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Globalization and Historical Writing since the „Global Village“

Globalization as Dialectic of Historicity and Discourse

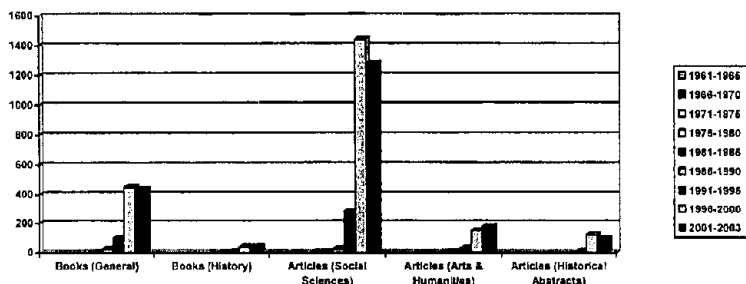
Following the three main analytical variables of economy, ideology and politics, the examination of globalization, or current globalization, as a historical phenomenon stands out as an integrated and interdependent „economy that works as a unit in real time on a planetary basis“. This economy relies on information superhighways and communication networks that simultaneously contribute to enhancing a global culture. The political realm, however, lags behind this twofold trend of compression of both the temporal and the spatial dimensions. Despite the constitution of regional and global political institutions, the nation-state persists as a central institution. The impacts of economical and cultural globalizing effects on the nation-state remain under discussion.

Scholars date these historical developments at different points throughout the second half of the 20th century up to today. Indeed, these historical developments are accompanied by an additional phenomenon: the construction of a discourse about globalization. Probably the first step in this direction is due to McLuhan. His contribution concerns mass media and communication, which are the means of both the economical and cultural developments. In his book *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1962), McLuhan claims that distance disappeared and psychic, social, economic and political parochialism ended. Since 1962 the volume of publications on the globalization has increasingly grown, not only in the social sciences but also in the humanities. These publications have to do with other issues as well, such as environment, diseases, war, diasporas, change, etc., which are now defined as Global. Therefore, the definition of globalization suggested here encompasses the dialectic of historicity and discourse as a feedback circle. This definition implies that besides the well-known quantitative trends of economical data we must also examine their correlation with the quantitative trend of academic discourse. What is the quantitative extent of the academic discourse on globalization? What is the amount of publications on the subject? What trend do these publications follow?¹

1 M. McLuhan, *War and Peace in the Global Village*, New York 1968.

The first book on globalization held by the Library of Congress dates from 1982. In the five-year period 1986–1990 twenty-four books on the topic are incorporated to the library collection. Since then an explosion on globalization writing has taken place: ninety-eight books between 1991–1995, 450 books between 1996–2000, and for the first part of the current five-year period at least 435 books have been already published. The publication of articles follows a similar trend. According to the *Social Science Index of Citations*, there are only one, two, five and twenty six articles on globalization for the periods 1966–1970, 1976–1980 1981–1985 and 1986–1990, respectively. Nevertheless, since the watershed of 1991 280 and 1444 articles appeared for the successive five-year periods. A similar trend emerges from the *Arts & Humanities Index of Citations*, however its scope is about ten percent of that from the social sciences.

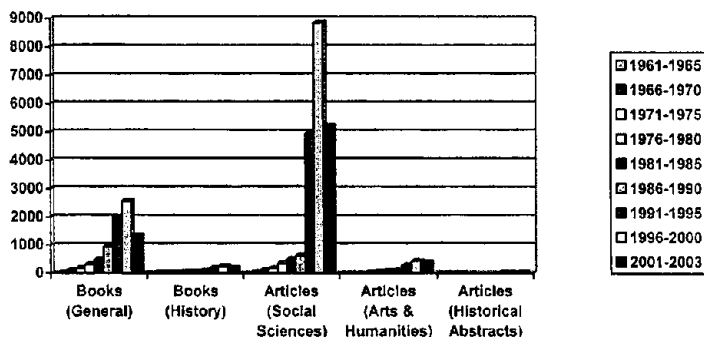
Publications on Globalization since 1961



Figures are even more impressive when we turn to publications on global issues. First, the turning point in the attention to the global as a concept took place in 1961–1965, when already fourteen books were entitled „whatever global“ or „global whatever.“ Since then a multiplication of the amount of publications occurs every five years. Only in the period 1996–2000 the growth became less drastic (from 2010 between 1991–1995 to 2568 between 1996–2000). This difference between the figures for globalization and Global issues in the publication of books is consistent with the flow of articles in respect to both the timing of the turning point and to the increasing volume. The only difference between books and articles is that there is no slow down at all in the speed of article publication. Again, there is a huge gap between social sciences and humanities. Here the proportion is twenty to

one: for each item published in the humanities twenty are published in the social sciences.

