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# 2.7. Western Europe

This contribution evaluates research on work and labour, looking at the period when concepts of a new global history began to emerge. Although counter-cyclical state policies tended to postpone that history's momentum, the paradigm dates from the 1970s in Europe and North America, in line with the transition from the post-World-War-II Fordist welfare state towards the end of industrial mass production that formed its foundation. We are dealing therefore with a rather longer period of twenty years, until the 1990s, when neo-liberal policies and the globalization of commodity chains became widespread. Both types of European welfare state were affected, although in different ways. In the capitalist West the decline of industry and the end of what was considered "standard" employment happened more gradually and went hand in hand with the decline of traditional labour history. Meanwhile, in the socialist COMECON states the collapse of the system in 1989 – 1991 marked a sudden rupture terminating a social model that had been defined by labour.[1] Traditional labour history, which had played a prominent role in state socialism, lost its institutions, funding, and legitimation. The two systems had already begun to interact in the 1970s, when Eastern European state enterprise served as extended workbenches for Western firms and joint ventures were set up in Poland, Hungary, and Romania. However, after 1989, Eastern Europe was transformed according to the interests of Western companies, and many East European firms were unable to compete and closed down. In other cases, privatization broke up integrated production lines and retained labour-intensive operations that supplied Western companies with cheap but still in many cases skilled labour. Moreover, acquisitions and greenfield investment increased the role of contract manufacture, which allowed Western companies to compete with Asian firms and maintain their control of global commodity chains. Car manufacturing is a good example of the shift from a low level of East European domestic-label production to just-in-time piece suppliers for West European, US, and Korean companies.[2]

From the 1990s onwards established industrial regions all over Europe faced strong competition from global peripheries where labour and production costs were lower. The Global South acquired a new role as industrial mass production

1 GDR sociologists and historians proposed the term "workers' society" (*arbeiterliche Gesellschaft*): Helga Schultz, "Das sozialistische Projekt und die Arbeiter. Die DDR und die Volksrepublik Polen im Vergleich", in: *idem* and Hans-Jürgen Wagener (eds), *Die DDR im Rückblick. Politik, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Kultur* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 224 – 243, at 227.

2 Andrea Komlosy, "Systemtransformation als Krisenmanagement. Der RGW-Umbruch im globalen Kontext, 40 Jahre danach (1973 – 2013)", in: Dariusz Adamczyk and Stephan Lehnstaedt (eds), *Wirtschaftskrisen als Wendepunkte. Ursachen, Folgen und historische Einordnungen vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Osnabrück, 2015), pp. 337 – 376, at 365 f.

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was outsourced to free production zones in Central America, South-east Asia, Turkey, Maghreb, and later to China and Eastern Europe. Such regions offered not only cheap labour but also subsidies, tax exemptions, and the absence of labour protection and social legislation. In the West, the relocation of huge parts of mass production to the Global South led to a shift from manufacturing to the service sector. That allowed Western companies to overcome the profit squeeze of the 1970s and to upgrade and strengthen their research and value-adding operations. Innovation was linked to rationalization, but that contributed in turn to structural unemployment. Technological adjustment favoured regional polarization, delinking former industrial regions that were now being placed in great despair. Layoffs and closures led to a vicious circle of declining infrastructure and education, pushing the mobile workforce to migrate. Textile regions in Catalonia, Normandy, Lancashire, or Lower Austria were affected as much as mining and regions of heavy industry such as Wales, Yorkshire, the English Midlands, Wallonia, the Saar-Lorraine region, the Rhine-Ruhr, or Upper Styria. What in the West took several years and was eased, if not overcome, by regional and social programmes came suddenly to Eastern Europe when the socialist system was dissolved. Vast industrial regions suffered decline and many workers lost their jobs, whereupon considerable numbers of them turned to alcohol as employment became a makeshift thing and labour was forced to migrate. Relocations of Western multinationals into the privatized industrial landscape could not make up for the losses, and in the West and East alike informalization, precarity, and deregulation gained ground. For a growing number of workers a transformation had come to what had been regulated and socially secure workplaces, turning them into permanent battlefields for jobs, opportunities, or social transfers.

## New challenges for historical research

The new landscape of global competition that was enabled by neoliberal deregulation at the national and international levels left its imprint on academia too. Neoliberal social science paved the way for the introduction of reforms, preparing public opinion and interpreting the changes. Other non-liberal social scientists pointed to social consequences, increasing gaps, impoverishment, and a loss of solidarity and cohesion that could be understood only in a global context. At first, historians were rarely involved in analysing transformation and globalization. It was a time when the "cultural turn" had shifted the focus of many historians from studying social structures and longitudinal perspectives to looking at single cases and discourse analysis. The French journal *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* will serve as an example. As a 1930s flagship of a new type of history that adopted methods of the social sciences, such as typology, global outreach, and *longue durée*, it changed direction in the early 1980s – "just at the moment when ... its results were taken as authoritative well beyond the boundaries of the profession and the 'territory of the historian' seemed capable of indefinite enlargement" – as Jacques Revel observed

in his manifesto of micro-history.[3] Micro-history, historical anthropology, and cultural studies flourished while social and economic history became less attractive.

Even historians who were still attached to social and economic structures and conflicting interests changed their methods and approaches because they realized that the changing global environment had affected how they should assess historical developments. This was the birth of global history, embedded in a "spatial turn". It might be built on older world history, but it was more aware of the former's inherently Eurocentric teleology. All world regions and world cultures ought to be studied on their own terms in their mutual entanglement and hierarchical relations – to sum up the programme that required the collaboration of various experts and disciplines from all over the world.[4] Work and labour was just one of the fields that were changing in the light of new global approaches to history.

With regard to work and labour, global history opened a new research agenda that went beyond previous studies of labour relations and labour movements. Work and labour should not be reduced to commodified free labour. The global angle opened historians' eyes to non-paid labour (subsistence, homework), small-scale agriculture, craft, home and self-employed labour, forced labour (serfdom, slavery, indentured labour), and formal and informal labour. Those forms of labour and their representatives – peasants, serfs, servants, slaves, homeworkers, craftsmen/women, housewives, industrial workers, clerks, and so on – were considered working characters who deserved equal analysis in their own specific contexts. Moreover, the global perspective helped historians to realize that all those labour relations coexisted within individual people according to age and status, within households, within regions, and on a global scale.

Since the 1970s world-system analysis had emphasized the synchronicity of different labour relations as a principal feature of capitalism. It could be understood only in its global, unequal composition and resulted from the functional division of labour in different zones of the global economy.[5] Global labour history pleaded for a

**3** "... au moment où ... ses résultats s'imposaient bien au-delà des frontières de la profession et où le 'territoire de l'historien' paraissait pouvoir s'élargir indéfinitivement". Jacques Revel (ed.), *Jeux d'échelles. La micro-analyse à l'expérience* (Paris, 1996), p. 18. See *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* or *Quaderni storici* since the 1980s.

**4** *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* devoted a special issue to the global turn. See issue 56, 1 (2001), "Une histoire à l'échelle globale", edited by Serge Gruzinski and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, where an attempt is made to reconcile micro and global history. See also Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization", *Journal of Global History*, 5, 1 (2010), pp. 149–170.

