

GLOBAL HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY



EDITED BY

Julian Go and George Lawson



"*Global Historical Sociology* is a virtuoso guide to bringing 'the global in' to the understanding of political and social history.

This collection is a compelling, agenda-setting statement for both historical sociology and international relations. The editors, Julian Go and George Lawson, advance a persuasive theoretical case for this shared project, while the individual contributors dive more deeply into questions of empire, capitalism, and global modernity in chapters that are exemplars of historically-engaged social analysis."

Elisabeth S. Clemens, William Rainey Harper Professor of Sociology,
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This is a new agenda, not to be missed."

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Sociology at McGill University, Montreal

"In *Global Historical Sociology*, Go and Lawson have brought together in mutual conversation an impressive array of historical sociologists and International Relations scholars, all advancing the shared cause of global history. There is no doubt in my mind that this will become the go-to text for all IR scholars interested in historical sociology (and vice versa) for many years to come."

Ayşe Zarakol, Reader in International Relations, Emmanuel College,
University of Cambridge

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Edited by

Julian Go

Boston University

George Lawson

London School of Economics and Political Science



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Global Historical Sociology

Bringing together historical sociologists from Sociology and International Relations, this collection lays out the international, transnational, and global dimensions of social change. It reveals the shortcomings of existing scholarship and argues for a deepening of the “third wave” of historical sociology through a concerted treatment of transnational and global dynamics as they unfold in, and through, time. The volume combines theoretical interventions with in-depth case studies. Each chapter moves beyond binaries of “internalism” and “externalism,” offering a relational approach to a particular thematic: the rise of the West, the colonial construction of sexuality, the imperial origins of state formation, the global origins of modern economic theory, the international features of revolutionary struggles, and more. By bringing this sensibility to bear on a wide range of issue-areas, the volume lays out the promise of a truly global historical sociology.

Julian Go is Professor of Sociology at Boston University. He is author of *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning* (2008) and *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

George Lawson is Associate Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science. His books include *The Global Transformation* with Barry Buzan (Cambridge University Press, 2015), *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics*, edited with Chris Armbruster and Michael Cox (Cambridge University Press, 2010), and *Negotiated Revolutions: The Czech Republic, South Africa and Chile* (2005).

Contributors

TARAK BARKAWI is Reader in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He studies warfare between the West and the Non-European world, past and present. He is author most recently of *Soldiers of Empire*.

EMILY ERIKSON is Associate Professor of Sociology at Yale University working on the role of social networks in historical and cultural change. She is the author of *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company* (2014), winner of the Allan Sharlin Memorial Award, the Ralph Gomory Prize, the Gaddis Smith International Book Prize, and the James Coleman Award for Outstanding Publication.

JULIAN GO is Professor of Sociology and Faculty Affiliate in Asian Studies and New England and American Studies at Boston University. His books include *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory* (2016), *Fielding Transnationalism*, coedited with Monika Krause (2016), and *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

JOHN M. HOBSON is Professor of Politics and International Relations at the University of Sheffield. He coedits (with L. H. M. Ling) the Rowman & Littlefield international book series *Global Dialogues: Developing non-Eurocentric IR and IPE*, and he is a fellow of the British Academy. His most recent book is *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

HO-FUNG HUNG is the Henry M. and Elizabeth P. Wiesenfeld Associate Professor of Political Economy at the Johns Hopkins University. He researches global political economy, protest, and nationalism. He is the author of *Protest with Chinese Characteristics: Demonstrations, Riots, and Petitions in the Mid-Qing Dynasty* (2011) and *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World* (2016).

GEORGE LAWSON is Associate Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the author of *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations* (with Barry Buzan) (Cambridge University Press, 2015), and is currently working on a monograph entitled *Anatomies of Revolution*.

ZINE MAGUBANE is Associate Professor of Sociology and African Diaspora Studies at Boston College. She has been published in *Signs*, *Gender and Society*, and *Cultural Sociology*.

MATTHEW NORTON is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Oregon. His work, focusing on cultural theory and the intersection of culture and state power, has appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology*, *Sociological Theory*, and *Theory and Society*. He is currently working on a book about the destruction of piracy in the early modern English empire.