Publications on Global Issues



What is the share of historical writing in this discursive construction? Rather disappointingly, the *Historical Abstract* reports that the globalization as a topic appeared lately, in 1993. Until 1995, there were eight articles concerning globalization in historical journals. For historians, the end of the 1990's marked the turning point instead of its beginnings as for social scientists. This later turning point was also much more drastic. One hundred twenty articles on globalization appeared in the 1996–2000 five-year period. For the current period since 2001, ninety-one articles on globalization have been already published. This twofold trend of late and drastic watershed is confirmed by the curve of book publications: two books in 1986–1990, thirty eight books for 1996–2000 and thirty nine books for the first half of the current period. However, much more important than the figures is the following question: what is the qualitative impact globalization had both as a historical phenomenon and as a discourse on historical writing?²

In the next part of this paper I shall turn to present three categories of historical writing that have developed in the context of globalization: first, global history, second, global or world perspective and third, world history.

² According to the Library of Congress as researched through the First Search database.

Conceptualizing Global History

The emergence of a new „sub-discipline“ is probably the most direct impact of globalization on historical writing. This self-proclaimed „sub-discipline“ is Global History. Historians belonging to this new sub field of study find contemporary history to be a singular temporal unit with unique characteristics. First, it has a new spatial dimension, the „spaceship earth“, that is, the thrust into space. Another prominent characteristic is the withdrawal of previous institutions, the territorial state being now unable to protect its citizens. Moreover, new phenomena are said to have appeared: multinational corporations, environmental problems, and nuclear threats. Although some signs of globalization may be detected in earlier periods, the „Global epoch“ or the „Age of globalization“ differs from them in its intensity and synchronicity.

Global history proposes a new perspective over a very short time span. Its unit of analysis, however, is ambiguous, because it comprehends both the nation-states and the global arena. In this way, it enhances not a single Global history, but a unique history of each and every nation-state in the frame of globalization. The central subjects approached by Global history include topics acute to the components of globalization's definitions, such as globalizing economy, globalizing culture (media, films, music, popular culture), globalizing civil society (human rights, NGO's), global moving (migration, refugees, tourism), and global versus local identities.³

However, the narrow window provided by the earliest definition of the realm for precedents, the so-called „earlier signs of the global epoch“ progressively widens. At this stage, they are going beyond „today globalization“ toward the „first great globalization“ of 1850-1914 as the big leap to more globally integrated markets. Between these two waves of globalization the world war period represents a loss of previous globalization achievements. Implicitly this argument may explain why global history at its beginnings concentrates only on the post world war period. In any case, the widening of the relation between globalization and history has at least two other expressions.⁴

3 B. Mazlish/R. Buultjens, R. (Eds.) *Conceptualizing Global History*, Boulder, Colo. 1993; ders., „Comparing Global History to World History“, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 28 (1998) 3, 385-395.

4 K. O'Rourke/J. Williamson, *Globalization and History: the Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1999.

Every History its own Globalization

A more diffuse and general influence of globalization on historical writing is the approach to several issues, and spatial units under the title „global“ or „world“. This trend shares two crucial assumptions with Global history. First, that a global history is possible for a delimited time span. Secondly, that a specific global history is feasible for each unit of analysis separately. Obviously, the crucial difference between both approaches is the chronological point of departure. While the only possible time span for Global history is the contemporary period, for the Global perspective there is not such limitation. Free of such constrain the global perspective provides a wide range of publications. Titles like *China in World History*, *Islamic History as Global History*, and *American History in Global perspective* exemplify the global perspective on space units. In what ways do Chinese, Muslim or American histories become different throughout a global perspective? Let us review very briefly the case of Adshead's book, *China in World History* as an example. First, Chinese history is contextualized in the frame of four extensive civilizations, which define the space variable placing China as the core region of East Asia. Second, the criterion for periodization is the type of relationship between China and the rest of the world, which defines the time variable into six periods different from the usual dynastic-cycle chronology. From this time-space frame emerge the central topics of the book: the routes of contacts between China and the world, what traveled along this routes (peoples, goods, techniques, ideas, values, pathologies, institutions, and myths), and finally what contributions these exchanges made to propagate a „convergence“ of human history. Summing up, the history of China is reformulated as China's place in the history of contacts between civilizations in their road toward globalization.⁵

