Lives Beyond Borders, or: How to Trace Global Biographies, 1880–1950

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In November 1956, in the midst of the Suez and Hungarian crises, the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* published a piece on the role played by Dag Hammarskjöld, the well-known second UN General Secretary, in settling the conflict. The author was full of praise for Hammarskjöld and for his unexpected capacity to shift the balance of power by taking the political lead and setting up the first UN peace-keeping mission. The journalist also introduced the notion of the "cosmopolitician" to describe Hammarskjöld. This term referred to a new sort of internationalist, located somewhere between the well-known national statesman and the cosmopolitan, who influences the course of politics and societies in a world supposedly dominated by veto-powers, and whose next step is difficult to predict because he lacks a distinct image.[1] The articles in this volume seek to demonstrate that the notion of the "cosmopolitician" captures a type of international actor that was particular to the twentieth century; that is, a national citizen who operated beyond the national and thus questioned and redefined established visions of political, social, and cultural agency. However, these articles are not intended as heroic tales recounting the achievements of some individuals and of their efforts to transform societies or the international order. In examining "lives beyond borders," the authors in this volume aim to shed light on a particular social practice that is characterized by the individual capacity to translate limited scopes of action into a political practice adapted

1   Gösta von Uexküll, „Kosmopolitiker Hammarskjöld," *Die Zeit*, November 15, 1956, http://www.zeit.de/1956/46/kosmopolitiker-hammarskjoeld (accessed December 15, 2013).

to the language and rules of emerging transnational scopes of action. These unfolded beyond the culturally constructed entity of the nation and beyond its instituted logics of rule, practice, and representation. The case studies here serve as a potential conduit through which further avenues of research may be opened, avenues centring on the role of individuals in larger struggles over sovereignty and global agenda-setting.

There are admittedly plenty of reasons why the writing of biographies might not seem, at first glance, to be the most thrilling and up-to-date intellectual project. Since the 1960s the biographical genre has been criticized for privileging single persons as key figures who determine 'the course of history' and for narrowing down the understanding of complex historical processes to the role played by particular persons. Recently, though, the genre has witnessed substantial reconfigurations with the arrival of transnational perspectives and global approaches to historiography. As a result, the biographical genre has not only received fresh attention but has also undergone a transformation stemming from historians' increased interest in the importance of mobility and cultural transfers for the emergence of the modern world.[2] By presenting an actor-centred approach and by assuming the position of the (moving) historical subject, the articles assembled in this volume pick up the thread of recent interest in the 'global individual.' They explore the set of meaning-producing practices used by historical actors who tried to make sense of and profit from living outside their country of origin, in-between distant places, or *in situ* (as soon as we take institutions or cities as sites of global entanglements into consideration). The articles' intention is to dive into the very fundamental relationship between the individual and its social environment in a world that is not, or only temporarily, delineated by space, institutions, borders, or by territorially defined identity politics. Furthermore, focusing on the first half of the twentieth century, and thus on a period of intense political turmoil, fragility, and (failed) global challenges, the authors share a vital interest in the profile strategies used by historical actors who were exposed to and actively engaged in the shaping of this turmoil. How were they able to link their individual fate to the paramount reorganisation and / or rupture of politics and society? And how did they benefit from windows of opportunity and initiate slight and sometimes barely visible shifts in established institutional hierarchies and social orders? By paying attention to single historical actors, the articles in this issue pay tribute to the decreasing importance of national histories and explore alternative frames of reference that refer to the way the historical actors made sense of a world that was experienced as both liberating and unsettling.

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2 For an overview see Thomas Etzemüller, *Biographien* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2012); Christian Klein ed., *Handbuch Biographie. Methoden, Traditionen, Theorien* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2009); Volker R. Berghahn and Simone Lässig eds., *Biography Between Structure and Agency. Central European Lives in International Historiography* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).