**5** Immanuel Wallerstein has become the most prominent social scientist identified with "world-systems analysis". The approach was developed in a collective endeavour, inspired by the cross-cutting institutionalization of social sciences and area studies at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris, with which Wallerstein has been associated since the 1970s. World-systems analysis grew from his collaboration with Fernand Braudel, who became the moving spirit of Waller-

deep analysis of each type of labour and of labour relations to see how they were interrelated and how they affected social relations.[6] It was evident that types of labour and labour relations varied according to age, gender, ethnicity (or race), and location in the international division of labour. Specialists in those fields were therefore invited to contribute to a cooperative agenda.[7]

In spite of its cooperative and global claims, world systems and global labour history was a Western project primarily based in Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States.[8] It could therefore be seen as a transatlantic or perhaps more precisely a North Atlantic project. The main institutional pillars were at State University of New York at Binghamton,[9] at the École des Hautes Etudes (EHESS) Paris, at the London School of Economics (LSE),[10] and above all at the International Institute of Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam. The IISG played a leading role in developing a research agenda, establishing international research projects and networks, and encouraging global labour research in various world regions.[11] It was

stein's Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations at SUNY Binghamton.

**6** Marcel van der Linden, *Workers of the World. Essays Toward a Global Labor History* (Leiden and Boston, 2008); Marcel van der Linden and Leo Lucassen (eds), *Working on Labor. Essays in Honor of Jan Lucassen* (Leiden and Boston, 2012).

**7** Barbara Duden and Karin Hausen, "Gesellschaftliche Arbeit, geschlechtsspezifische Arbeitsteilung", in: Annette Kuhn and Gerhard Schneider (eds), *Frauen in der Geschichte* (Düsseldorf, 1979), pp. 11–33; Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, *The Subsistence Perspective. Beyond the Globalised Economy* (London, 1989); Wilma A. Dunaway, "The Semiproletarian Household over the *Longue Durée* of the Modern World-System", in: Richard E. Lee (ed.), *The* Longue Durée *and World-System Analysis* (Albany, NY, 2012), pp. 97–136.

**8** In Jan Lucassen (ed.), *Global Labour History. A State of the Art* (Berne, 2006), presenting the state of the art of global labour history, Dick Geary's contribution on "Labour History in Western Europe from c. 1800" was confined to Britain, France, and Germany.

**9** The Fernand Braudel Center at SUNY Binghamton, founded by Terence Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein in 1976, initiated a number of working groups that laid the foundation for systematic explorations of global relations. See the programmatic article by Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Patterns of Development of the Modern World-System", *Review*, 1, 2 (1977), pp. 111–145. Since the 1990s, world-systems analysis has embarked on different conceptual paths, leading to a multiplication of places, journals, and institutions of research. Meanwhile, adaptations, revisions, and new departures took place, taking into account the view of critics and recent developments in global studies.

**10** The Global Economic History Network (GEHN) is based at the London School of Economics and was coordinated by Patrick O'Brien from 2003 to 2007. Like EHESS it can build on an institutionalized network of social scientists and area studies. Its work is published by Cambridge University Press and other major publishing houses. *The Journal of Global History* (Cambridge University Press) is a product of this network.

**11** Compare the founding document by research directors Marcel van der Linden and Jan Lucassen, *Prolegomena for a Global Labour History* (1999), and the annual reports documenting ongoing research activities and publications ever since: www.socialhistory.org, last accessed 13 February 2017. The IISG set up affiliates responsible for document collection all over the Global South and in Russia, initiating local and cooperative research projects. Moreover, it supported the development of regional

able to build on the IISG's vast collections on the history of labour and other social movements. When global labour history was implemented as a key research agenda, the institute developed active strategies to bring documents from non-European regions into the collections and to employ non-European scholars to rectify its lack of knowledge of the Global South. IISG scholars contributed to the formation of an international community of labour historians from all over the world who rely on multiple language skills but communicate in English to exchange and accumulate regional expertise. The IISG, its staff, and scholars were important agents in promoting a global shift in labour research worldwide.[12]

Looking back at the regional focus of global labour research reveals various waves. In a first wave of exploration of the Global South, Latin America was at the foreground. Latin America offered a vast amount of evidence of how indigenous people, slaves, and colonial settlers interacted to extract resources to be used for European manufacture. The transatlantic trade triangle, consisting of African slaves working on American plantations and fed by indigenous forced labour and the rise of industrial capitalism in Western Europe, was one of the main features of global studies.[13] With the exception of the slave trade, African studies was a rather marginal subject while European activities in Asia were often included in the colonial paradigm of colonial extractivism encountered in the Americas.

In the late 1990s a second wave of historical research emphasized the independent development of trades and manufacture in various Asian regions instead of attributing leadership to European companies and skills. Asian regions were "discovered" for their competitive advances in technology and the quality of their manufacture. The specific combination of export textile trades and local agrarian production in rural households from West to East Asia fed the paradigm of a "labour

networks of global labour history, coordinated by the IISG and its partners. Major projects involving international participation dealt with specific groups of workers (at the docks, or in textiles, sugar cane, oil, for example) or work conditions (of children, soldiers, migrants), or aimed at the collection of data (on wages, prices, the typology of labour relations) for long-term comparative analyses. In 2007 a Global Collaboratory on the History of Labour Relations was initiated. Its first main goal is to provide statistical insights into the global distribution of all types of labour relations (systematically including women and child labour) in five historical cross-sections: 1500, 1650, 1800, 1900, [Africa: 1950], and 2000. The second main goal will be the explanation of shifts signalled in labour relations worldwide. See https://collab.iisg.nl/web/LabourRelations. The findings of the various projects are published by major publishing houses. See, for example, the *Studies in Global Social History* edited by Marcel van der Linden, and the *Studies in Global Migration History* edited by Dirk Hoerder (published by Brill, Leiden/Boston). See also the *International Review of Social History* (Cambridge University Press).

**12** The output of global labour history is huge. A good way to keep up to date are the calls, reports, and reviews on the web forum history.transtransnational within the framework of H-Soz-u-Kult and Clio-online: http://geschichte-transnational.clio-online.net/transnat.asp?lang=en.

**13** See the survey of the literature on Atlantic history by Ulrike Schmieder, "Aspekte der Forschungsgeschichte zum Atlantischen Raum", in: *idem* and Hans-Heinrich Nolte (eds), *Atlantik. Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte in der Neuzeit* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 226 – 254.

intensive" and industrious mode of production.[14] Andre Gunder Frank rejected the narrative of the "European World System", to which he had contributed in earlier days. Frank had realized it was Eurocentric, and urged "reorientation". He now acknowledged Asia's leading role in a multi-centric world system until the eighteenth century (India, the Ottoman Empire) or the nineteenth century (China).[15]

For both narratives Latin America was a source for extraction with the help of slaves and indentured servants. The indigenous population were also exterminated, assimilated, displaced, and marginalized. According to the new interpretation the transatlantic triangle was linked to Asian trade and American silver and gold, allowing European merchant companies to import and re-export Asian-manufactured goods globally. The "European miracle", a supposed exceptionalism based on the continuity of European civilization leading from Greek Antiquity to the Renaissance and Enlightenment, was called into question and then replaced by the paradigm of the "Great Divergence"[16] signalled by the rise of Western European hegemony at the expense of Asia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Situating Asia at the core of "industrious" manufacture had repercussions on the conventional way of assessing the "industrial" revolution. Only recently have studies of African labour transcended the boundaries of area studies and entered the realm of global labour history.[17]

## Assessing Europe in the global history of work

Notwithstanding a vivid debate that questioned conventional knowledge, terms, and concepts of industry and labour in the emerging global history networks, "Europe" was usually considered synonymous with "Western Europe". It was symbolized by the "European banana", stretching from the northern parts of France and Italy to

**14** The "industrious" mode of production is seen as a way of raising productivity in crafts and putting-out industries. It was common in many export trades all over the world, before the factory-based "industrial" mode became dominant in the nineteenth century. In many Asian regions, mainly in East Asia, industrious production survived, representing an autonomous path towards modern industry, finally merging with the industrial system. Compare Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution. Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), and Gareth Austin and Kaoru Sugihara (eds), *Labour-Intensive Industrialization in Global History* (London, 2013).
**15** Andre Gunder Frank, *ReORIENT. Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, CA, 1998). Frank's revisions of the European origins of the capitalist world system gave way to controversial discussions, reflected in reviews, books, and journal articles. He proposed to replace the intrinsically Eurocentric notion of capitalism with capital accumulation, realized by competitive advantages in exchange processes.
**16** The term was coined by Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence. China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton and Oxford, 2000).
**17** Andreas Eckert, "Capitalism and Labor in Sub-Saharan Africa", in: Jürgen Kocka and Marcel van der Linden (eds), *Capitalism: The Reemergence of a Historical Concept* (London, 2016), pp. 165–186.