A similar transformation is recognized in the writing of the history of several topics from a global perspective, being them for instance environmentalism, consumption, gender, war, and others. For instance, Guha's book *Environmentalism a Global History* exemplifies a similar emphasis on spatial contextualization, diffusion processes, and even the overall divergent tendencies are exposed as result of dependent ties. Following these assumptions, the history of environmental thought and action is the history of two waves that crossed the world from the eighteenth century up to the present. Both waves create particular forms of environmental ideologies and organizations in different places, such as the demand for environmental justice by

5 S. Adshead, *China in World History*, New York 1995; R. Eaton, *Islamic History as Global History*, Washington, D.C. 1990; D. Russo, *American History from a Global Perspective: an Interpretation*, Westport, Conn. 2000.

„Radical American environmentalism“, the political highly influential Green Party in Europe, or the simultaneous demands of environmental and social justice by South Americans movements.⁶

Now, after the presentation of two types of self-contained global history it is time to consider the uncontained mode of global history.

Expanding Globalization: World History (including world system approach)

We may find that globalization has an ever-broader impact on historical writing in another historiographical category, that of World History. This branch of historical knowledge confronted Global history at least in defining the time span and the unit of analysis. Here the claim that historians usually approached the past with questions inspired on present conditions becomes evident. Globalization, as an historical phenomenon as well as discourse stimulated historians to wonder since when humanity has experienced a global history. After reading the most prominent works on world history, the answer becomes apparent. The origins of a global history in the writing of world historians are correlated negatively to the passing of time. The more time passes by, the earlier historians establish the beginning of world history as a global history. In other words, the more intensive the dialectic of global historicity and discourse becomes, the earlier the origins of globalization are found. This negative regression curve concerning the contents of world history complements the previously mentioned positive regression curve concerning the volume of publications and the passing of time. What are the main stages of this retrocession in the quest for a global world history? Putting it very shortly throughout several stages provided by a selected group of authors, the first stage backward is that of industrialization. Because of this process, Hobsbawm titled the third chapter of his *Age of Capital* (1975) „The Unification of the World“. He states there that before the middle of the 19th century the history of the world was composed by separated histories of regions unconnected beyond some superficial mutual knowledge or contact. The industrial revolution was responsible for the creation of interdependence between the different regions of the world. The central factor of this interdependence is the new „world market“. This market was able to develop thanks to innovations in the realm of communication. The main examples are train networks, the biggest public enterprise in history, which supplemented the navigation lines now accelerated by the steamships and the Suez and later Panama canals, and the telegraph whose cables covered great part

6 R. Guha, *Environmentalism: a Global History*, New York 2000.

of the world by the 1870's. The development of communications demanded new forms of international coordination, as the Telegraphic International Union and The Postal Universal Union. Besides their utility for businessmen, these innovations enhanced cultural developments, mainly the progress of journalism, including especially the world news. Mass migration becomes another important factor in the process of „transforming the planet into one unique world“. According to Hobsbawm, by the 1870's globalization had existed as in the 1970's except for a matter of intensity: more machines, more production, and more business.⁷

Immanuel Wallerstein pushed the origins of the globalization process back in his *modern world-system* (1974). Not industrialization but mercantilism marked the beginnings of capitalism. More important for our discussion is that not intra-societal processes but interdependence between regions across the world brings the capitalist society. The constituent parts of the system are defined as core, semi periphery and periphery. The characteristics of these components are permanent but not their agents. Up and down mobility exist in the system. The crucial elements that transform the world into a single unit of analysis are the world division of labor, the economic Kondratieff and logistic cycles affecting it, and the inter-states relations including the quest for hegemony and its own cycle. The world system, however, does not encompass the world but mainly the Atlantic basin. Only later was the rest of the world progressively integrated into the system.⁸

