Introduction

The nineteenth century is generally regarded as the century of the nation state. Inspired by the example of the *Grande Nation* (and the challenge it presented), western Europe, so the grand narrative of modernisation runs, transformed itself from a patchwork of minor states into a landscape of nations. 'Blood and iron' (Bismarck), internal nation-building and the 'invention of traditions' turned highly varied political units into imagined communities that all saw themselves as nations: large and small ones, late developers, oppressed and incomplete ones. During the nineteenth century this model was exported around the world, and from then onward, national states were seen as the only possible subjects of international law, the only political actors. In historiography, too, this has long remained the privileged perspective. The past was usually narrated in the form of national histories.

But at the same time, the late nineteenth century was an era of worldwide interaction and exchange. This fact is returning to historical consciousness only now, in the context of the current wave of globalisation. Individual nation states entered into relationships with each other to an increasing extent. International relations and diplomacy emerged as the incarnation of politics. States were economically interlinked to a high degree, as symbolised in the World Exhibitions; in many ways, this level of interlinkage was only reattained in the 1970s. Trade in consumer goods increased to a previously unknown degree and influenced reading habits, tastes in art and trends in fashion. Many of the main aspects of the current globalisation process were already in existence in 1900.

The present volume is a contribution to the attempt to return attention to some of the global dimensions of German history. German history did not unfold solely within the boundaries of the nation state. Nor did the world remain outside; external events had far-reaching effects on German society. The Kaiserreich formed an integral part of the political, economic and cultural interrelationships that characterised the world before 1914. Pre-First World War German history is and has always been part of the history of the process of globalisation around 1900.

The chapters below examine the question of how the dominance of perspectives based on the nation state can be reconciled with the formation of a globalised world. After all, contemporaries were well aware of the global context in which German society was located. Terms such as 'world politics' (*Weltpolitik*) and 'world economy' became ubiquitous, and there was intense debate about emigration laws, protectionism, Americanisation and the 'yellow peril'; all this is evidence of the global consciousness that emerged around 1900. If we take a closer look at how contemporaries interpreted this globalising process, it is striking to see that they typically saw it more or less as a natural stage of development. First, it was generally assumed, nations developed into modern nation states; then they would gradually enter into contact with each other, begin to become international, and start to engage in global trade and world politics. 'The family became the clan [*Stamm*]; a combination of clans became the state and the nation', August Bebel assured the public, 'and finally, the close links between nations developed into internationality. That is the historical process.'[1] First the nation, then the interconnections: we may call this the paradigm of consecutivity, a model of stages of global development.

But is this idea not a 'national inversion', an attempt to make transnational and systemic contexts comprehensible and, where possible, controllable?[2] Nationalisation and globalisation, I will argue, are

[1] Bebel, *Commune*, p. 29. This viewpoint was by no means limited to Germany. 'The Nineteenth Century was the Century of Nationalism', the British journalist W. T. Stead declared in 1907, 'the Twentieth Century is the Century of Internationalism' (quoted in Herren, 'Internationalism', p. 121).

[2] I have borrowed the term 'national inversion' from Hill, *National History*, Chapter 1.

not two stages of a consecutive process of development, but rather were dependent on each other. This book suggests that the dynamics of nationalisation and nationalism must always be understood as, in part, a product of the globalisation of the turn-of-the-century era and not merely as its prerequisite. This idea aims to complement prior research on the nation, which focused mainly on the internal history of the Kaiserreich. The present volume argues, in contrast, that the transformation of the idea of the nation and of nationalism in the Wilhelmine era can also be seen as an effect of global interlinkages: as a partly exogenous formation of the nation in the context of globalisation.[3]

This link will be investigated using the example of the debates about labour mobility and the effects these debates had on the idea of the German nation. The explorations below start from the observation that transnational interlinkages of work reached a peak at around 1900, while, paradoxically, the idea of the specific national character of 'German work' became most widely held during the same period. The trope of 'German work' (*deutsche Arbeit*) emerged as an important element of the way the nation was conceived during the Wilhelmine period.[4] It continued to be of importance, in different guises, in the decades to follow. The concept played a fatal role in the ideology of National Socialism and the latter's 'soldiers of labour'. The term was revisited during the years of the West German 'economic miracle', when work functioned as a surrogate for coming to terms with

[3] The chapters that follow thus also contribute to the attempt to elucidate the relationship between globalisation and modernisation. Globalisation is often understood as a continuation or extension of modernisation, a modernisation that includes the process of nationalisation. This viewpoint picks up on the contemporary idea of 'world politics' (*Weltpolitik*), which was seen in industrial circles as linked to the (desirable) further modernisation of German society. In contrast, the process of globalisation is here viewed as the constitutive framework within which strategies and practices of modernisation and nationalisation can be explained – and, it is suggested, which formed the framework within which it was determined what should be regarded as modern and national. For a discussion of these two perspectives see Smith, 'Weltpolitik'.

