

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.

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-16664-6 – Global Historical Sociology
Edited by Julian Go, George Lawson
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107166646
DOI: 10.1017/9781316711248

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First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-16664-6 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-316-61769-4 Paperback

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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

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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

Acknowledgments

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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

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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.