Lives Beyond Borders: A Survey

For obvious reasons, the mobility of groups and individuals forms part of the history of global circulation and interactions. Global commodity chains, the social, commercial and institutional construction of imperial spaces, or the emergence of colonial disciplines like botany, ethnography, and geography are unthinkable without people travelling from one place to the other. In the modern era, migration history has dealt in large part with mass migrations. The history of the transatlantic slave trade is paradigmatic for one strand of research that deals with forced migration and labour recruitment systems as a crucial component in power struggles and in the formation of competing transregional commodity chains.[3] At the same time, diaspora studies have seized on the cultural impact of forced migration and have pointed to the role African diaspora communities played in the construction of transnational consciousness beyond ethnicity.[4] Mass migrations that took place between the 1830s and the middle of the twentieth century constitute the second main emphasis of migration history. Meanwhile, it has become the consensus that mass mobility was a key feature of globalization processes, in combination with new technologies of transportation and communication that accelerated the movement of people, goods, and information during the nineteenth century. Therefore, sociologists and historians have begun to explore the different facets in the history of the gradual and steady mobilisation of societies.[5] As Dirk Hoerder argues, migration was multi-directional and took place within various migration systems, which covered the globe without being necessarily connected to one another. Migration in the Atlantic economies and within the Black Atlantic were complemented by Russian settlements in Siberia, the Chinese migration to Manchuria, and the contract labour systems around the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific.[6] Many studies have argued convincingly that moving in space does not necessarily entail the spanning of regions or continents. Narrow passages, such as imperial metropoles or port cities, can also serve as focal points for a global history of mobility, as soon as different forms of mobility and regimes of regulating the moving subject become visible and crystallize on site.[7]

3   Kevin O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *The Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001).

4   Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993); J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London: Verso, 2007).

5   For a programmatic outline see John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam eds., *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750–1950* (London: Anthem Press, 2006).

6   Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 306–403; Donna R. Gabaccia and Dirk Hoerder eds., *Connecting Seas and Connected Ocean Rims. Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans and China Seas Migrations from the 1830s to the 1930s* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

7   Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalization in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

While research on mass migration and forced labour systems focuses on large groups and is oftentimes dedicated to quantitative approaches or the carving out of the social and economic patterns underlying mass mobility,[8] a third strand has attended to what has been subsumed under the rubric of global subjects or transnational lives. Unlike research agendas which give priority to the emergence and implementation of technologies to prevent movement, like border control systems or mobility regimes,[9] it is the mobile individual or identifiable groups of migrants who are the pivot of this particular research interest. But why should we position unknown individuals, or persons known only by a select few, as prime examples of the close connection between migration and a culturally, socially, and economically entangled world? In what respect can these professional careers and individual trajectories unfold a broader picture that gives us information about the mechanics of global interdependence, cultural exchange, and the still fundamental relationship between territorially based societies and their integration in global exchange processes? And how can they support the analytical challenge of studying the plurality of actors, places, and decision-making levels that appear when attention is increasingly directed towards the border-crossing or border-ignoring movements of people?

Recent years have witnessed a considerable number of edited volumes and special issues on these questions, which present a manifold and colourful panorama of the travel and network activities of their protagonists.[10] Interestingly, historians of the early modern period and historians of empire and imperialism have made a significant contribution to the shaping of this field of study. In her seminal book, Natalie Zemon Davis portrays the life of a Muslim, born in Granada in the late fifteenth century, who travelled extensively in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Levant and who made his way from a prisoner on a pirate ship to a baptised scholar in the papal court in Rome. Zemon Davis presents Leo Africanus, as he was called, as the embodiment of a transitional, though limited, period of increasing dialogue between the Christian and Muslim worlds in the Mediterranean. In this context, Leo Africanus appears as a cultural broker, and she interprets him as representing paradigmatically a certain zeitgeist that favoured negotia-

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8 Jan and Leo Lucassen, "From Mobility Transition to Comparative Global Migration History," *Journal of Global History* 6/2 (2011): 299–307. Additionally see the complete discussion on the relationship of quantitative versus qualitative approaches to migration history in this issue: "Discussion – Global Migration," *Journal of Global History* 6/2 (2011): 299–344.

9 Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order. Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Andreas Fahrmeir, Oliver Faron, and Patrick Weil eds., *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003); Barbara Lüthi, *"Invading Bodies." Medizin und Immigration in den USA, 1880–1920* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2009); Marylin Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Mens' Countries and the International Challenge of Race Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

10 Bernd Hausberger ed., *Globale Lebensläufe. Menschen als Akteure im weltgeschichtlichen Geschehen* (Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2006); Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Woollacott eds., *Transnational Lives: Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Barbara Lüthi and Miriam Rürup eds., *"Grenzgänge,"* WerkstattGeschichte 53 (2009): 3 (special issue); Glenda Sluga and Julia Horne eds., "Cosmopolitanism: Its Past and Practices," *Journal of World History* 21 (2010): 3 (special issue).