A contestation to this thesis comes in *Before European hegemony: the world system A.D. 1250–1350* (1989) Janet Abu-Lughod traces the slow development of eight commercial „circuits“: Northwest/Mediterranean Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and Black sea basins, the Middle East, the Steppe of central Asia, West and East India's shores, Southeast Asia and China. These circuits have been webbing commercial links between them until the formation of a world system between 1250 and 1350. The foundation of this system was the city that served as a center of its own region. Metaphorically, the system is presented as an „archipelago of cities“, a network of world cities. In contrast to the European world system, before the European hegemony, the world system is said to be based on cooperative and mutually interdependent relations, without a single participant dominating it all. Instead, most of the participants benefited from coexistence and mutual tolerance since it was not based on „short term plunder [but on] long-term exchange“. However, the system bore in itself the seeds of its own destruction: the

7 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875*, New York 1975.

8 I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York 1974.

spread of the Bubonic Plague from China throughout Asia toward Europe. It is the disruption of this system the appropriate context proposed to explain the subsequent European capitalist hegemony.⁹

In an earlier stage, however, Marshall Hodgson had already depicted the perception of Eurasia and north Sahara Africa as the proper unit of analysis. In his writing, this area did not appear as a world system, but he labeled it the *Oikoumene*. Their central agents were not the cities and their network as such but Islamic civilization. The global character of the emergence of Islam derives from its longitudinal expansion, which for the first time provides a corridor connecting directly the Asian Far East and the European Far West. Eaton in *Islamic History as Global History* (1990) further developed this idea.¹⁰

However, William McNeill pushes back the North Africa-Eurasian unit of analysis to an earlier stage. At the beginnings of the Common Era a „first closure of ecumene“ occurred. The nature of this closure derives from the simultaneous emergence of bordering empires across Eurasia. This political situation favored transportation, communication, trade, and migration, but also epidemics responsible for the collapse of empires and by that of the enclosure itself.¹¹

Hodgson and McNeill represent an exception to the negative correlation between date of publication and origin of globalization proposed as a metaphorical rule. However, since Wallerstein and Abu Lughod crossed the capitalist border of globalization, industrial and mercantile respectively, the way was paved for earlier globalizations in later publications. Precisely one of the inspiring figures of the original world system took the big leap backward. In *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* (1993) Andre Günter Frank states that the main dynamics of the world system oriented the course of history since its beginnings. The process of capital accumulation, the establishment of core-periphery relationships, the operation of cycles of expansion and contraction, and the existence of hegemony and rivalry relationships, all apply equally well to pre-modern as to modern times. These dynamics are taking place from the interactions between Mesopotamian and Egyptian societies about 3000 BCE and has expanded in size and scale ever since. This overreaching statement is barely accompanied, however, by the

9 J. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: the World System A.D. 1250–1350*, New York 1989.

10 M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam; a Short History of Islamic Civilization*, Chicago 1974.

11 W. H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West: a History of the Human Community*, New York/London 1963.

tracing of eight long cycles that are presented as the economic and political history of the eastern hemisphere between 1700 BCE and 1700 CE.¹²

Chase-Dunn, C. approaches this proliferation of world systems from a comparative point of view. In his „*Cross-World-System Comparisons*” (1995) he proposes a frame to reconcile the debates between previous authors, assuming that their works are not excluding but demanding a comparative analysis. He claims that world systems range from small to global in terms of the populations linked and the spatial extent of interactions. From the contrast of similarities and differences, ten types of world systems are presented: nomadic foragers, sedentary foragers, big man, simple chiefdoms, complex chiefdoms, primary states, primary empires, secondary empires, commercializing systems and Modern world system. Once all history was reformulated in terms of globalization process there is no more place for further retrocession but prehistory.¹³

In *The Global Imperative: An Interpretive History of the Spread of Humankind* (1997) Clark, R. reaches the earlier possible stage of globalization by tracing it back to the pre-agricultural *Homo erectus*. According to him, the first diffusionist historic or prehistoric development, named by him „out of Africa“, was already a global one. This was the first episode of humankind spread across different geographic and social spaces until the full encompassing of the globe. Therefore, the concept of globalization essentially focuses the processes of human society diffusion across space. These processes vary throughout time according to the distances covered, the volume of the materials moved, the speed with which they are moved, and the diversity of materials moved. Nevertheless, all the seven stages formulated, „Out of Africa“, „The Neolithic Revolution“, „Ancient Cities and Trade Routes“, „Age of Discovery“, „The Partnership of Steam and Coal“, „Petroleum and the Internal Combustion Engine“, and the „Information Age“ share as their common characteristic the role of entropy in the spread of humankind. The concept of entropy, imported from the physical science of thermodynamics, states that all kinds of energy spontaneously spread out from where they are concentrated to where they are more dispersed, if they are not hindered from doing that. From entropy follows, that globalization is an imperative of evolution toward social complexity. No particular historical actor, either individual or collective, was necessarily aware during the process.¹⁴