Germany, the Netherlands, and England. Taking the Genovese, Dutch, French, and English trajectories as models for types of development, it was almost impossible to assess composite monarchies such as the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Empire in Central, Eastern, and South-eastern Europe, the Russian Empire in Eastern Europe, or the Ottoman Empire in South-eastern Europe. It was equally difficult to address their imperial legacies in their smaller national successor states.[18]

Those parts of Europe certainly represented different political and economic systems that were interrelated with Western Europe by unequal divisions of labour similar to the intercontinental ones. But they showed, too, different patterns of integration at the global level. The Hanse established a medieval system of unequal exchange with north-eastern Europe. The Italian state republics and France were the first to set up colonial networks in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and they served as models for the Spanish and Portuguese transatlantic plantation systems after the eastern Mediterranean came under Ottoman rule. From 1600 onwards Dutch and English trading companies carried out commercial activities, interlinking Atlantic, Asian, Mediterranean, North Sea, and Baltic trade by their respective maritime and communication capacities. They set up a system of commodity chains that relied on and profited from the combination of different labour regimes in the various regions. When merchant capital was replaced by domestic industrial interests connected to the political economy of the state, the equilibrium between Asia and Europe gradually gave way to European dominance.

Indeed, the hierarchical interactions set up by colonialism and imperialism are mirrored in colonial history. The academic communities tread paths paved by trade or conquest and previously used for investment, exchange, migration, and all sorts of transfers. Global history follows the tracks beaten by colonialism, area studies often concentrating on the "golden eras" of the respective states and empires. That is why research in Spain and Portugal concentrates on Latin America and the slave trade; in France on Caribbean and African history; in the Netherlands on Caribbean, South African, and Indonesian history; and in Great Britain on North America, the Caribbean, India, Africa, and the Commonwealth. Each area and each period is linked with specific labour regimes, including chattel slavery, indentured labour, sharecropping, and free farming. After decolonization the new states developed anti-colonial counter-narratives. It is no surprise that the impetus to place colonial and anti-colonial area studies under the common heading of global interconnections began in the United States, for after it had succeeded Great Britain as global leader during World War II the US relied not on territorial domination of colonies but on control of global flows.

Concentration on specific regions was the result of cultural and language competence too. Empirical research requires language skills, and among other legacies of

**18** Competing concepts and subdivisions of Europe are discussed in Thomas Ertl, Andrea Komlosy, and Hans-Jürgen Puhle (eds), *Europa als Weltregion. Zentrum, Modell oder Provinz?* (Vienna, 2014).

colonialism[19] colonial borders survive in the linguistic reach of English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, or Dutch. With the hegemonic rise of the United States, English has acquired global dominance in the Western world of science, and other Western languages have been marginalized. Since 1990 English has even replaced Russian as the lingua franca in the former European COMECON states. While for a long time French, Spanish, and Portuguese scholars found it difficult to accept linguistic Anglicization and wished to continue to emphasize their own national languages, Dutch and to a lesser extent Scandinavian scholars easily adopted English as their academic working language, thereby improving their international visibility.

Central European regions do not fit into the pattern of imperialism with overseas colonies – or did so only for short periods.[20] Compared with the Western states and empires bordering the Atlantic, they did not acquire colonies and accounted for relatively small shares of intercontinental trade. As long as labour history dealt with domestic work and labour relations in agriculture, crafts and industry, trade unions, and labour movements, Central European narratives were comparable with similar projects in Western Europe. But when the domestic framework was challenged by global history, Central European scholars took up the agenda that had been set in Western Europe and the United States. German, Austrian, and Scandinavian schools and universities very soon included in their curricula the history of European colonialism and its impact on non-European regions. Those schools profited from their supposedly neutral position to learn about and investigate all kinds of colonial activities. They did not deny that their own regions had profited from colonial extraction and unequal exchange through trade, but concentrated on those aspects of North-South relations where being part of the Global North did not require direct colonial conquest, or interference.

When, in the course of doing global history, basic terms and concepts were re-evaluated, it ceased to be possible to assume a position of colonial non-involvement.[21] Instead of acquiring overseas colonies and participating in the slave trade,

**19** "Coloniality" refers to racial and epistemological hierarchies shaped by colonial domination which remain effective after decolonization. See, for example, Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/ Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ, 2000). Equally, coloniality has been placed in a position of power by the hierarchical structures and inequalities of global capitalism.

**20** Successor states, too, of former colonial sea powers such as Portugal and Spain that later underwent decline and peripheralization have difficulty defining their role in history. It is beyond the scope of this article to address them however.

**21** According to Jürgen Osterhammel's definition of colonialism (*Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton, NJ, 2010)), the concept can easily be applied to the domination of internal peripheries by an imperial core, as well as to the attitudes of cultural superiority that legitimate dominance. Following the European perception of West and East Asian cultures as backward or primitive, Edward Said coined the term "orientalism", which had transcended its regional meaning and become a general term for legitimizing "civilizing" missions by reference to cultural or economic deficiencies. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism. Western Concepts of the Orient* (New York, 1978).

the Habsburg Monarchy and Prussia, and later the German Reich, pursued a policy of conquest and quasi-colonial dominance in competition with the Russian and Ottoman empires when they expanded into Eastern and South-eastern Europe in the eighteenth century. They transformed their new territorial acquisitions into internal colonies, or peripheries. The Habsburgs conquered provinces of the Ottoman Empire and acquired former Venetian provinces, and the Habsburgs and Prussians conquered the Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania.[22] During World War I the territorial conquest of lands, crops, and labour power, from the Baltic regions to Belarus, Russian Poland, Ukraine, and Serbia, was again a principal military objective of imperial Germany and Austria. Occupations followed economic aims, which required the mobilization of the local population to work on large agricultural estates and in forestry and mining. In times of war, labour mobilization in frontier zones meant coercion under military law. While Habsburg Austria-Hungary had no overseas colonies, Germany had taken part in the "Scramble for Africa", acquiring German East Africa and German South-West Africa at the Berlin Africa Conference of the Great Powers in 1884. In 1878 the Berlin Balkan Conference had already agreed zones of Great Power influence in the Balkans, attributing to Austria-Hungary the right to occupy the Ottoman province of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was then transformed into a military and economic frontier zone serving Austro-Hungarian interests.

Under the rubric of global history, National Socialist expansion is also discussed within the framework of the colonial competition that encouraged the Nazi leadership to catch up in the race for colonies in Eastern and South-eastern Europe, Africa, and the Near East. From a global perspective the Holocaust, property confiscation, labour coercion, and compensation for victims can no longer be discussed in isolation as a matter for the Germans; instead it has to be seen as a phenomenon that requires the acknowledgement of comparison and interaction with other cases of genocide, labour enforcement, and expulsion.[23]

Finally, Germany and Austria, which now belonged to the European core, together became the driving forces of EU enlargement in the 1990s, insisting to East European candidates for accession to the EU that they must dismantle the labour regulations and social protection that had been established under communism.