tion and the translation of religious difference.[11] Other studies have seized on the idea of the pioneering role of individuals in situations of cultural contact in the early modern period. Resuming the recent trend of completing the history of cultural transfers with the concept of cultural translation, this emerging field directs attention to particular efforts and outcomes in order to bridge cultural difference, to redraw cultural or symbolic borders, and to deal with changing perceptions of the self and the other.[12] In this context, increasing attention has been paid to the men on the spot – the cultural brokers, the cultural agents, or the go-betweens. Analysing their lives allows us to dig deeper into the complex relationship of structure and agency and to better understand the constant de- and re-stabilization of cultural, social, and political structures.[13] Yet for most studies on translation the actual lives of the cultural brokers are not of paramount importance since interest lies more in how cultures are translated and how regimes of translation impact perceptions of cultural difference.

In comparison, historians of empire and imperialism have gradually discovered lives beyond borders.[14] Emma Rothschild has used the connections between the Scottish Johnstone family and the British, French, Spanish, and Mughal Empires in the eighteenth century as a case study for how the histories of families, groups, or individuals were intertwined with enlightenment politics, economics, and the increasing role of information in the Atlantic economies and the new British Empire in India. She argues that the careers of the family members reflect larger historical processes and thus allow researchers to analyse closely the scope of action for individuals and groups in gradually expanding global interactions.[15] According to Miles Ogborn, the tracing of "global lives" allows the historian to draw nuanced historical geographies for fragile and/or routinized border-crossing connections formed by merchant trading over long distances or by imperial administrators, and thus replaces the much rougher dichotomy of centre and periphery.[16]

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11   Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between the Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

12   Simone Lässig, "Übersetzungen in der Geschichte – Geschichte als Übersetzung? Überlegungen zu einem analytischen Konzept und Forschungsgegenstand für die Geschichtswissenschaft", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38 (2012): 189–216; Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Introduction: The Translational Turn", *Translation Studies* 2/1 (2009): 2–16; Monica Juneja and Margrit Pernau, "Lost in Translation: Transcending Boundaries in Comparative History," *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, eds. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 105–29.

13   Peter Burke, "Translating Knowledge, Translating Cultures," in *Kultureller Austausch. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Frühneuzeitforschung*, ed. Michael North (Cologne: Böhlau, 2009), 69–80; Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, and Kapil Raj eds., *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach, Mass: Science History Publishing, 2009); James H. Merell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: Norton, 1999); Mark Häberlein and Alexander Kneese eds., *Sprachgenzen, Sprachkontakte, kulturelle Vermittler: Kommunikation zwischen Europäern und Außereuropäern (16. bis 20. Jahrhundert)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010).

14   For the Russian and Habsburg Empires cf: Jörn Happel and Rolf Malte eds., "Grenzgänger in Vielvölkerreichen: Grenzziehungen und -überschreitungen in Russland und Österreich-Ungarn (1850–1919)," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 59 (2011): 5 (special issue).

15   Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

16   Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives. Britain and the World, 1550–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 6.

In her study on the integral role of family practices in the maintenance and reproduction of imperial rule over several generations, Elizabeth Buettner continued this line of argumentation and applied it to the nineteenth century by connecting the role of travel and migration cycles to the formation of social, cultural, and racial identities. What is important in this context is her observation that the formation of identity politics within these families was never shaped by a formal emigration and integration into British communities in India nor by full integration into British society. Instead, the self-perception of the empire families developed out of the permanent movement between India and the colonial metropolis. As a consequence, these families "indeed personify the difference, yet simultaneously the inseparability and blurring of boundaries, between Britain's domestic and imperial histories."[17] Likewise, David Lambert and Alan Lester have argued for a strong connection between biography, space, and the making of social order. Tracing the trajectories of what the authors call the imperial careers of individuals who moved across the empire during their life span allows them to grasp the mechanics of imperial rule. While the case studies present thoughtful reflections on the role of gender, class, race, and religion, the individual careers at stake shed light on the constant process of linking imperial places and thus on the overall process of the de- and reintegration of empire.[18] Taking up the relationship of power, space, and mobility, Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton highlight imperial space as a "territorialized mobility."[19] According to Ballantyne and Burton, imperial sites and localities were saturated with contestations of cultural hegemony and struggles over the boundaries of imperial rule that were renegotiated each time travellers, migrants, colonialists, and indigenous groups met. Consequently, to interpret the move beyond national borders merely as an individual or group decision without serious effects on the boundaries between the nation and the empire, the European and the non-European localities, does not go far enough. On the contrary, going beyond borders may be nothing more than an element of imperial politics. In this sense, moving in space transforms into a phenomenon that "itself is ever moving, and those operating on it find themselves routinely adjusting themselves."[20]