12 A. Frank/B. Gills (Hrsg.), *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* London 1993.

13 C. Chase-Dunn, „Cross-World-System Comparisons”, in: S. K. Sanderson, *Civilizations and World Systems: Studying World-Historical Change*, Walnut Creek, Calif. 1995.

When chronology became exhausted, with no more room for quantitative retrocession, a qualitative transformation took place in world historical writing. In *Globalization in World History* (2002), Hopkins and others deliberately approach globalization as an ever-present phenomenon in history, but responding to different definitions at different historical stages. Instead of detecting globalization's point of departure, the authors assume world history to be organized according to several waves of globalization. Each wave of globalization is different by definition, and they do not follow a linear pattern of succession. Moreover, different waves of globalization can overlap, interact, compete or symbiotically intermingle. Therefore, this approach implicitly combines two historical strategies. On the one hand, it deliberately adopts arguments about the present in order to guide our understanding of the past. On the other hand, it rejects an inverted teleological view of history, resulting in a tense equilibrium between Bloch's proposal of understanding of the past by the present and Loewenthal's recall of the past as a foreign country.

The first type of globalization is named „archaic“ and refers to the entire historical time span before industrialization and nation-state formation. Its generative agents are kings and warriors, merchants and pilgrims responsible of the creation of „globalizing networks“, both sea-borne and land based. The major social formations created by them are alternatively pre-modern empires or city networks. These formations preserve the original diversity of the component parts rather than pushing toward standardization. Their goal is more to co-ordinate than assimilate. The limitations of the impact of these formations are attributed to technical and institutional constrictions, as well as to the size of markets and the extent of the division of labor. Once these limitations were banished after industrialization and nation-state formation, a global integration of raw materials producers and manufacturing centers of Europe occurred. In this second type of globalization, called „modern globalization“ the political integration was characterized by the formation of an international system of relations whose strategies of control are assimilation and association. However, a third type of globalization is distinguished in-between the two previously mentioned, during the 16th and 17th centuries. This type of globalization is named „proto-globalization“. The main argument is that at the eve of the major transformations of the 19th century, the pre-industrial manufacturing, finance and services grow considerably. Simultaneously, political entities strengthened the links between territory, taxation and sovereignty, a process presented as „military fiscalism“. Both de-

14 R. Clark, *The Global Imperative: an Interpretive History of the Spread of Humankind*, Boulder, Co. 1997.

velopments enhanced the circuits of exchange as the salient characteristic of this type of globalization. The fourth and last type of globalization is the contemporary one existing since the 1950's. Called „post-colonial globalization“, it is presented as a product of one hegemonic superpower, new forms of regional integration and the creation of supra-territorial organizations. Between the most prominent impacts of it stand out the elimination of isolation, the unraveling of the nation-state and a redefinition of frontiers in the frame of a supra-national borderless world, according to circuits of trade, financial flows, patterns of migration and systems of belief.¹⁵

The itinerary followed by world history, especially in the last fifteen years, is astonishing. What an enormous journey in so short a period! Besides the speed of world history development lies its vitality but also some problems. We may attribute several contributions to the incipient world history. One of them is its corrective impact on the „postmodernist turn“ of the last decade. More precisely, there are two corrective impacts. On the one hand, the predominance of material conditions implicit in the definitions of globalization may balance the attention toward the text as a means, instead of the text as goal in itself, and also balance the concentration on historical images and representations in favor of historical processes. On the other hand, world history provides a new attempt against the skepticism or rejection of „totalizing project“ replacing them with a search under the tracks of what McNeill refers to as the search of „perspective and proportions, not details“. Moreover, world history approach undermines several profound assumptions of traditional historiography. The most evident of them is the definition of the unit of analysis, the world or at least part of it instead the nation-state or, at maximum, a region. This change is related to several crucial assumptions concerning historical writing. First, the redefinition of the spatial dimension is concomitantly related to a redefinition of the temporal dimension. Instead of focusing time from a diachronic perspective, the encompassing of a wider spatial unit encourages a synchronic perspective of time. Second, the transition from a diachronic to a synchronic perspective of time is related to the passage from an endogenous causal attribution toward an exogenous one. These contributions may enrich beyond historiography and even branches of social sciences, and by that, making the globalization's lagging field of historiography into what globalization theorist may call a convergent one. Another development due to World History is the transformation of core curriculum in several universities, beginning from new introductory courses on world history and ending in doctoral programs in this field. This development was followed by the publication of some twenty

