

Worlds Apart?

Futures of Global History

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in cooperation with Weltmuseum Wien

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Global history has come under scrutiny in recent years. Critics have bemoaned the field's failure to overcome colonial attitudes and Eurocentric perspectives (Falola, 2005; Sachsenmaier, 2006; Witz, 2016; Adelman, 2017; Drayton/Motadel, 2018; EUI Global History Group, 2021). Originally intended as a corrective to the shortcomings of Western scientific thought, the field has barely managed to break out of the discipline's conceptional constraints and has remained rooted in the Anglophone academy. The result has been Janus-faced: while broadening the scope of historical analysis, it has failed to include a variety of voices, tools, and subjects, and reinforced 'Europe' as the default reference point. Moreover, the glaring inequalities in access to travel, knowledge, and funding often exclude researchers from participating in scholarly debates and exchange on an equal footing. How can the practice of global history be diversified, decentered, and decolonized?

This international conference seeks to discuss possible paths for the future of global history. How can the field live up to its emancipatory potential, how can its approaches and methods be pluralized, how do we address the more pressing topics of global inequality and poverty, how do we strive for a consequent decolonization, and how can a decentralized and entangled practice of global history be achieved (Mignolo, 2007; Bhambra, 2014; Grosfoguel, 2007; Epple, 2018; Adichie, 2019)? With these questions at hand, we would like to center stage the perspectives and experiences of scholars from societies that are still at the margins of global history. We therefore invite scholars, artists, and writers whose histories and epistemologies have been sidelined or excluded from debates about our global past to chart the pivots of a new global history in the plural. The aim of this conference is to discuss and promote ways toward

a more open and multicentered study of global history. However, the conference is not limited to the field's research and writing practices, but also problematizes who its (current and future) practitioners and audiences are, addressing the stark imbalance of gender, race, and class within the discipline. While the workshop does not attempt to provide final answers for a remake of the field, it offers the opportunity to suggest, reflect, and sketch new avenues for a fairer global history that includes a broader and more diverse authorship and an expansion of its methodological, narrative, and conceptual repertoire.

There have been increasing efforts to integrate world regions outside the OECD countries into global history. However, this has rarely been accompanied by the acceptance of other methodologies or historiographical (and narrative) traditions. Instead, the discipline continues to be policed by debates about the correct way to do global history. If the plurality of the field is to be taken seriously, the practice of global history must allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the demands and traditions of historiography in all parts of the world. Moreover, the discipline reproduces the asymmetries of privilege and relevance inherent in our educational systems. A pluralistic global history must necessarily pay attention to the disparities in hierarchy, funding, and access, and find ways to redress them.

The conference draws on foundational debates about Western historiography, e.g. Dipesh Chakrabarty's approach of "Provincializing Europe" (2007), Fred Cooper's critical questions about the concept of globalization in African history (2001), and recent critiques of global history from African, Asian, and Latin American scholars that stress the intrinsically Western structure of the discipline (Dirlik, 1999; Falola, 2005; Witz, 2016; Grecco/Schuster, 2020). Furthermore, it is inspired by postcolonial debates on collaborative, decentered, and less hierarchical histories in global perspective (Büscher, 2020). The conference will discuss further perspectives of global histories like "decolonizing", "decentering" or "epistemologies of the South" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Santos, 2014).

We invite contributions from all parts of the world dealing with the themes of decolonization, decentering, pluralization, and collaboration in the field of global history. Young scholars and those working in regions currently underrepresented in the study of global history are encouraged to apply. Submissions on archives, museums, and collecting practices are particularly welcome. Proposals should address one of the following areas:

1. Politics of Global History
2. Methods and Sources of Global History
3. Narratives and Languages of Global History
4. Time and Space of Global History
5. Topics and Concepts of Global History

To express your interest in the conference, please submit a **title** and **abstract** (max. 300 words) matching one of the aforementioned areas and a brief CV to the organizers **Hubertus Büschel** (Hubertus.Bueschel@uni-kassel.de) and **Norman Aselmeyer** (aselmeyer@gmail.com). The deadline for submission is **30 September 2022**. Selected participants will be notified by the end of October 2022.

The event is co-organized by Hubertus Büschel (University of Kassel) and Norman Aselmeyer (University of Bremen) in cooperation with Weltmuseum Wien. It is part of the project “Global History in Practice” funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Transport and accommodation costs will be covered for all accepted participants. While the conference will take place on site in Vienna, we will also be able to facilitate presentations by video link. A publication of the conference’s proceedings is intended.

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