All these studies emphasized the close and inextricable entanglement of imperial biographies with the social and political hierarchies of their respective times. In this regard, they argue for the interpretation of individuals as embodiments of a particular aspect in the making or un-making of imperial societies. In so doing, they also question the well-established difference between the national and the imperial space. Sensitizing us to the fragility of order and to its constant state of contest and challenge, the studies suggest

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17 Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2; Tamson Pietsch, "A British Sea: Making Sense of Global Space in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 423–46.

18 David Lambert and Alan Lester, "Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects," in *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–31.

19 Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton eds., *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire,* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 3.

20 Ibid., 3.

a micro-historical perspective on the social and political history of what Antje Flüchter and Susan Richter call "technologies of governance in transcultural encounters."[21]

Contingency, Scale, and the Individual: Reordering the Writing of History

Writing a microhistory of mobile persons in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries raises several questions about the epistemological aims of such an endeavour. While the advance of biographical and cultural approaches in imperial history has been observed critically due to the moderating of force and power asymmetries inherent in these approaches,[22] the genre still provides a range of fundamental methodological challenges essential to all histories that attempt to transgress the nation as the dominant analytical unit. Global history itself is a field of research on the move. Although open for discussion on subjects, periodization, and methods,[23] unity prevails with regard to one central aspect. Research on subjects with a global reach usually builds on the notion that the modern world has been shaped by connections and interactions that not only crossed long distances but also crossed cultural and social borders in a way that cannot be grasped within the bi- or multilateral models that conventional histories on political or economic development propose.[24] This shared focus on global connections and interactions forms the core and the glue of the field. However, by inversing the argument many studies have emphasized the persistence of the nation state as a particular means of controlling the political, social, cultural, and economic life of a certain territory, as an instrument to enable or prevent global flows by opening or closing national borders, or as a certain spatial pattern that is influenced by and has to compete with alternative frames of reference.[25] It is within this particular dialectic of the national, of being an actor in and subject to processes of global integration and fragmentation all at the same time, that the historical actors gain in importance. Putting the historical actors into the centre of our research allows us to use these persons' ideas and actions, according to Bardo Fassbender and Anne

21   Antje Flüchter and Susan Richter eds., *Structures on the Move: Technologies of Governance in Transcultural Encounters,* (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 2012); Angelika Epple, "Globale Mikrogeschichte. Auf dem Weg zu einer Geschichte der Relationen," in *Im Kleinen das Große suchen. Mikrogeschichte in Theorie und Praxis. Hans Haas zum 70. Geburtstag,* eds. Ewald Hiebl and Ernst Langthaler (Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: Studien Verlag, 2012), 37–47; Rebekka Habermas, "Der Kolonialskandal Atakpame – ein Mikrogeschichte des Globalen," *Historische Anthropologie* 17/2 (2009): 295–319.

22   See, for example, Stephen Howe, "Introduction: New Imperial Histories," in *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, ed. Stephen Howe (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 1–20, in particular 7–8.

23   For a recent overview see Sebastian Conrad, *Globalgeschichte. Eine Einführung* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2013); Maxine Berg ed., *Writing the History of the Global: Challenges for the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

24   See, for example, John R. and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History* (New York: Norton, 2003); Emily Rosenberg ed., *A World Connecting, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

25   Isabella Löhr and Roland Wenzlhuemer eds., *The Nation State and Beyond: Governing Globalization Processes in the 19th and Early 20th Century* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2013); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

Peters, as "'keyholes' through which we can see an entire 'room' or historical space."[26] But how can we describe this space of historical practice? In what respect does it differ from a structural and national approach to history, and how can we include the varying access to power, resources, and competences for the persons studied?