It was even more difficult to match Eastern Europe to the Western stereotype of global history. East Central Europe is a region that has always shifted between West-Central European and Russian interests.[24] Joining, or hoping to join, the Euro-

**22** Nolte organized several conferences on internal peripheries. See Hans-Heinrich Nolte (ed.), *Internal Peripheries in European History* (Göttingen, 1991); *idem* (ed.), *Europäische innere Peripherien im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1997); and *idem* (ed.), *Innere Peripherien in Ost und West* (Stuttgart, 2002).
**23** Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (eds), *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (Basingstoke, 2010); Berthold Unfried, *Vergangenes Unrecht. Entschädigung und Restitution in einer globalen Perspektive* (Göttingen, 2014).
**24** South-eastern Europe is facing similar problems with regard to competing and overlapping legacies of Ottoman, Habsburg, and Russian influence and domination.

pean Union highlighted its identification with the West and entrenched its borders with Russia and the post-Soviet world. The new member states did indeed become part of the West, although in a dependent status that was often contested by their older, more socialist- or nationalist-inclined populations – especially in rural areas. By contrast, in young academia, becoming part of the West was a thing to be welcomed most warmly. As social matters in general and labour history in particular were topics related to the old regime, they were no longer considered attractive. Based on the official rejection of communist ideas, which in some countries were forbidden under new constitutions, labour research institutions faced political pressure, loss of funding, or even dissolution.[25] The situation was therefore favourable neither to labour history nor to critical assessments of the capitalist transformation. Colonization and external domination were attributed to the Soviet Union, and after its dissolution to Russia alone. The peripheralizing effects of West-Central European occupation and exploitation of the region before and after the Soviet period did not fit into the new self-images of countries that now saw themselves as members of the European core. They wished to distance themselves from the post-Soviet world and from old orientalizing stereotypes. In the case of Western Ukraine, conquered by Habsburg Austria in 1772 to become the province of Galicia, the striving for Westernization had consequences for the historical perception of the Habsburg period. In order to mark the distance from the Soviet influence that was attributed entirely to Russia and the Russians, the Habsburg past came to be applauded as a civilizing mission, used for nostalgic propaganda and tourism as well as being reassessed in academia.[26]

## Eastern Europe entering global labour history

From the 2000s onwards social issues in the new EU member states could no longer be neglected in the social sciences. A new generation of scholars began to raise critical questions about transformation, including contemporary and historical aspects of work and labour. In the globalized framework of academic mobility, individual careers can no longer be associated with Western or Eastern Europe. However, because of the socioeconomic gap between West and East we face a semipermeable situation. Young scholars from Eastern Europe strive to work with Western institutions and

**25** See Susan Zimmermann (Ch. 2.7) in the present volume. A dramatic way of excluding scholars from academic life was devised in the German Democratic Republic. West German scholars took the opportunity to escape the precariousness of academic life and voluntarily took over the jobs of the scholars who had been sacked. See Stefan Bollinger, Ulrich van der Heyden, and Mario Keßler, *Ausgrenzung oder Integration? Ostdeutsche Sozialwissenschaftler zwischen Isolierung und Selbstbehauptung* (Berlin, 2004).

**26** Exhibition and catalogue "Mythos Galizien" (Wien Museum and International Cultural Center Cracow, 2015) represent both the production of nostalgia and its critical assessment.

projects. Apart from Eastern Germany, where, after the change of system, academic posts in the humanities were taken over by West Germans, there has been no comparable eastward movement and East European scholars and institutions take part in international research projects funded by Western institutions. The matters raised by Western and Eastern academia include the following labour-related topics.[27]

## Historical transformation research

If we include the 1970s, when trade and industrial cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe began to gather momentum, the transformation spans more than forty years. The dismantling of labour protection and social security, the commodification of labour for Western investment in the form of outsourcing, and the mobilization and control of migrant labour were crucial things to be investigated in regional, local, and branch studies with regard to cycles, ruptures, particularities, and shared features.[28] Roughly put, there were three attitudes that reflected the fragmentation of societies. First there was an approving approach that blamed governments and population for deficiencies and lack of cooperation with EU programmes and institutions. Second was a reformist approach intended to improve implementation, then a critical approach in which the structural inequalities of the world system were assessed. As well as all that, consideration was given to the conditions of accession as the main factor in the ongoing economic peripheralization and social disparity within the East European states that accompanied – and by some indicators exceeded – the gaps in international development.[29]

**27** The publications selected mirror the author's personal choice and limited language skills.

**28** For example, Regina Barendt and Bettina Musiolek, *Workers' Voices. The Situation of Women in the Eastern European and Turkish Garment Industries* (Meißen, 2005); Eszter Bartha, *Alienating Labour. Workers on the Road from Socialism to Capitalism in East Germany and Hungary* (Oxford and New York, 2013); Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits, "Capitalism without Compromise: Strong Business and Weak Labor in Eastern Europe's New Transnational Industries", *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 41, 1 (2006), pp. 3–25; Jan Drahokoupil, "The Politics of the Competition State: The Agents and Mechanisms of State Transnationalization in Central and Eastern Europe", in: László Bruszt and Ronald Holzhacker (eds), *The Transnationalization of Economies, States, and Civil Societies: New Challenges for Governance in Europe* (New York, 2009), pp. 135–155; Hannes Hofbauer, *EU-Osterweiterung. Historische Basis – ökonomische Triebkräfte – soziale Folgen* (Vienna, 2007); Philipp Ther, *Die neue Ordnung auf dem alten Kontinent. Eine Geschichte des neoliberalen Europa* (Frankfurt am Main, 2014), to list just a few.

**29** Hofbauer, *EU-Osterweiterung*; Dariusz Adamczyk, "Vom Kommunismus zur EU-Integration. Polens Entwicklung nach dem Kollaps des Monopolsozialismus", in: Hans-Heinrich Nolte (ed.), *Transformationen in Osteuropa und Zentralasien: Polen, die Ukraine, Russland und Kirgisien* (Schwalbach am Taunus, 2007). See also the Hofbauer-Adamczyk debates on the prospects of Poland's catching up in the *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte*, 6, 2 (2005), pp. 115–125, and 13, 2 (2012), pp. 75–94.

## State socialism – rise and decline

There arose among historians a new interest in the transition to state socialism. Unlike research into the Cold War, the focus was on the everyday aspects of social life and work in a planned economy rather than on the takeover of political power and ideological confrontation. The question was, "How did the priority given to work and the worker affect labour relations, social status, cohesion, and social advancement?"[30] In spite of the official rhetoric that defined work as gainful employment, subsistence gardening, households, and the informal economy played an important role compensating for problems of short supply and difficulties with the distribution of consumer goods.[31] Labour migration under socialism followed different rules than in the West. East German factories along the river Oder used to employ Polish workers;[32] Czechoslovakia and East Germany, the technologically most advanced COMECON states, exchanged machinery for workers from Vietnam, Algeria, Mozambique, Cuba, and China, who were engaged to work for a certain period in Czech and German companies, in turn serving as suppliers of consumer goods for their families and as agents of knowledge transfer back home. How did those guest workers integrate on the shop floor and in community life?[33]

Within the international economic history network established by Alice Teichova at the universities of Bratislava, Cracow, Prague, and Vienna, one of the things economic historians and institutions all over the region were studying was how East-West cooperation took place across the Iron Curtain in different periods.[34] In recent years there has been increasing interest among East European scholars in exploring labour relations in state-socialist enterprises.[35]

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**30** Peter Hübner and Klaus Tenfelde (eds), *Arbeiter in der SBZ-DDR* (Essen, 1999); Peter Hübner, Christoph Klessmann, and Klaus Tenfelde (eds), *Arbeiter im Staatssozialismus: Ideologischer Anspruch und soziale Wirklichkeit* (Cologne, 2005); Schultz, "Das sozialistische Projekt und die Arbeiter".