VRUSHALI PATIL is Associate Professor of Sociology at Florida International University. She works on racialized gender and sexuality with a focus on transnational, postcolonial, and decolonial approaches to gender and sexuality. She is currently working on a book entitled *Transnationalizing Sex, Gender and Sexuality: Towards a Sociology of Webbed Connectivities*.

ANDREW PHILLIPS is Associate Professor of International Relations and Strategy in the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland. His publications include *War, Religion and Empire – The Transformation of International Orders* (Cambridge University Press, 2011) and (with J.C. Sharman) *International Order in Diversity: War, Trade and Rule in the Indian Ocean* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

ROBBIE SHILLIAM is Professor of International Relations at Queen Mary University of London. He is coeditor of *Meanings of Bandung: Postcolonial Orders and Decolonial Visions* (2016) and author of *The Black Pacific: Anticolonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections* (2015).

ANDREW ZIMMERMAN is Professor of History at George Washington University. He is the author of *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (2001) and *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (2010). He is currently writing a history of the American Civil War as a transnational revolution against slave labor and wage labor.

Acknowledgments

All edited books are collective endeavors, but some are more collective than others. This volume is of the latter variety. The impetus for the project began in late 2011 when Gurminder Bhambra and George Lawson talked about bringing together sociologists and international relations (IR) specialists to consider the viability of constructing a *global* historical sociology (GHS). While Bhambra made the point that, although historical sociological work in disciplinary sociology had, to a considerable extent, embraced work on race and, to a lesser extent, imperialism and colonialism, it had not made a concerted move to tackle the ways in which these issues were constituted by global formations and connected histories. For his part, Lawson thought that historical sociological work in IR had, for all its productivity, lost track of its specific contribution and, at the same time, not found a way to engage those working outside the discipline. Perhaps these two constituencies could be brought together and a common enterprise forged?

Bhambra and Lawson organized a gathering of sociologists and IR scholars at the London School Economics in April 2012 to consider these issues. Participants were asked to prepare a few remarks in response to the question: “what is global historical sociology?”, and a further set of remarks on what such an enterprise entailed for their specialist areas of interest: war, colonialism, capitalism, race, revolution, and more. The liveliness of the discussion made clear that the project was onto something, even if it wasn’t clear exactly what that something was. The theoretical and empirical bandwidth occupied by global historical sociology seemed extremely wide. And it was evident that, despite speaking the same basic language in terms of subfield, disciplinary differences worked to manufacture distinct dialects. If participants could understand each other, they were not always able to fully tune into their colleague’s regional accents. We offer our considerable thanks to the GHS pioneers who worked so hard to construct a historical sociological Esperanto: Tarak Barkawi, Manali Desai, John Hobson, Raka Ray, Justin

Rosenberg, Robbie Shilliam, and George Steinmetz. Without their initial efforts, this project would not have got very far.

Following the LSE meeting, Julian Go, who was also present at the event, joined Bhambra and Lawson in co-convening the wider project. Bhambra, Go, and Lawson wrote a manifesto summarizing the discussions and suggesting a range of positions around which GHS could be oriented. Follow-up meetings were held at the Social Science History Association (SSHA) conference in Vancouver in November 2012 and at the International Studies Association (ISA) convention in San Francisco in April 2013. These meetings were sufficiently productive – and sufficiently well attended – to warrant a second gathering at LSE in October 2013. This meeting had two objectives: first, tightening GHS as a field of enquiry; and second, workshopping papers that could – eventually – form part of an edited volume. Once again, the meeting was marked by highly stimulating discussions. The project's core premises came more sharply into view and the disciplinary differences between participants began to erode, not to the extent that there was a single language, but something loosely approximating this. In addition to those who had been present at the initial LSE gathering in 2012, we were joined by a range of new colleagues at the SSHA, ISA, and LSE meetings, all of whom we would like to thank for the productive role they played in forging the project's agenda: Julia Adams, Gennaro Ascione, Emily Erikson, Jack Goldstone, Ho-fung Hung, Pei-Chia Lan, Nawal Mustafa, Daniel Neep, Dan Nexon, Matt Norton, Vrushali Patil, and Isaac Reed.