[4] Other subjects could also be used to exemplify this tension between the universal and the particular – for example, the idea of 'German science'; see Jessen and Vogel (eds.), *Wissenschaft und Nation*, which also gives further references.

the recent past (Hannah Arendt has spoken of a 'weapon against the claims made by reality'), and when the term 'German quality work' (*deutsche Wertarbeit*) had its second coming; it was also reincarnated in the East German moniker of a 'country of work' (*Staat der Arbeit*).

How can we explain the fact that the idea of the ahistoric, unchangeable and nationally specific character of 'German work' became established at a moment in history that was characterised by mobility, exchange and circulation? In this book I aim to unravel this paradox. Globalisation contributed, around 1900, to the popularity of ideas about distinct national characteristics because of and not in spite of the fact that it was creating upheavals in the political, economic and discursive orders of this world of nations. Instead of dissolving national borders, mass mobility in the late nineteenth century could 'actually help to explain the intensity of nationalist movements and the focus of national states on ideological nation-building in the years prior to World War I', as Donna Gabaccia claims.[5] The search for particularity and for the elements of an unchangeable national identity, I suggest below, was not a threatened relic of a pre-global world order, but rather an actual effect of processes of cross-border circulation.

This perspective is supported by new approaches taken in the theoretical literature on globalisation. For some time, the sociological theory of globalisation assumed that increases in exchange, in interrelationships and in circulation would lead to a gradual homogenisation of the world. During the nineteenth century, European expansion across the globe was accompanied by optimistic expectations of a common, assimilated (in the contemporary rhetoric: 'civilised') world, that were supported by the euphoria of free-trade propaganda, or later by the visions of the League of Nations. This hope, or rather fear, which still pervades current discourse about the 'Coca-colonization' of the world and the development of a 'McWorld',[6] has given way, over recent years, to a more differentiated understanding of global interlinkages. The consequences of interactions include not only homogenisation and assimilation (under asymmetric conditions)

[5] Gabaccia, 'Juggling Jargons', p. 54.
[6] An example of this point of view can be found in Barber, *Jihad*.

but also delimitation and fragmentation. As such, the process of globalisation was characterised not only by cross-border interactions; it also contributed to the creation and consolidation of these borders.[7] The increase in transnational interrelationships can thus be seen as one of the most important factors contributing to the consolidation of national categories. As Craig Calhoun phrases it: 'No era placed greater emphasis on the autonomy of the nation state or the capacity of the idea of nation to define large-scale collective identities. But it did so precisely when and partly because the world was becoming pronouncedly international.'[8]

Any transnational history of globalisation has to investigate a complex web of 'shared histories' (*geteilte Geschichten*; Shalina Randeria) of the modern era. The German term *geteilte Geschichten* combines two opposing connotations in English, both 'shared' and 'divided', and thus expresses the ambivalences of a history of exchange and interaction. On the one hand, the formation and development of the modern world can be read as a 'shared history' in which a variety of cultures and societies interacted and interrelated, thus jointly constituting the modern world, and in which processes of mutual appropriation led to homogenising effects. On the other, the increasing circulation of goods, people and ideas did not only create commonalities – it also resulted in delimitations, difference and a need for particularity. This applies both to a large number of differences and inequalities within societies and to the policies of delimitation between nation states.[9]

As such, the arguments below form part of the project of transnational historiography. These debates are the result of processes of increasing European integration and of discussion on globalisation. The main goal of the concept is to overcome the tunnel vision

[7] For examples of the literature on globalisation theory see Appadurai, *Disjuncture*; Robertson, *Globalization*; Bauman, *Globalization*; Dirlik, 'Is There History'; Dirlik, *Global Modernity*; and Scholte, *Globalization*. See also, with a slightly different area of investigation, Bayart, *Gouvernement*.

[8] Calhoun, 'Nationalism', p. 463.