**31** Ute Gerhard, "Die staatlich institutionalisierte 'Lösung' der Frauenfrage: Zur Geschichte der Geschlechterverhältnisse in der DDR", in: Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr (eds), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart, 1994), pp. 383–403.

**32** Polish contract work in Eastern Germany has frequently been addressed in projects at the Viadrina European University in Frankfurt (Oder), and documented in a book series (*Frankfurter Studien zur Grenzregion*), edited by Helga Schultz *et al.* Volumes include Helga Schultz and Alan Nothnagle (eds), *Grenze der Hoffnung. Geschichte und Perspektiven der Grenzregion an der Oder* (Berlin, 1996), and Katarzyna Stokłosa, *Grenzstädte in Ostmitteleuropa. Guben und Gubin 1945 bis 1995* (Berlin, 2003).

**33** For an overview, see Jörg Roesler, "Auf dem Weg zum Einwanderungsland. Zur Situation der Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR während der 1970er und 1980er Jahre", *Standpunkte*, 16 (Berlin, 2012).

**34** Gertrude Enderle-Burcel *et al.*, *Gaps in the Iron Curtain. Economic Relations between Neutral and Socialist Countries in Cold War Europe* (Cracow, 2009) gives country-based evidence on economic relations between neutral and socialist countries in Cold War Europe. The work's main concern is with trade and investment, while labour relations are widely neglected.

**35** See, for instance, Goran Musić, *Yugoslavia: Workers' Self-Management as State Paradigm* (Chicago, 2011); Sabine Rutar, "Towards a Southeast European History of Labour: Examples from Yugoslavia",

## Eastern Europe in the international division of labour

After the end of socialism, the widespread ideological satisfaction that Eastern Europe had joined the West did not prevent the region from new peripheralization. Regional and social polarization, unemployment, poverty, precarious labour conditions, brain drain and care drain, lack of skilled labour in education and health care – from that perspective older debates on social and economic deficiencies and the structural dependency on West Central Europe reappeared on the agenda, oscillating among "backwardness", "peripheralization", and "orientalization" while looking for moments of agency from both local governments and ordinary citizens.

The role of "second serfdom", which, according to Marxist historiography, followed the peripheral integration of East Central Europe into the early modern world economy and that had inspired world-system analysis,[36] was revised and replaced by more regional differentiation and a gradual approach to the borders between different agrarian systems. Certain scholars rejected a world-economic impact on regional developments,[37] while empirical case studies by others brought new evidence of peripheralization.[38]

A similar controversy came up with regard to industrial catching up in the second half of the nineteenth century. Could backwardness be overcome by the joint efforts of private investment and state support, as modernization theory claims,[39] or did the structural dependency laid out by early modern functional integration into

in: Sabine Rutar (ed.), *Beyond the Balkans. Towards an Inclusive History of Southeastern Europe* (Münster, 2015), pp. 323–356, for former Yugoslavia.

**36** Marian Małowist, "The Economic and Social Development of the Baltic Countries from the 15th to the 17th Centuries", *Economic History Review*, Second Series, 12, 2 (1959), pp. 177–189, for Poland; Zsigmond Pál Pach, *Die ungarische Agrarentwicklung im 16–17. Jahrhundert. Abbiegung vom westeuropäischen Entwicklungsgang* (Budapest, 1964), for Hungary; Christoph Schmidt, *Leibeigenschaft im Ostseeraum* (Cologne, 1997), in a comparative approach to the Baltic Sea region.

**37** Markus Cerman, *Villagers and Lords in Eastern Europe, 1300–1800* (Basingstoke, 2012), on Eastern Europe and Russia; *idem* and Hermann Zeitlhofer, *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen. Ein regionaler Vergleich von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Gutsherrschaften, 16.–19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna and Munich, 2002), in the framework of a collaborative research project on "Social structures in Bohemia"; Alessandro Stanziani, *Bondage. Labor and Rights in Eurasia from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York and Oxford, 2014), on Russia. The results confirm those of Larry Wolff's provocative book *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1995), which includes the concept of peripheralization in the process of "invention".

**38** Dariusz Adamczyk, *Silber und Macht. Fernhandel, Tribute und die piastische Herrschaftsbildung in nordosteuropäischer Perspektive (800–1100)* (Wiesbaden, 2016) on Poland; Klemens Kaps, *Ungleiche Entwicklung in Zentraleuropa. Galizien zwischen überregionaler Verflechtung und imperialer Politik (1772–1914)* (Vienna, 2015), on Habsburg Galicia.

**39** See, for example, David F. Good, "The Economic Lag of Central and Eastern Europe: Income Estimates for the Habsburg Successor States, 1870–1910", *Journal of Economic History*, 54, 4 (1994), pp. 869–891.

Western structures produce only a second wave of dependent accumulation, as is supposed in world-system approaches?[40]

Studies on Eastern Europe, in comparison or in entanglement with Western regions, had become a prominent topic, and students and scholars all over Europe produced a large amount of new evidence. International research projects were initiated by universities in, for example, Leipzig,[41] Frankfurt an der Oder,[42] and Vienna,[43] all of which have long traditions of Eastern European studies. Conferences were organized, study programmes set up, and material published in cooperation with East European partners. But work and labour, although often addressed, were rarely the topics of investigation, so that in fact much research is still overshadowed by the neglect of social questions that has been a result of the cultural turn in the humanities and social sciences and the collapse of state socialism.

In the course of growing international interest, Eastern Europe overcame its role as the other, backward, belated half of Europe, which has raised questions of connections with the rest of the world. A few examples will illustrate a trend of including Eastern Europe in global history projects and debates.[44] There are a growing number of studies exploring the composition of exports, imports, and trade partners, allowing assessment of labour relations that reflect equality and inequality of trade.[45]

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**40** For example, Andrea Komlosy, "Regionale Ungleichheiten in der Habsburgermonarchie: Kohäsionskraft oder Explosionsgefahr für die staatliche Einheit?", in: Nolte, *Innere Peripherien in Ost und West*, pp. 95–109, on internal peripheries in the Habsburg Monarchy; Kaps, *Ungleiche Entwicklung*, on Habsburg Galicia; Susan Zimmermann, *Divide, Provide and Rule. An Integrative History of Poverty Policy, Social Policy, and Social Reform in Hungary under the Habsburg Monarchy* (Budapest and New York, 2011), on Hungary, approaching work and labour through the history of poverty and policy.

**41** Gesellschaft für Kultursoziologie (journal: *Kultursoziologie*, Welttrends Verlag; *Leipziger Jahrbücher Osteuropa in Tradition und Wandel*); Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropa (GWZO).

**42** Viadrina European University, Frankfurt (Oder), Department of Social and Economic History. See the book series *Frankfurter Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Osteuropas*, Berlin Verlag.

**43** Various projects at the Departments for Eastern European and Economic and Social History, Slavic Studies, Anthropology and Social Sciences, including the doctoral programme "Austrian Galicia and its Multicultural Heritage", https://dk-galizien.univie.ac.at/english/, last accessed 10 October 2016; Forschungsplattform Osteuropaforum https://sowi.univie.ac.at/forschung/forschungsplattformen/wiener-osteuropaforum/, last accessed 10 October 2016.

**44** For example, the Global and European Studies Institute (GESI, University of Leipzig) programme on "East Central Europe in transnational perspective"; joint European Master's in "Global History from a European Perspective", including universities in Leipzig, London, Roskilde, Vienna, and Wrocław; Masters' programmes in Global Studies at the Freie University Berlin and Humboldt University Berlin. By making GESI Leipzig the organizing body of the European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH), Eastern European colleagues became part of the network building from the beginning. In global history journals, such as *Comparativ* (Leipzig) and *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte* (Hanover), articles on Eastern Europe in global and comparative perspectives are frequent.