The historical space opened up by the transnational lives describes the difficulties of being transnational, the need to create new bonds of solidarity, and its repercussions on the ruling order. Most instructive in this regard are studies on anarchism and anti-colonial movements. In his recent book, Benedict Anderson enquires into the tense relationship between anarchism, militant nationalism, imperialist competition, and transoceanic migration and thus maps the role that individual anarchists played in the formation of anti-colonial movements.[27] Instead of referring to the well-known stereotype of the uprooted cosmopolitan,[28] the creation of new social means of communication and interaction alludes to the political and social impact of persons or groups living and acting within several contexts, to the transformation of these very contexts, including institutions, concepts or structures of (national) governance, and to the understanding of belonging and exclusion. Stephen Greenblatt points out that the "microhistories of 'displaced' things and persons […] represent cultural connections between unexpected times and places." In so doing, they invoke contingency as a principle, though oftentimes underestimated, historical category and present it as major challenge for the prevailing perception of territorially organized societies as something comparatively stable and fixed.[29] On the other hand, focusing on transformation with a preference for biographical evidence over the description of institutions and territorial orders clearly establishes the growing awareness of the fragility of societies and the very fundamental influence that lives beyond borders wield over the way larger social entities are constituted.[30]

Consequently, transnational biographies shed light on the formation and reformation of societies in what Michael Geyer and Charles Bright have called the "global age": The global condition is the paramount horizon within which we live and act, and which continuously and irrevocably creates path dependencies with a global reach.[31] To approach the global condition from the perspective and scope of action of the individual means to prioritise the exception to the rule; it ascribes the power to unravel the (contingent) me-

26   Bardo Fassbender and Anne Peters, "Introduction: Towards a Global History of International Law," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law,* eds. Bardo Fassbender and Anne Peters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 14.

27   Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2007); see also Tanja Bührer, Markus Pohlmann, and Daniel Marc Segesser eds., "Globale Akteue an den Randzonen von Souveränität und Legitimität," *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 23 (2013): 2 (special issue).

28   Nicolas Berg, *Luftmensch. Zur Geschichte einer Metapher* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

29   Stephen Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," in *Cultural Mobility. A Manifesto,* ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16.

30   Rudolf Stichweh, „Die klassische Soziologie des Fremden und die Genese der Disziplin Soziologie," in *Der Fremde. Studien zu Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte,* Rudolf Stichweh (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), 19.

31   Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "World History in a Global Age," *American Historical Review* 97 (1995): 1034–60.

chanics of social transformation in the dialectical interplay of global entanglements and the constitution of the national to the margins. Interpreting the non-compliant individual as an indicator of social change is to reread the relationship between territoriality, human order, and global social processes. In this regard, Madeleine Herren has argued for a re-evaluation of the forms of subjectivity that have been previously marginalized in historical research because of the prevalence of clear-cut categories of the national, the transnational, and the international and a focus on larger groups, structures, or institutions. In lieu of opposing the mobile individual with a settled society, she suggests conceiving of mobility as an end in itself. Consequently, the need to establish new social relationships beyond national solidarity can be seen as a set of elaborate techniques that not only create new transnational spaces of action but also violate existing social norms and transgress the ruling order.[32]

All the papers in this special issue refer to a core issue in studies on cosmopolitanism – that is, the constant rearrangement of political, social, and cultural borders. Our use of the term cosmopolitan does not aim at reinstating the traditional understanding of cosmopolitanism as a description of citizens of the world who are protected by laws of hospitality and by their unalienable rights in a Kantian tradition.[33] Rather, the conceptual approaches related to the term *new cosmopolitanism* allow us to think ahead to the consequences of the spatial turn and the corresponding methodological challenges global history poses to empirical research on border-crossing exchanges.[34] Building on the research of the sociologists Magdalena Nowicka and Gerard Delanty, a cosmopolitan perspective focuses on the problems that cultural difference entails and on the networks that do not correspond any longer with the vision of a territorial fixation of politics, culture, and society. Taking the permanent transgression of purportedly stable entities as a starting point, the acknowledgement of exchange processes as more than an ephemeral moment emphasizes actor-centred approaches and stresses the on-going process of reformulation and the creation of borders, which have been described by Nowicka as "(b)ordering."[35] It includes the moment that sanctions and control are established, but it also copes with the changing rules on a structural and individual level. Continuing with this line of argumentation, Delanty sets out a "cosmopolitan condition of living in translation": With reference to postcolonial theory, he describes the "re-codification of culture" in interaction as the crucial moment when "new meanings and structures" are

32   Madeleine Herren, „Inszenierungen des globalen Subjekts. Vorschläge zur Typologie einer transgressiven Biographie," *Historische Anthropologie* 13/3 (2005): 2; see also Franziska Rogger and Madeleine Herren, *Inszeniertes Leben. Die entzauberte Biographie des Selbstdarstellers Dr. Tomarkin* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2012).