[9] On this concept see Conrad and Randeria, 'Geteilte Geschichten'; and Randeria, 'Geteilte Geschichte'.

that focuses on national societies alone, excluding their regional and global interlinkages. The concept picks up on approaches from comparative history and the history of transfers that, since the 1980s in particular, have helped to place national narratives in context and to relativise them.[10] Transnational history is understood here primarily as a perspective that allows us to go beyond the sharp division between 'internal' and 'external', and the question of which has primacy. Historical processes are seen as relational, and the focus is on the constitutive role played by the interactions between regions and nations in the development of modern societies. Transnational history is critical of the idea that national developments took place autonomously and that they can be understood on the basis of the nation's own traditions. Instead, the links between the European and non-European worlds, inextricably bound up since the nineteenth century at the very latest, form the point of departure for a historiography that does not limit itself to national teleologies.[11]

Such discussions are not restricted to Germany. In Britain, in particular, recent studies on imperial history, often focusing on the 'new imperialism' from the 1890s onward, have examined the question of the importance of the empire for Great Britain. Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins brought the empire back to the metropole with their concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism'.[12] The 'Manchester School' of social history around John MacKenzie focused in particular on the effects of imperial expansion on everyday life in Britain.[13]

[10] On comparative history and the history of transfers, see Haupt and Kocka, *Geschichte*; Kaelble, *Vergleich*; Espagne, 'Limites'; and Paulmann, 'Vergleich', which gives further references. See also Middell, 'Kulturtransfer'.

[11] See, for example, the discussions in Osterhammel, 'Transnationale Gesellschaftsgeschichte'; Spiliotis, 'Transterritorialität'; Wirz, 'Gesellschaftsgeschichte'; Conrad, 'Doppelte Marginalisierung'; Werner and Zimmermann, 'Histoire croisée'; Werner and Zimmermann, 'Vergleich'; Patel, 'Transatlantische Perspektiven'; and Patel, *Nationalfixiertheit*. Transnational approaches can in many cases link in to the history of international politics: Loth and Osterhammel, *Internationale Geschichte*. See also Subrahmanyam, 'Connected Histories'; and Gruzinski, 'Mondes'.

[12] See Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*; and Dumett, *Gentlemanly Capitalism*. See also Hopkins' influential essay 'Back to the Future'.

[13] Among a large number of studies see MacKenzie, *Propaganda*; *Imperialism*; and *Empire of Nature*.

Many studies in the areas of postcolonial and cultural studies have looked at the effects of the colonial experience on the home country and have argued that 'British "nationhood" was built up through empire'.[14] For the history of Britain, with its long-lasting and extensive colonial empire, this remains an important perspective, all sceptical voices notwithstanding.[15] In the USA, too, the national past is increasingly placed in transnational contexts. Here, it is not so much a formal empire that is under examination but rather the country's place in global history.[16]

In a similar spirit, the following pages focus on the non-European dimensions of German history as an attempt to complement a historiography that has to date looked mainly at Germany in its European context. But around the turn of the century, Europe had expanded to every corner of the globe, and had been altered and shaped by the experience of this expansion. In the course of colonialism and – of even greater importance for the Kaiserreich – of global interlinkages that went beyond formal territorial claims, the world had increasingly become a single area of action and its systemic constraints had effects on Europe and on the German empire. For that reason, the goal is not so much to play off European, colonial and global references against each other, but rather to recognise that European – and German – history around 1900 took place in a global context.[17]

MOBILITY

In 1900, Germany was on the move. Wanderers and travelling journeymen walked the highways as they had in the previous decades. Railways, the tourism industry and the seaside resorts were evidence of the mobility of the bourgeoisie. Population growth, the increasing

[14] Marks, 'History', p. 117. See also Burton, 'Civilising Subjects'; and Kumar, 'Nation'.

[15] See for example Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*; and Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialists*.

[16] See in particular the landmark volume edited by Bender: *Rethinking*; as well as Bender, *Nation among Nations*.

[17] On this subject see the contributions to Conrad and Osterhammel, *Kaiserreich*.

pull of the cities, and the economic opportunities that the industrial centres presented all led to a flight of people from rural areas. But migration from the countryside to the urban centres was often just the first stage of a longer journey that brought many Germans abroad (and frequently back again). Between 1880 and 1893, approximately 2 million left the country. In addition, German ports were points of departure for large numbers of emigrants from eastern Europe. By the eve of the First World War, around 7 million people had passed through Bremerhaven alone on their way across the Atlantic. But Germany was not merely a point of departure for migrants; it was also the destination of many immigrants, from Holland, Poland and Italy, for example, seeking either permanent or temporary work. Many of these movements were by no means final – they were just the first stage of further movements. During harvest periods, many seasonal workers and *Sachsengänger* (travellers to Saxony) supplied the seasonal demand for labour in agriculture. The national economist Werner Sombart compared Germany to an ant-heap into which a passer-by had pushed his walking-stick.[18] Between 1890 and 1914, mobility within, out of and into Germany became 'a mass phenomenon which was without precedent in Europe'.[19]

Mass mobility was one of the main characteristics of globalisation in the nineteenth century. A series of profound changes, mainly linked to the global expansion of capitalist methods of production, led to a considerable increase in mobility and in the distances that people travelled. Industrial production and the expansion of plantation agriculture, combined with the interlinking of markets around the world, meant that the demand for labour was increasingly met outside national boundaries. The creation of global labour markets was greatly facilitated by revolutionary changes in transport and in information technology, but also by the imperial penetration of large

[18] Sombart, *Volkswirtschaft*, p. 408.