**45** Trade analyses cover the period from early medieval trade between the Baltic regions and the Arab world, when Baghdad was at the core of the global economy, showing that the orientation to-

Moreover, Eastern Europe has become a major region for global migration studies.[46] Last but not least, the concept of "second serfdom" was liberated from an academic cul-de-sac by comparison with the concept of "second slavery", which had been developed to distinguish between an early period of chattel slavery that gave way to more intensive exploitation of slave labour with the rise of the factory system and the demand for cotton, sugar, and other raw materials.[47] Although there is no consensus about what different types of forced labour might have in common, the isolated way of studying serfdom, slavery, or forced labour in labour camps and prisons has given way to comparative approaches.[48] Until recently, slavery along the frontiers between the Christian and Muslim worlds had received little attention, but now new studies dealing with stabilizing and destabilizing impacts on border societies have engendered comparison with transatlantic slavery.[49]

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wards Western Europe followed the decline of the Arab world (Adamczyk, *Silber und Macht*). For later periods, it proved useful to extend bilateral trade relations by interrelating them with one other – see, for example, Klemens Kaps, "Internal Differentiation in a Rising European Semi-Periphery: Cameralist Division of Labor and Mercantile Polycentrism: Two Different Models of Political Economy in Eighteenth-Century Habsburg Central Europe", *Review*, 36, 3 – 4 (2013), pp. 315 – 350, for the entanglement of Habsburg Galicia and Lombardy within a polycentric empire.

**46** Ulf Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe: Emigrants, America, and the State since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, 2015), for South-east Europe; Ewa Morawska, "Labor Migrations of Poles in the Atlantic World Economy, 1880 – 1914", in: Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch (eds), *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston, 1996), pp. 170 – 208, for Poland; handbooks (Hoerder and Moch, *European Migrants*) and encyclopaedias (Klaus Bade *et al.* (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Migration and Minorities in Europe: From the 17th Century to the Present* (Cambridge, 2011)) cover historical migration from all parts of Eastern Europe. Recent developments such as care chains are investigated in light of earlier labour migrations of servants, agricultural labourers, or permanent migrants from Eastern to Western Europe. See, for example, Helma Lutz, *Vom Weltmarkt in den Privathaushalt. Die neuen Dienstmädchen im Zeitalter der Globalisierung* (Opladen and Farmington Hills, 2007).

**47** Manuela Boatca, "Second Slavery versus Second Serfdom: Local Labor Regimes of the Global Periphery", in: Said Arjomand (ed.), *Social Theory and Regional Studies in the Global Age* (New York, 2013), pp. 361 – 388.

**48** *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte*, Special Issue, 3, 2 (2002); Claus Füllberg-Stolberg, "Zwangsarbeit in der Moderne. Vergleichende Überlegungen", *ibid.*, pp. 71 – 88. On this see also De Vito's chapter (4.3) on convict labour in the present volume.

**49** See, for example, Andrzej Gliwa, "Krise durch Plünderung. Die zivilisatorische und ökonomische Entwicklung im Grenzgebiet des Osmanischen Reiches und der polnisch-litauischen Adelsrepublik", in: Adamczyk and Lehnstaedt, *Wirtschaftskrisen als Wendepunkte*, pp. 289 – 318, on Tartar raids; Alison Frank-Johnson, "The Children of the Desert and the Laws of the Sea: Austria, Great Britain, the Ottoman Empire, and the Mediterranean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century", *American Historical Review*, 117, 2 (2012), pp. 410 – 444, on the Austrian Lloyd involvement in slave transports to the Ottoman Empire.

## Multiple approaches to research on work and labour

While the requirements of funding contribute to the merging of individual scholars into trans-national communities, language and habit prevent dialogue between different epistemic communities. We shall look here at three communities that all deal with work and labour. First will be the museology of work and labour, second its social and economic history, and third the new global history. Finally, we shall consider the potential of labour research to serve as a means of dialogue and cooperation among them.

### Museology of work and labour

There is an old tradition in European anthropology of addressing social change by collecting symbolic items from the past, exhibiting them in museums, and thereby coming to terms with the transition to a new period. It began in the nineteenth century when, to preserve the memory of the world of artisans and old village life, their artefacts were transferred to local museums as industrial manufacturing replaced traditional handicrafts. Then, another wave of musealization took place from the 1970s onwards, when industrial manufacturing disappeared because of computer-aided rationalization or outsourcing. Former factories, mines, workplaces, industrial districts, and workers' housing were saved from destruction by turning them into museums, heritage zones, and historical entertainment parks.[50] Open-air museums, or *Skansens*,[51] which represented traditional peasant work all over Europe were joined by museums and heritage trails commemorating industrial labour. The trend began in the former industrial regions of Great Britain, with their rich heritage of architecture, machinery, and artefacts. They attracted former employees, who could show their worlds of labour and reassert their otherwise lost identities as workers.[52] As with the adoption of the factory system in about 1800 in continental Europe and following Great Britain's example, labour museums and industrial heritage spread all over Europe, blossoming wherever enterprises had closed, and old build-

**50** Hildegard K. Vieregg, *Geschichte des Museums* (Munich, 2008); Peggy Levitt, *Artifacts and Allegiances. How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display* (Berkeley, CA, 2015).

**51** The name of the first open-air museum (Sweden, 1880s) has become a trademark.

**52** The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, founded in 1967, includes thirty-five historic sites, including the Museum of the Gorge, the recreated Victorian town of Blists Hill, and the Coalbrookdale Museum. This project can be seen as the starting point and reference for many other European projects to preserve memories of industrial labour, technology, and social relations. http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/about-us/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/, last accessed 10 October 2016.

ings considered worthy of preservation were turned into museums.[53] Often such memorials were established on the initiative of communities and local associations, relying on individual enthusiasm and voluntary work. Bigger projects support permanent staff, collection departments and strategies with changing exhibitions, and education programmes. Many serve as pilot institutions and models for smaller projects.

While architects care for the conservation of the buildings, cultural anthropologists and historians develop concepts of presenting, interpreting, and visualizing for visitors the transition from the industrial to the post-industrial era. Projects like that are purely local, but in dealing with a European trend they address a general problem. As they contribute to finding new forms of income and identity for former industrial regions, they become part of the tourism industry, making it easier to raise funds and secure publicity, at the risk of turning what was a harmful process of industrial closures, rationalization, and job loss into something like an industrial Disneyland, as if there had only ever been fun and romanticism.

In spite of the tension between commerce and conservation, labour museums and trails have engendered research into labour conditions in regions, industries, and even specific companies, contributing to the rise of a professional network of museum experts. Focusing on everyday life, they document not only the work done in factories, fields, and mines, they also include in their agenda housing, housework, gardening, social care, workers' culture, and political organization. Taking place outside academic institutions, the research carried out in museums, exhibitions, and industrial heritage trails is often neglected in academia. In fact, such efforts rescue documents, artefacts, and memories of work that deserve high esteem. They serve as a link between collection, conservation, research, and public education. Most national museums of technology and industry nowadays include consideration of the history of labour, reorganizing collections and exhibitions with a special focus on work.[54] Local labour museums often rely on the benevolent cooperation of former factory owners or workers, and when such experts are no longer available in person labour museums will face a serious challenge. In response, public support for private museums can help to improve concepts and marketing, bridging the gap between voluntary and professional work in the field.

**53** For an overview of major labour museums, see the homepage of the International Association of Labour Museums http://worklab.info/, last accessed 10 October 2016. Information on small local museums can be found on various regional websites.