15 A. G. Hopkins (Hrsg.), *Globalization in world history*, London 2002.

textbooks in world history in the last decade. Nevertheless, besides these achievements and contributions lie some problems. To put it very shortly, recent world history has taken us from a polarity according to which there was no globalization until the last decades into an opposite polarity according to which there is no history outside globalization. Here probably lies the great challenge of conceptualization.

Globalizing Historical Writing: Before and After the „Global Village“

One of the main arguments sustained here is that the three historical approaches presented, global history, global perspective and world history are fundamentally results of the impact of globalization as both historicity and discourse on historical writing. This argument invites a thinking experiment whose research design must be the dependent variable (historical writing) before and after the application of the independent one (globalization). In other words, the comparison deals with the examination of historical writing before and after globalization.

There is of course an extensive list of books and authors that approached the history of the world before globalization, or I should say current globalization. To mention only a few: Augustinus (354–430) *De civitate Dei*, Otto of Freising (1112–1158) *Chronica sive historia de duabus civitatibus*, Rashid al-din Fadl Allah (1247–1318) *Jāmi al-tawarikh*, Ibn Khaldun (1406–1332) *Muqaddima*, Bossuet (1704–1627) *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, Voltaire (1778–1694) *La Philosophie de l'histoire*, and *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, Smith (1723–1790) *The Wealth of Nations*, Hegel (1770–1831) *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Ranke (1795–1886) *Weltgeschichte*, Marx (1818–1883) *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Lamprecht (1856–1915) *Zur universal-geschichtlichen Methodenbildung*, Weber (1864–1920) *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, H. J. Mackinder (1861–1947) *The Geographical Pivot of History*. (1904), J. Burckhardt (1818–1897) *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*. (1905), O. Spengler (1880–1936) *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* (1918–1922), H. W. Wells (1866–1946) *The Outline of History* (1920), A. Toynbee (1889–1975) *A Study of History* (1934–1961), P. Sorokin (1899–1968) *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1937–1941), L. Mumford (1895–1990) *The Condition of Man*. (1944), K. Jaspers (1883–1969) *The Origin and Goal of History* (1953), Ch. Dawson (1889–1970) *The Dynamics of World History* (1956).

However, these books do not fit in any one of the three current historical approaches under examination: global history, global perspective and world history. Their foundations are completely different and responding to two

different categories: metahistory, which is the writing of history following a permanent principle or set of principles and to a lesser extent universal history, which is the presentation of separate units of analysis in an arithmetic sum until the encompassing of the globe or part of it.

A much more focused and useful formulation of this experimental thinking is to contrast the attempts to encompass world history at the earlier dating of globalization as historicity, after World War II, with those made after the emergence of the formulation of „the global village“ and the subsequent discourse on globalization since the end of the 1960's. Here it is very instructive to stress that in the beginnings of globalization, *sensu stricto*, as historicity, according to the earlier dating (since late 1940's) the first attempts toward a world history were already made. These attempts concern the three fields considered previously: publication of books, periodical publications and teaching. The initiative in this direction was taken by an international organization, the UNESCO that in 1951 formed a special commission for that purpose: The *International Commission for a History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind*. The expectations were high. Ralph Turner, chief editor in charge of a staff of one thousand, forecast that UNESCO world history would be „the most influential ever written [...] a source from which all peoples can take a vision of humanity as a whole“. However, these several projects did not take off. The publication of *History of Humanity* had no significant repercussion. A second edition in progress since 1978 was published lately. The *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* reached their end after fourteen volumes were published over twenty years. As for the course in world history, it remains a dream that refused to become truth. Moreover, it is not only the total or partial failure of these three attempts that concern the proposed before and after „global village“-experiment. It is the mere conception of these projects that becomes indicative of the after effect. The *History of Humanity* is arranged according to an arithmetical principle, which means that the encompassing of the world is fulfilled by means of an additive strategy. As one of the members of the commission proudly expressed that: [the commission would] „present to man the sum total of his memories as a coherent whole“. The same is true concerning the *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale*. Its global character derives from the contention of articles concerning any unit of time and space along chronology and across the globe; not from the adoption of the world as a distinctive unit of analysis. Put in other way, these were not precisely world history attempts but universal history works of the old type. Only after the „Global village“ and the construction of the subsequent academic discourse were the first seeds of world history planted by the forefathers of the new field: Hodgson, Stavri-