[19] Wehler, *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, Vol. III, p. 503. See, especially on domestic migration, Köllmann, *Bevölkerung*; and Langewiesche, 'Wanderungsbewegungen'. On emigration and immigration see Bade, *Europa*; Bade, 'Massenauswanderung'; Herbert, *Ausländerbeschäftigung*; and Hoerder and Nagel, *People*. On the transit migration movements from eastern Europe see Just, *Amerikawanderung*.

areas of the planet from 1882 onward.[20] During the nineteenth century, some 60 million people emigrated from Europe alone, mainly to the New World. Germany was one of the centres of this mass exodus. But European migration was merely part of a global process of mobility that was frequently organised by colonial governments and that was further intensified by the abolition of slavery. The numbers involved were enormous. From 1834 to 1937, between thirty and 45 million people left the Indian subcontinent; almost 50 million moved from Russia and north-eastern Asia to Siberia and Manchuria; over 19 million Chinese emigrated to south-eastern Asia; Japanese workers moved to Hawaii, California and Brazil; Java provided workers for the European colonies in Asia; and in Africa, worker mobility also continued to increase, often under conditions not far removed from slavery. Often, imported workers were preferred to natives because they were assumed to be easier to discipline (and to fire).[21]

Contemporaries, too, saw mobility as one of the central characteristics of the era. Around 1900, there was an 'almost neurotic consciousness of the process of mobility', as Geoffrey Barraclough has noted, which culminated in a global fear of the 'Yellow Peril'.[22] In Germany, too, this level of mobility led to intense and controversial debate about movement and stability, restrictions on access and restricted periods (*Karenzzeiten*), the freedom of movement and boundaries, segregation and alterity, amalgamation and identity. These debates did not take place in isolation. Close attention was paid in Germany to debates in other countries about limiting immigration, in particular in the USA, Australia and South Africa. The debate on migration reveals how a global consciousness developed among German political actors – especially when restrictions elsewhere created a risk that migratory flows would be redirected to Germany.[23] Hopes and fears linked to mobility, to transport or to the arrival of 'population

[20] See O'Rourke and Williamson, *Globalization*; and Williamson, 'Globalization'.
[21] See McKeown, 'Global Migration'. See also McNeill and Adams, *Human Migration*; Nugent, *Crossings*; Segal, *Atlas;* Wang, *Global History*; van der Linden, 'Geschichte'; and Hoerder, *Cultures*, esp. pp. 331–404.
[22] Barraclough, *Introduction*, p. 80.
[23] See Zolberg, 'Global Movements'.

masses' were among the ingredients of discourses on the nation. The way the nation viewed itself was permanently affected by the debates about Germans abroad (*Auslandsdeutsche*) and the 'loss of national energies', about overseas settlers and colonial 'New Germany', and about seasonal workers and the threat of 'Polonisation'. Nationalism in the Wilhelmine era was always influenced by issues of mobility, circulation and globalisation.[24]

Of course, mobility was not a phenomenon that was new to Germany. In fact, it had a long history. During the pre-modern age, migration for work (most famously by the 'Holland-goers') and the movements of travelling merchants were the most important forms of employment migration, along with the wanderings of travelling journeymen. Proletarian mass migration began during the 'great transformation', the crisis-ridden period during which Germany changed from an agricultural to an industrial society, especially from the 1840s. These migratory trends were reinforced by the growth in population during the nineteenth century. During the peak of pauperism, around the middle of the century, large numbers of impoverished people could be found on the country's highways. Emigration also took off in the early nineteenth century, mainly to the United States. It reached its first peak in 1846/47 as a result of the agricultural and trade crises of those years, with 1.3 million people leaving the German states. (The second major wave was from 1864 to 1873.)[25]

Thus, the transition to mass mobility was a gradual process without any abrupt shifts. However, mobility did become even more important in Germany from the 1880s onward, both in terms of the numbers involved and in terms of public perception. It was only during this period that the country as a whole became industrialised, and this was also the time of the largest wave of emigration: almost 2 million people left the country in the years after 1880. There were even higher levels of through-migration from eastern Europe, mainly

[24] Bade, *Deutsche im Ausland*; and O'Donnell, Bridenthal and Reagin, *Heimat Abroad*.

[25] See, as an introduction to the extensive literature, Moch, *Moving Europeans*; Bade, *Europa*, pp. 17–120; Köllmann, *Bevölkerung*; and Küther, *Menschen*. See the overview given in Kocka, *19. Jahrhundert*, pp. 61–79.