**54** The Technical Museum Vienna (opened 2011) hosts a ground-breaking exhibition "On Labour", presenting historical Austrian artefacts against the background of current technical change, globalization, and the challenge of redefining work.

## Social and economic history

In the interwar period social and economic history split from economics and political history and became established as a historical sub-discipline with separate academic departments and journals. Since then it has specialized further in the conditions and relations of labour under changing historical conditions, but since the 1990s labour-related topics have lost their attraction for students and scholars. Those subjects have been replaced by questions of identity that were no longer related to class struggles and conflicts of interest but to diversity, which became an appealing approach. However, there was no establishment of links between matters of gender or ethnicity and economic interests, nor between labour relations and social inequalities in a changing global environment. The unity of social, economic, and cultural aspects that was characteristic of the profile of social and economic history in the early days of the sub-discipline were eroded, giving way to fragmentation into different epistemic communities. Cultural historians emphasized "discourse" and "representation", avoiding contact with the "real world". For their part social historians with an interest in material culture were reluctant to admit the impact of discourse on society. Both sorts of historians had difficulties in making theoretical assessments of changes wrought on their specific milieus by new social and economic environments on a global scale. It was due mainly to the rise of globalist and feminist approaches that the history of work and labour could be placed into a new and appealing conceptual framework. Based on a broad notion of work and labour that went beyond the factory and the proletarian household, and acknowledging the variety of labour relations beyond the industrialized cores of the global economy, older research on the industrial era could open itself up to a broader acknowledgement of shifting technological and economic cycles. Fresh eyes noted changing regional participation and leadership, and saw the impact they had on the definition and perception of work and labour. Institutions like the International Conference of Labour and Social History (ITH), with its annual conferences, held in Linz since 1964,[55] and the International Research Centre "Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History" (re:work) at Humboldt University,[56] founded in 2009, offered new arenas, programmes, incentives, funding, and collaborative workplaces for global labour studies. In both cases the International Institute of Social History (IISG), represented by Marcel van der Linden, who was once its research director, played an important role in reconciling old and new approaches to labour history.[57]

**55** http://www.ith.or.at/start/d_index.htm, last accessed 10 October 2016. For the reorientation of this labour research institution towards global connections, see Marcel van der Linden (ed.), *Labour History Beyond Borders: Concepts and Explorations* (Leipzig, 2010).

**56** https://rework.hu-berlin.de/en/news.html, last accessed 10 October 2016.

**57** Karl Heinz Roth, "Ein Enzyklopädist des kritischen Denkens: Marcel van der Linden, der heterodoxe Marxismus und die Global Labour History", *Sozial.Geschichte Online*, 9 (2012), pp. 116–244.

### New global history

With the rise of a global approach to social, cultural, and economic history, the dead ends of classic Eurocentric narratives could be avoided. Asking questions from the perspective of non-European regions required rethinking old concepts. In the case of the Industrial Revolution, a key topic both for industrial and labour history, the idea of a British beginning and advance, rooted in the internal conditions and dynamics of British society, could no longer be claimed in light of the leading position of Asian manufacture, which British merchant companies had imported and distributed worldwide from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries until domestic producers began their own successful industrial catching up with the help of centralized mechanical production in factories.[58] Similarly, the catching up done by other industrializing regions on the European continent cannot be explained unless the changing global conditions of the British advance are taken into account. Furthermore, another key concept, that of capitalism and the relationships of production to commodification and the accumulation of capital, appears in a new light and raises new questions if it is looked at from a global instead of a national perspective.[59]

## The epistemic potential of work and labour

Among the challenges that might contribute to a renewal of social, cultural, and economic history, work and labour have the potential to serve as links crossing existing borders and reassembling fragmentation among epistemic communities. First, the concept of work and labour has to be delinked from its reduction to paid labour and employment and be opened up to all kinds of activities that are necessary for human life.[60] Second, the debate about how people assess work requires historical context, in other words its social, spatial, and temporal background. Work must be seen in discursive, relational categories instead of one fixed one.[61] Third, if we in-

**58** Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, 2014); Andrea Komlosy, *Arbeit. Eine globalhistorische Perspektive. 13.–21. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 2014); van der Linden, *Workers of the World*.

**59** Jürgen Kocka and Marcel van der Linden (eds), *Capitalism: The Reemergence of a Historical Concept* (London, 2016).

**60** Jürgen Kocka and Claus Offe (eds), *Geschichte und Zukunft der Arbeit* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, 2000); Josef Ehmer and Catharina Lis (eds), *The Idea of Work in Europe from Antiquity to Modern Time*s (Farnham, 2009).

**61** In the project "The Production of Work" (POW, http://pow.univie.ac.at/, last accessed 10 October 2016) at the University of Vienna, local studies have investigated in depth the discourses between public authorities and workers from 1880 to the 1930s, thus establishing notions of what work was in the public consciousness and what it ought to be, in contrast to activities not regarded as work. See also Sigrid Wadauer, Thomas Buchner, and Alexander Mejstrik (eds), *The History of Labour Inter-*

clude all parts of the world and adopt a *longue durée* perspective we will have the tools necessary to launch a global history of work. Moreover, the IISG Collaboratory on the Global History of Labour Relations, 1500 – 2000, has been preparing a taxonomy and database to be able to assess the changing composition and distribution of labour relations from the 1500s to the 2000s, so preparing the ground for embedding case studies into a global quantitative framework.[62]

In that broad sense there is rarely a question that is not related to work, for – if seen through the prism of a broad concept of work – other topics will appear in a new light.[63] Identity, social stratification, class, gender, age, migration, education, social inequality, and social movements all show intersections with work, allowing connections to be made among all those topics. Work establishes relations with other academic disciplines, too, from the social and technical sciences to the humanities. Making work a key concept turned out to be just as beneficial when looking at transdisciplinary and international centres and networks of global labour research. Examples there are the networks of global labour history that take shape at the regional level in Africa, India, Latin America, and Europe, or at the global level with the institutional backing of the IISG in Amsterdam, re:work in Berlin, the ITH in Austria, and the Global and European Studies Institute (GESI) in Leipzig – to name just some of the European driving forces of such endeavours. Work is the key subject of the online journal *Workers of the World*, which deals with strikes and social conflicts and involves scholars from all over the world.[64]

Awareness of work's great relevance to power relations and the struggle to maintain or overcome inequality in subsistence, income, status, and fulfilment is a broad avenue to historical research. Historians undoubtedly need such awareness if they are to make any impact on key questions of social change, both in the community and at state level, and in their consideration of international relations and the global inequalities that always rely on unequal access to work and education, unequal pay, and labour conditions. Work is a moral category in all world religions, philosophies, and political concepts. The question of whether it should be sought and acquired or got rid of is contested. Is it a source of satisfaction, or only of income and thereby access to social security? Work is a key category of both utopian and dystopian thinking from Thomas More to Aldous Huxley; it is addressed in numerous contemporary novels, films, and artistic works. Evaluating historical utopias is therefore an important part of investigating the historical variety of concepts and realizations of work.[65]

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*mediation: Institutions and Finding Employment in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York and Oxford, 2015).

**62** https://collab.iisg.nl/web/labourrelations, last accessed 10 October 2016.

**63** See my synopsis of various approaches to global labour history in Andrea Komlosy, "Work and Labor Relations", in: Kocka and van der Linden, *Capitalism*, pp. 33 – 70.

**64** https://workersoftheworldjournal.wordpress.com/, last accessed 10 October 2016.

**65** Andreas Heyer, *Die Utopie steht links!* (Berlin, 2006) gives a chronological overview of prominent utopian writings. Felix Wemheuer, "Dining in Utopia: An Intellectual History of the Origins of the Chi-

Assessing changing concepts and discourses about work can enrich the debate about the future of work that comes up against the obvious deficiencies of our global economic order with regard to its ability to satisfy needs and hopes.