anos, McNeill. Despite the already mentioned initial retard of the historical discipline, by the 1990's global and world historians converged in their ways with globalization. Several developments endorse this affirmation. The founding of historical associations: the World history association and its *Journal of world history* and *World history bulletin* in North America; *The Karl Lamprecht-Gesellschaft/European Network on Global and Universal History* and its journal *Comparativ* and bulletin. Several collections and individual volumes in world history were published. Courses in world history were consolidated and expanded.¹⁶

Conclusion

To sum up, let me insist that the phenomenon and discourse of globalization had an important impact, albeit relatively late, on historical writing. This impact is expressed in three roads to a global past: global history, global perspective on whatever history and world history. In turn, these forms of writing history have made a valuable conceptual contribution to historical writing. They help balance the attention from the text as a goal towards the text as a means. They may retrieve the material variables besides the dominant concerns with representations and images. They have brought to the fore the need to consider not only ever-present diachronic dimension of time, but also the less usual synchronic one. In this way, they encourage to focus our attention on exogenous explanations as an alternative to endogenous ones, which are related to the unique, idiosyncratic, and compartmentalist biases.

As for the contents that raised the attention of world historians, I stressed that one central preoccupation in their writing is what Marc Bloch called *l'idole de l'origine*: since when is history a global one or since when does history occur under globalization? I would like to state the answer as an equation in the following form: in general, the later a world history has been written, the earlier it proposes that globalization began. I believe this sprint of the last ten years in the quest for finding the earliest possible beginning of globalization should bring historians and social scientists to clarify their concept of globalization at least as far as this concept refers to historical stages before current globalization. Are empires, cultural contacts, trade circuits,

16 International Commission for a History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind. *The History of Mankind: Cultural and Scientific Development*. New York 1963–1976; International Commission for the New Edition of the History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind. *History of Humanity*. (Rev. ed. of: *History of Mankind*) London/New York/Paris 1994 ff.

social networks, diffusion processes, migration patterns, and etc. all globalizations?

Let us go back to the definition of globalization that I suggested at the beginning. I define globalization as the dialectic of historicity and discourse as a feedback circle. In the case of contemporary historical writing, global and world history did not take off until both components, historicity and discourse, began their interaction. For historical research purposes, this definition may suggest to approach the study of comparative globalization not only from an ethic perspective, our post-factum reconstruction, but also from an emic perspective. Was there any sense of globalization for our subjects of research? At least, did their perceptions of the world change because of what we now consider as previous forms of globalization? We may point at a few perceptual changes just as first clues: the development of regional and comparative studies after Second World War; the fascination and disenchantment with the Orient developed since the Enlightenment; the theological questions arisen when Europeans meet the Native Americans; the medieval Europeans whom as a result of the missions into Asia realized, as stated in the *Directorium ad passagium faciendum*, that: „if we divide the inhabited part of the world into ten parts, we, the true Christians proclaimed as orthodox, are not even a tenth part...“ These suggestions may present this quest as worthy. When some kind of global process of any extent took place in the past, it probably arouses the attention of the contemporaries.¹⁷

In addition, beyond defining clearly the concept of globalization, we should consider the feasibility to apply it to several historical cases. Moreover, how are we going to compare between globalizations? Finally, are we going to compare between globalizations or should we instead try to connect between globalizations? How should we approach this task?

17 J. de Cora, *Directorium ad Faciendum Passagium Transmarinum* [ed. C. R. Beazley] New York 1907.