33   See, for example, Carol A. Breckenridge ed., *Cosmopolitanism (*Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

34   Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra eds., *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Gerard Delanty ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies* (London: Routledge, 2012); Maria Rovisco and Magdalena Nowicka eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

35   Magdalena Nowicka, *Transnational Professionals and Their Cosmopolitan Universe* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2006), 224.

created and social and institutional change is initiated.[36] As soon as we conceive of cosmopolitanism not in political or philosophical terms but as a methodological approach "that is not confined to identifiable transnational processes as such, but pervades the very nature of social relations and institutions more generally,"[37] a cosmopolitan perspective becomes a tool to write the history of the global from the perspective of the individual. Crossing borders, therefore, is not necessarily limited to individual mobility but strongly encompasses the transgression of structures and of travelling networks.

As developed in the chapter by Madeleine Herren, this approach goes hand in hand with a historiography that is described as transcultural. Transcultural history introduces a global view of the past by focusing on the processes of border-crossing. Instead of attaching the past to clearly defined entities like eras, territories, nations, classes, and states, transcultural history focuses on the incompatibilities, tensions, and disputes that develop whenever people, objects, concepts, and ideas cross the ruling orders of their respective time. The reaction to crossing borders reflects the acceptance or rejection of entanglements in the respective society. According to this definition, transcultural history is first of all an analytical tool that helps to overcome methodological nationalism even in cases where 'foreign' cultures are not involved.[38]

Bringing cosmopolitanism and transcultural history into the equation, the authors in this issue remodel certain assumptions of transnational and global history. First of all, this approach allows researchers to work closely with the primary sources and helps bypass the often-heard concern that narratives of global interaction are in danger of losing sight of empirical realities. Yet, as Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Wollacott correctly remark, tracing lives beyond the holdings of national archives raises many new practical problems for the historian in how to track down people who moved across and how to deal with multilingual papers spread over several archives on several continents.[39] Second, the papers in this issue combine the spatial dimensions of global history with social mobility and a qualitative analysis of how individuals and societies change themselves in view of border-crossing interrelations. We argue that the lives beyond borders do more than just illuminate social structures; rather, the authors suggest questioning analytical dichotomies of fixity and precariousness in principle. According to Johannes Paulmann, social and political structures are shaped in the interaction of people and ideas with these very structures. Departing from the concept of translocality, as put forward by Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, he argues for understanding translocal empirical realities as the result of interaction, mobility, and circulation.[40] Consequently, the individual

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36 Gerard Delanty, *The Cosmopolitan Imagination: The Renewal of Critical Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 196.

37 Ibid., 5.

38 Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, and Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural History* (Berlin: Springer, 2012).

39 Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Woollacott eds., *Transnational Lives,* 9; for a detailed account of archival pitfalls see Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

40 Johannes Paulmann, „Regionen und Welten. Arenen und Akteure regionaler Weltbeziehungen seit dem 19. Jahrhundert," *Historische Zeitschrift* 296 (2013): 669, 683; Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, „Introduction.

agency – that is, the capacity and autonomy of the individual to act – develops into a core category for the writing of a micro-social history of global entanglements. The articles emphasize the general instability of structures and highlight the contested as well as constant shifting of borders. In so doing, they assert the role of the individual in the mobility of social, cultural, and geographical borders. Stressing the transformative impact of individuals on society, the case studies reach beyond an analytical understanding of the historical individual and present them as more than merely a lens through which features of the interaction between national societies and global forces can be disclosed. Using the scope of action and experiences of particular individuals as a starting point is not a misguided attempt to romanticise the cases presented but a means of giving preference to a nuanced analysis of the effects of connectedness on the making and institutionalisation of social, cultural, and political structures in a global perspective.