## Conclusion

This article supports the idea that the historiography of work cannot be separated from work's transformation and the concomitant altered labour conditions and relations. The relocation of industrial mass production to newly industrializing countries since the 1970s and the decline and neoliberal restructuring of economies and labour in capitalist Western and communist East European states affected how work and labour were perceived and interpreted both in present times and from a historical perspective. While the "cultural turn" diverted scholarly interest towards questions of identity and representation, the "spatial turn" has emphasized location and place, opening the way to studying regional imbalances, social inequality, and the synchronicity of various types of labour at different places in globalized commodity chains.

Initiatives towards global labour history originated from academic institutions in countries that were either directly involved in colonizing activities or played leading roles as cores of the capitalist world economy. In Eastern Europe, labour history, including the history of international labour movements, enjoyed prominence under state socialism, but lost its attractiveness after the transformation. Interest and activity were revived only when scholars were able to establish connections between transformations at local, national, and global levels, so that they could then assess contemporary and historical processes of peripheralization.

When state industry was dismantled in the 1990s and replaced by production sites in the framework of transnational production and care chains, Western Europe's borders with the eastern part of the continent became porous. Eastern Europe was transformed into a peripheral part of what was always seen as "The West", on the one hand facing a continuing process of military and political as well as economic enlargement, but on the other seeing Western labour markets open up for migrants. In academia, Western institutions and programmes exert a particular pull for young scholars, who enthusiastically mutate into a sort of transnational species of mobile cosmopolitans, often obliged to accept flexibility and precarious working conditions as they beat the paths of their academic careers.

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nese Public Dining Halls", in: Matthias Middell and Felix Wemheuer (eds), *Hunger and Scarcity under State-Socialism* (Leipzig, 2012), pp. 277–302, relates Chinese attempts to socialize cooking and eating to influences of European utopian thinking.

# Suggested reading

Bade, Klaus *et al.* (eds). *The Encyclopedia of Migration and Minorities in Europe: From the 17th Century to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Barendt, Regina and Bettina Musiolek. *Workers' Voices. The Situation of Women in the Eastern European and Turkish Garment Industries* (Meißen: Evangelische Akademie, 2015).

Bartha, Eszter. *Alienating Labour: Workers on the Road from Socialism to Capitalism in East Germany and Hungary* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2013).

Brunnbauer, Ulf. *Globalizing Southeastern Europe: Emigrants, America, and the State since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016).

Cerman, Markus. *Villagers and Lords in Eastern Europe, 1300–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Ehmer, Josef and Catharina Lis (eds). *The Idea of Work in Europe from Antiquity to Modern Time*s (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

Hoerder, Dirk and Leslie Page Moch (eds). *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1996).

Komlosy, Andrea. *Work. The Last 1000 Years* (London and New York: Verso, 2017).

Małowist, Marian. "The Economic and Social Development of the Baltic Countries from the 15th to the 17th Centuries", *Economic History Review*, Second Series, 12, 2 (1959), pp. 177–189.

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Stanziani, Alessandro. *Bondage. Labor and Rights in Eurasia from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2014).

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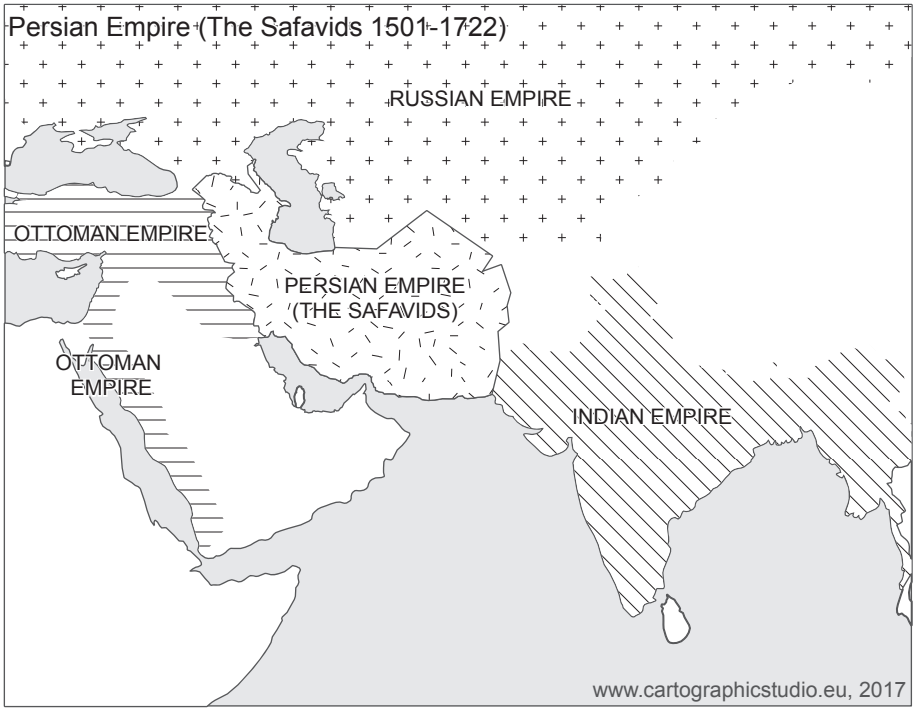
Persian Empire (The Safavids 1501-1722)
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
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PERSIAN EMPIRE
(THE SAFAVIDS)
OTTOMAN
EMPIRE
INDIAN EMPIRE
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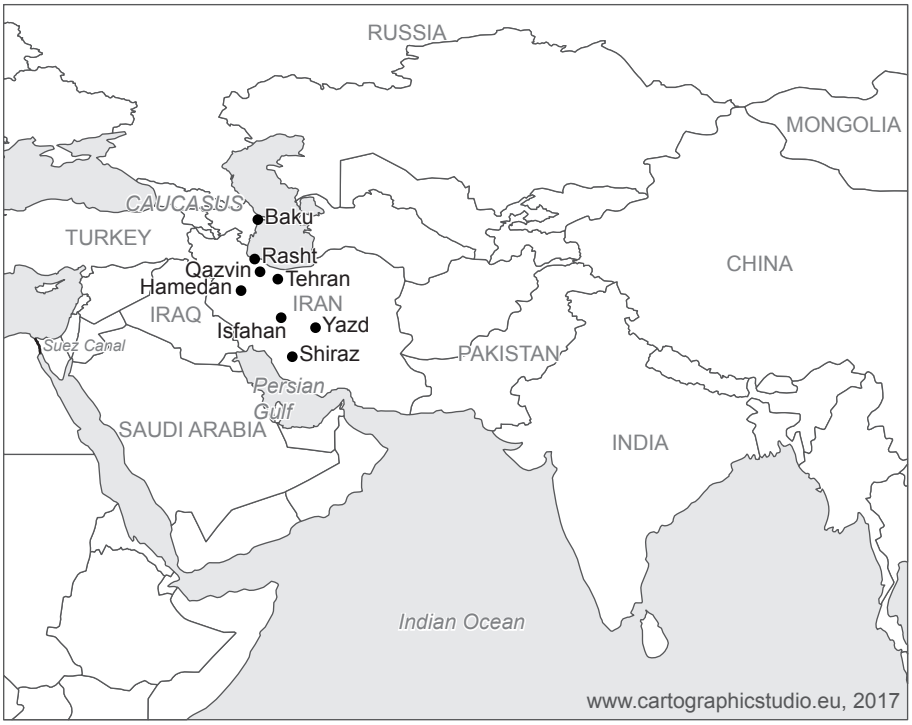
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