The last stage of the project saw Go and Lawson assume coeditorship as Bhambra pursued other projects. Of all the people involved in the project who do not form part of this volume, Gurminder deserves the greatest thanks. Much of the intellectual stimulus that lies behind this volume come from Gurminder, something made clear by the many citations her work receives in the chapters that follow. We hope that Gurminder enjoys the book and that it fulfills the goals she helped to establish for the project.

The final flurry of activities associated with the book included meetings at the 2014 SSHA meeting in Toronto and the 2015 ISA convention in New Orleans. Once again, we offer our thanks to participants at these events. Those who have not already been mentioned include: Diego Holstein, Diana Kim, Jean Lachapelle, Andrew Phillips, Meera Sabaratnam, Jason Sharman, Ann Tickner, Colin Wight, and Ayşe Zarakol. Sandwiched between these events was a meeting of the book's final contributors at Yale University in October 2014. Joining us for the first time at this workshop were Zine Magubane and Andrew Phillips. Each paper was given a forensic examination by a group of outstanding

discussants: Santhi Hejeebu, Wei Luo, Kristin Plys, Sadia Saeed, Alexandre White, Nick Wilson, and Jonathan Wyrzten. We offer special thanks to Julia Adams, who not only secured funding for the event and superbly curated it, but who has provided consistent intellectual leadership throughout the project.

By the time of the Yale workshop, the volume had taken coherent shape around a (more or less) unified language, analytic, and sensibility. During 2015, follow-up events at the British International Studies Association (BISA) conference in London and the ISA North East meeting in Providence deepened this coherence. Meticulous work by Will Rooke in the final stages of the project underlined it. Jimmy Lou was professionalism personified in putting together the index. Our thanks to Will and Jimmy, as well as the participants at the many events related to the book, whether they've been thanked above, or whether they participated from the floor. We have presented work linked to this project to well over a thousand people. Many of their questions, comments and provocations form a central part of what follows. We cannot thank them all by name (even if we could remember them all), but they are a major reason for why the project developed into a coherent volume. It has been collectively constituted from the beginning. And it is much richer for the many forms of public scrutiny that it has been through.

John Haslam at Cambridge University Press showed interest in the project from an early stage and was extremely patient with us as the project developed. John also organized two extraordinary reviews of the manuscript, both of which were positive, yet each of which raised pertinent queries that added up to over 8,000 words of comments. We very much hope this level of constructive engagement is an indication of the depth of thought that the book will provoke. We would like to thank both John and the two reviewers for improving the volume considerably. We also thank the contributors for responding so constructively to the reviews. The final manuscript is much improved for this intellectual back-and-forth. Indeed, this kind of back-and-forth has characterized the project from the beginning. Our goal was – and is – to produce a volume that is as an opening rather than any kind of final word. For funding our endeavors along the way, we would like to thank Boston University's College of Arts and Sciences, the International Relations Department at LSE, and the Kempf Fund of Yale University.

Our final thanks go to our respective families. The length of time this project has taken (and taken up) has seen the arrival of two new members of the Lawson clan. It has also seen Jake, George's first son, mature from precocious child to equally precocious teenager. George offers his thanks to all three children – Kasper, Xavi, and Jake – for putting up with his

absent-mindedness (and notoriously “selective hearing”) while he considered just how GHS could and should be put to work. But George reserves his greatest thanks to his wife, Kirsten, who now knows more about global historical sociology than she ever expected to. Or wanted to. Or had any interest in. Julian also thanks his family: his son, Oliver, who was delightful company during some of Julian’s trips to the meetings, and his wife Emily who, as ever, not only provided personal and moral support but also frequent intellectual exchange. Our families are unlikely to read this book. But we think of them as honorary global historical sociologists anyway.