Living beyond the Nation: Civil Society, International Organisations, and a Cosmopolitan City

The essays assembled in this issue cover the time period stretching from the late nineteenth century to the late 1940s and, accordingly, the authors build on recent attempts to moderate the perception of the Great War as a break in the historiography. Instead, priority is given to the perspective that interprets the new regimes of border controls, government regulation, and nongovernmental and intergovernmental institutions as a reaction to and principal acknowledgement of the fact that societies were irreversibly connected and that extended instruments were needed to control mobility, economic interdependency and the impact of civil society on global policy issues.[41] By examining the twofold way in which individuals formed part of larger historical settings and processes and, simultaneously, tried to exert influence on broader changes in the formation of public and institutional arenas of governance, the authors in this issue explore the transcultural history of (b)ordering the ruling order on a structural and individual level. In so doing, the case studies pay explicit attention to the double role played by historical actors as the visible as well as invisible forces behind shifting balances of power in urban governance, a globalized public sphere, or in the League of Nations. However, the chapters do not forget to accentuate failure or unintended consequences and to portray the historical individuals as subject to structural limitations and unexpected turns in in-

Translocality: An Approach to Connection and Transfer in Area Studies," in *Translocality: The Study of Globalisation Processes from a Southern Perspective,* eds. Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1–21; for a global history from below see Gopalan Balachandran, "Claiming Histories Beyond Nations: Situating Global History," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 49/2 (2012): 247–72.

41   Christoph Dejung, Niels P. Petersson, "Introduction. Power, Institutions, and Global Markets: Actors, Mechanisms, and Foundations of Worldwide Economic Integration, 1850–1930," in *The Foundations of Worldwide Economic Integration: Power, Institutions, and Global Markets, 1850–1930,* eds. Christoph Dejung and Niels P. Petersson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–17; Adam McKeown, "Global Migration, 1846–1940," *Journal of World History* 15/2 (2004): 155–89, here 172–7; Emily Rosenberg ed., *A World Connecting,* 11–3.

ternational endeavours. The essays all conceptualize lives beyond borders as an analytical perspective that guides historical research on a global past by acknowledging the historical actors as the interface between a global, national, and local frame of reference. Only when we combine these different frames of reference can we depict the social, cultural, and political horizons of the historical actors and assess the degree to which existing political, social, and institutional orders have been contested.

The contributions collected here explore three different aspects of lives beyond borders: civil society movements, a cosmopolitan city, and international organisations. From these angles the authors use their case studies as a magnifying glass through which to examine both the pitfalls and the loopholes that globalized societies offer for individual actors or groups. The chapters offer a precise description of the lives, aims, and interest of the biographies at stake, their (institutional) affiliations, their networks, and their social, political, or professional requirements. The authors thus shine a spotlight on the way in which the journalist William T. Stead, the shady characters in the city of Harbin, and the League of Nations officials profited from opportunities to expand their scope of action beyond the political, social, and cultural norms and rules of their respective time. The topics brought together here mirror some of the core fields that have come to the attention of historians during the last decade: the emergence of a global public sphere due to the expansion of media companies, optimized information technologies, the merging of a professionalized journalism with nongovernmental social movements and their increasing attempts to influence global policy agendas and diplomatic negotiations; the cosmopolitan city of Harbin in Northeast China demonstrates the entanglement of border-crossing with the unambiguity of administrative rules and territorial order; and the governance structures of the League of Nations is an example of the opening of new opportunities for individual actors both to accelerate and redefine career patterns and institutional frameworks. Highlighting both the differences and the similarities in the biographies under investigation, the essays provide a thorough analysis. They manage to present transnational biographies both as exceptions to the rule and as crucial components in the analytical efforts to retrace the shifting of social norms, political arenas, and cultural perceptions of territorial belonging and transcultural entanglement in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

In her contribution, *Cornelia Knab* delves into the life of the well-known British journalist William T. Stead. Although his life and career have been subject to extensive research, the chapter shifts attention to a less considered aspect of his life by unravelling the societal impact of his transnational journalistic and peace-keeping ventures. By explicitly departing from an approach that uses Stead as a lens to uncover multiple aspects of the history of Victorian Britain, *Knab* turns our gaze onto the so-called transgressive dimensions of his biography"; that is, the idea of overstepping social norms to establish a genuinely transnational sphere of influence. Concentrating on Stead's peace work at the two Hague peace conferences in 1899 and 1907, the article argues that Stead developed and applied strategies to conquer a globalized public space, to challenge the legitimation of state-centric diplomatic negotiations, and to install transnational structures of civil

society activism that would have a long-term impact. To classify Stead's transgressive working method, *Knab* suggests connecting his engagement with public campaigning and his use of new technological opportunities to liberalize the transfer of information. However, the chapter carefully avoids blundering into the trap of narrating the constant and unbroken emergence of a global public sphere with Stead as its hero. Instead, *Knab* draws our attention to how firmly Stead's worldview was rooted in notions of the British Empire. In so doing, the article explores Stead's role in the transformation of information politics and diplomacy before World War I and reveals the interplay between transgressing established rules and creating new borderlines by pointing to the relatedness of transnational civil society movements to imperial notions of civilization and moral supremacy.

