than those that divide us.
6. The eternal quest for trans-disciplinarity is an important mover in Global Studies. However, deep chasms seem to continue to exist between economic, ecological and more cultural realms. New

efforts to develop a language of multitudes and different universalities risk to split-up knowledge even more. In order to develop common paradigms and common tongues we need to engage with critical social theory more thoroughly. We need open discussions on theoretical frameworks and practical methodologies that can link different, often still separate fields with a global perspective such as globalization, global governance, global ethics and global history.

7. Global Studies create emancipating stories; stories that connect human actions within a broader human-made world. This is not a plea for legitimizing stories, but for a morally charged program. Global Studies does not exchange a national perspective for other exclusive frameworks, either global or sub-national. It does not essentialize new concepts like the non-West, the Global South or the subaltern. It does, however, create an emancipating space for action, interaction or resistance through the idea of contingency. Engagement in Global Studies cannot be translated directly into an ideology or a concrete use value. It is the lubricating oil in the paradigmatic engine that drives Global Studies; paradigms that question the relationship between peoples and powers. Because Global Studies tells us about the complexity of both the past and present worlds, it makes moral claims about the way in which the world functions today and how it could function tomorrow. Since differences and diversity are basic components of the human story, the world perspective shows that understanding and handling differences is an important moral skill. Claims, interpretations and evaluations cannot be made solely within the framework of our own known world; they must reflect the complexity of human history.
8. Global studies not only has to promote a 'transnationalization' of knowledge, it must also deal with a sharp hierarchy in academic knowledge.¹⁵ Unequal worlds of knowledge create an unequal exchange of insights. Any debate about the status and the future of Global Studies needs to face the fundamental question: How do our patterns of knowledge reflect the existing hierarchical systems of knowledge?
9. Within the re-emergence of Global Studies, history strikes back. It integrates time and place, deals with interactions and the hierarchy of scales in the human world. This makes it a barrier against the threat of an undifferentiated multitude of new stories, and advances the levels of ambition, time, place and themes, of questions and answers. Historicizing does not create a new totalizing master-narrative, only a lack of historical knowledge does.

¹⁵ Dominic M. Sachsenmaier: *Global Perspectives on Global History. Theories and Approaches in a Connected World*. New York 2011.

4 Critical Global Studies: The Deconstruction and Construction of World-Making

The main added value of Global Studies is that it provokes new questions and proposes alternative ways of looking at social change by integrating the concepts of communities, comparisons, connections and systems. The new meta-stories reconstruct the diversity of the human experience within the entangled history of the human journey. The opportunities for critical Global Studies have never been better. Not only has our knowledge about human societies in different times and spaces increased, our methodological toolboxes and models of interpretation have been extended, refined and sharpened. We have learned from the insights and failures from introspective national and civilizational histories. We are witnessing new global shifts as the centuries-long hegemony of European and Western societies and theories are increasingly challenged. We have the means for real dialogue using knowledge from outside the West. This urges us to broaden and deepen the paths of Global Studies. A global perspective is by definition highly ambitious: it interrogates processes of 'world-making', of social change in a broad time-space context. It compares, it connects, it incorporates, it systemizes. World-making has been framed in many tools (maps, calendars), concepts (societies, cultures, civilizations) and perspectives (civilization, development, globalization). Global/World Studies/History all deconstruct world-making processes and construct new world-making narratives. That is why the global perspective is inclusive, it includes outer worlds and outer times in our world, it includes 'us' in our narrative.

The Ghent Centre for Global Studies focuses on the different historical and contemporary processes and projects of world-making, embedded within unequal relations of power and knowledge.¹⁶ We do so by giving special attention to the spatial, historical and ethical dimensions of economic, political, social and cultural processes of global change, and to local agency in globalizing processes and world-making projects. We concentrate on three research trajectories: (1) spatializing and historicizing the global: How do we de-scale and re-scale the global, challenging the conventional spatial and temporal dichotomization and hierarchization of the global and the local (progress versus stasis, modernity versus tradition, etc.); (2) localizing the global: How do we situate or ground the global, inquiring into the sites, histories and practices of historical and contemporary processes of global change; (3) decolonizing and 'un'-disciplining the global: How can a critical, reflexive stance help to un-think established Eurocentric and disciplinary concepts, theories and ethics, challenging the homogenizing stories of global change?

¹⁶ The Ghent Centre for Global Studies (GCGS), founded in 2013, is one of five spearheading interdisciplinary research platforms in the Social Sciences and Humanities at Ghent University. The Centre unites geographers, social and political scientists, legal scholars, economists, historians and ethicists, around the critical study of global processes. The GCGS aims to question the boundaries and scales of space and place, focusing on the co-construction of the local and the global. See: <http://www.globalstudies.ugent.be>. Many thanks to Julie Carlier, coordinator of the GCGS, for her valuable feedback.

I argued that the concept of globalization has been both an objective tool to analyze the world and an ideological project to modulate the world. So is every global perspective. That is why debating world-making is central to contemporary Global Studies. Debating these 'worlds', and giving 'meaning' to them in a critical way entails at least four choices: What is the time-space context (outer limits/frontiers)? What are the levels/scales of (inter)action (internal frontiers)? What is the point of view (micro/macro, inside/outside)? And, last but not least, how do we define ourselves (self-reflexivity) within the process of world-making (the power geometry)? The ongoing debate about the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of Global Studies clarifies time and again the interconnected and subjective nature of this burgeoning academic field.

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