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Introduction: For a Global Historical Sociology

Julian Go and George Lawson

Why Global Historical Sociology?¹

Would it be an exaggeration to claim that there has been a “global” revolution in the social sciences? Witness, in disciplinary history, the rise of “global history” and “transnational history.”² Ever since Akira Iriye’s (1989) call for historians “to search for historical themes and conceptions that are meaningful across national boundaries,” historians have institutionalized transnational history as a prominent subfield, one that can be seen in journals, books, conferences, course offerings, and job lines. Witness, too, the proliferation of “globalization” studies (e.g., Castells 1996; Held et al. 1999; Beck 2006; Beck 2012) and the attempt to institutionalize a “global sociology” (Burawoy 2000; Burawoy 2008), moves intended to explore new cosmopolitan identities and trace social processes at transnational and global scales (also see Wallerstein 2001). Consider finally the discipline of International Relations (IR). For much of its disciplinary history, IR has studied the workings of a small part of the world (the West) through a relatively sparse analytical lens (the “states under anarchy” problematique). In recent years, IR scholarship has begun to make clear the ways in which the emergence of the discipline

¹ For helpful comments and suggestions on this Introduction, we thank the volume contributors and especially Julia Adams, who also helped secure some of the funding for our meeting at Yale. We also thank two anonymous reviewers for CUP, as well as Colin Beck, Craig Calhoun, Elisabeth Clemens, Jack Goldstone, Janice Bially Mattern, Gagan Sood, Nicholas Wilson, and commentators and audiences at sessions on the paper at the 2014 Social Science History Association meetings (Chicago), the 2015 International Studies Association meetings (New Orleans), the 2015 British International Studies Association Meetings (London), and the 2015 Northeast Regional ISA meetings (Providence). For funding the meetings at LSE and Yale, we thank Boston University’s College of Arts & Sciences, the International Relations Department at the LSE, and the Kempf Fund of Yale University.

² Although distinctions can be drawn between these two enterprises (e.g., Zimmerman 2013), we see the turn to global history and transnational history as representing a single movement in that both situate themselves in opposition to “internalism” and “methodological nationalism.” These terms are defined below.

was intimately associated with issues of colonial management (e.g., Vitalis 2010, 2016), the diverse range of politics that constitute the international system (e.g., Phillips and Sharman 2015), and the myriad of social forces, from market exchanges to cultural flows, that make up “the international” (e.g., Hobson, Lawson and Rosenberg 2010). The academy’s most overtly “international” discipline is finally going “global” (Tickner and Blaney eds. 2012).

The essays in this collection join and advance this revolution. But they do so from a particular standpoint: “Global Historical Sociology” (GHS). By “Global Historical Sociology” we mean the study of two interrelated dynamics: first, the *transnational* and *global* dynamics that enable the emergence, reproduction, and breakdown of social orders whether these orders are situated at the subnational, national, or global scales;³ and second, the *historical* emergence, reproduction, and breakdown of transnational and global social forms. The first of these dynamics provides the “global” in our enquiry; the second constitutes the “historical sociology.” While historical sociology is a long-established interdisciplinary field concerned with incorporating temporality in the analysis of social processes, we conceive global historical sociology as the study of the *transnational* and *global* features of these processes. Such features vary widely, ranging from the global dynamics of capitalist accumulation to the role of transnational ideologies and social movements in fostering change within and across state borders – to many things besides. With this emphasis on the transnational and global, Global Historical Sociology as an intellectual project emerges from the subfield of historical sociology even as it seeks to extend it.

The motivation behind our attempt to advance Global Historical Sociology is clear: it is, quite simply, *to keep up with the world*.⁴ After decades (or more) of globalization, and centuries of imperial formations before that, we are far from a world – if we ever inhabited one – when social science could attend dutifully to issues only “at home”; that is, in the sequestered sites of our particular territories. It took a special form of parochial vanity to imagine that historical development arose from the endogenous characteristics of a handful of powerful polities. Recent historical work has done

³ Once again, although transnational and global are not synonyms, we treat them as part of a single field of enquiry in that they are both concerned with connections that do not take place solely within states. The same is true for the term “international.” In broad terms, “international” refers to relations between social orders (which are not limited to nation-states), “transnational” means transboundary relations across social sites, and “global” is an encompassing term that denotes interconnectedness and spatially expansive social relations.

⁴ It is telling that, according to figures from the American Sociological Association, job lines in “comparative-historical sociology” are few and far between, while job lines in “transnational and global” areas are rising – and fast.