Frank Grüner, on the other hand, scouts out the transnational biographies of adventurers, criminals, gamblers, and drug dealers and sheds light on lives beyond borders from below. Dealing with the city of Harbin in Northeast China, *Grüner* has chosen a particular case study that places issues of territoriality, legal-administrative spaces, and transnational (criminal) networks within a cultural contact zone. As *Grüner* argues, bordercrossing in Harbin collapsed territorial and social spaces; it was enacted at the edges of several grey zones and played off the special characteristics of a border region, of overlapping regulations, and an ambiguous status of sovereignty – Harbin was a concession area of the Russian-Chinese Eastern Railway and a treaty port – against the local authorities. This complex situation eludes comprehension when explained only within the framework of a criminal history of drug trade, human trafficking, or gambling. *Grüner* conceptualizes the shady characters of Harbin as professional border-crossers who displayed a comprehensive knowledge of languages, of legal-administrative regulations, extraterritorial rights, and had sophisticated cultural competencies in the running of transnational criminal networks. Seen through the eyes of the lives beyond borders, Harbin serves as a case in point for the porosity and (temporary) collapse of analytical and political core categories such as territory, sovereignty, and governance.

Benjamin Auberer presents the biography of a New Zealand second-tier civil servant at the League of Nations to introduce the reader to the transformations that took place in diplomacy and international organisations during the interwar period. The characterless and career-minded official, Joseph Vivian Wilson, gains profile in his enduring attempts to climb a diplomatic career ladder foreclosed to him because he originated from a British dominion. Although Wilson concluded his professional career as the first ambassador of New Zealand in Paris in the 1950s, the instructive moments of his professional career can be found in his work as a League official behind the scenes where he constantly advanced his competencies and thus rebalanced the politically contested relationship between ranks, influence, and citizenship within the League Secretariat. Consequently, *Auberer* makes us aware of the individual capacity not only to escape the well-established social and political path-dependencies in an elitist professional environment but also of the particular scopes of action that emerged in a time that saw the development of competing interpretations of how to organize and administrate international politics.

Continuing in this line of enquiry, *Madeleine Herren* opens up the field by presenting international organisations as a starting point from which to identify patterns of what she calls "the traveling stranger." *Herren* provides the reader with a thorough methodological reflection on the adequate analytical tools needed to grasp lives beyond borders beyond clear-cut and pejorative categories of the Other, the outsider, or the stateless person. Instead, the article probes current research on new cosmopolitanism and transcultural history, which concentrates on the transgression of social, cultural, and political orders. *Herren* points us to the methodological presumptions of setting borders and develops an analytical grid that emphasizes incompatibilities, tensions, and disputes. The chapter directs our attention to both the volatility of transcultural entanglements and the instability of the historically well-consolidated appearance of the national. As *Herren* argues, this approach allows for a crystallization of different categories of border-crossing lives – the elite cosmopolitans, experts creating global topics, cumulative internationalists, and global illusionists. By suggesting this typology, the chapter avoids the stereotype of internationalism as something linked with pacifist attitudes but includes those who (mis-)used the opportunity presented by being outside of national or territorial control.

The example of the League of Nations officials shows us two essential components of border-crossing activities that run through the contributions and hold them together. Border-crossing entanglements followed a political and social rationale of their own, which took shape in the overlapping and concurrence of competing visions, arenas, and means to challenge, redefine, and change the ruling order. Therefore, as the articles reveal, it is less the single biography that can explain the increasing complexity of global agendas, but rather the multiplication of institutional, informal or non-governmental venues with a transnational reach and social and cultural tensions about how to represent difference, belonging and order. The chapters point out the similarities between groups and actors that obviously did not live in same time period and did not belong to the same region or social group. Yet, the examples highlight the structural correlations between individual agency and the rebalancing of order and thus direct our attention to a type of historical actor in the second tier that has escaped scholarly attention until now.

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