

The Global Turn in German History: New Developments – New Challenges

June 19-21, 2024

For too long, German history has primarily been discussed within the context of the nation state. Today, it is widely accepted that we cannot talk about Germany's past by treating it like a sealed 'container' anymore. Instead, the global history of Germany increasingly focuses on German activities beyond its borders. Cross-border exchanges of ideas, people and goods within regional and global networks have taken center stage. This conference covers more than hundred fifty years of German global history: from the powerful intensification of globalization of the 19th century to the profound changes of the international order and global economy in the 1990s. In which way are German and global history complementary? What is its relationship to international trends in scholarship? Why are some strands within the field, such as economic and colonial history, more successful than others? And does it matter whether German global history is written in Germany or by historians who live and work abroad?

Keynotes: David Blackbourn (Vanderbilt University) and H. Glenn Penny (UCLA)

Host: Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam

Venue: University of Amsterdam, Bushuis, Kloveniersburgwal 48, room F 1.14

Organizers: Hanco Jürgens and Mario Daniels (DIA)

Registration: Click [here](#) (please register before June 17)

With friendly support of the German Academic Exchange Service and the German Federal Foreign Office



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

Programme

Wednesday, June 19

- 17.00 – 17.15 Welcome: Hanco Jürgens (Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam)
- 17.15 – 18.45 David Blackbourn (Vanderbilt University)
Germany in the World: A Global History, 1500-2000
 Venue: Goethe-Institut Amsterdam, Herengracht 470, Amsterdam
 Moderator: Mario Daniels (Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam)

Thursday, June 20

- 8.30 – 9.00 Coffee and tea (venue: Kloveniersburgwal 48, room F 1.14)

Colonial Perspectives

Moderator: Hanco Jürgens (Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam)

- 9.00 – 9.40 Claudia Roesch (Universität Konstanz)
An Accidental Imperialist - Conrad Friedrich Stollmeyer as a Global German in Colonial Trinidad
- 9.40 – 10.20 Lasse Heerten (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)
A Machine of Trans-Imperial Commodification: The Port of Hamburg, the German Empire, and the Global History of Capitalism in the Anthropocene
- 10.20 – 11.00 Tom Menger (LMU)
The Historiography of Fin-de-Siècle German Colonial Violence: from a Trailblazer to a Laggard of the Global Turn in German History?
- 11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

Traveling People, Traveling Things

Moderator: Mario Daniels (Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam)

- 11.30 – 12.10 Sandra Maß (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)
The Global Family History, The Kaundinyas between Protestant Mission and European Colonialism, 1850-1945
- 12.10 – 12.50 Anne-Sophie Overkamp (Universität Tübingen)
Tropical Plants as Global Goods in 19th Century Germany (1850s to 1920s)

12.50 – 14.00 Lunch

Comparisons: Germany and Japan

Moderator: Natalie Scholz (University of Amsterdam)

14.00 – 14.40 Sarah Panzer (Missouri State University)

The Politics of Nowhere: Geopolitics, Anti-Globalism, and the German Revolt against the West

14.40 – 15.20 Robert Kramm (LMU/Kyoto University)

Besatzungsalltage, Race and Sex in Occupied Germany and Japan after World War II

15.20 – 15.40 Coffee break

15.40 – 17.10 H. Glenn Penny (UCLA)

Keynote: Central Peripheries: Beyond Global Histories of Germans and Germany

Moderator: Hanco Jürgens

Friday, June 21

8.30 – 9.00 Coffee and tea

Globalized Trade

Moderator: Moritz Föllmer (University of Amsterdam)

9.00 – 9.40 William Glenn Gray (Purdue University)

German Capital in Global Circulation: Exports, Investments, and Technology Transfer

9.40 – 10.20 Carolyn Taratko (ZZF, Potsdam)

(Un)Reconstructed Futures: Hanna Reitsch and German Development in the Decolonizing World

10.20 – 11.00 Martin Lutz (Universität Bielefeld)

Globalizing German “Dependency” on Soviet/Russian Natural Gas

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

Dimensions of Cultural Diplomacy

Moderator: Marleen Rensen (University of Amsterdam)

- 11.30 – 12.10 Friedemann Pestel (Universität Tübingen)
Global Players: German Symphony Orchestras Touring the World, 1950s to 1990s
- 12.10 – 12.50 Elsa Duval (UCLA)
Follow the Heritage Expert: For a Multilayered Global German History
- 12.50 – 14.00 Lunch

Germany in the Post-Cold War World

Moderator: Matthijs Lok (University of Amsterdam)

- 14.00 – 14.40 Stephen Milder (LMU)
The Making of “Green Germany”: Grassroots Solutions, National Ambitions, and Global Environmental Problems
- 14.40 – 15.20 Jochen Hung (Utrecht University)
Establishing Compatibility: A Global Microhistory of the German Hacker Scene, 1990-2000
- 15.20 – 15.30 Concluding remarks



Global German History: A Very Short Outline

For roughly three decades now global history has seen a remarkable boom – and it shows no sign of abating. The intense international debates about the perspectives, methods and political implications of global history have also had a profound effect on the way German history is being written and taught at universities in Germany and abroad.¹ In a wave of globally minded new historiography German history has been thoroughly reconsidered, reassessed, rewritten, recontextualized, and restructured.² Global history has broadened our historical perspectives which too often have been confined by the borders of the nation state.

Before the current boom the main questions of German historiography had usually been centered around the history of nationalism, National Socialism and the bumpy path to democracy. Thanks to vehement debates over the German “Sonderweg”, comparative history internationalized the outlook of historiographical debates. Since the 1990s and early 2000s, however, German historians have increasingly placed German history in the up-and-coming research fields of transnational and global history. Constantly egged on by developments in Anglo-Saxon academia and carried by a wave of publications, global perspectives established surprisingly swiftly a prominent position in present university curricula.³

After thirty years of disciplinary growth, there appears to be an urgent need for new synthesis and for reflections of the state of the art. Recently published books such as David Blackbourn’s *Germany in the World: A Global History*, Glenn Penny’s *German History Unbound*, or the university textbook *Modern Germany: A Global History* aim to provide such a synthesis.⁴ Yet, it is clear that we are only at the beginning of a new development in which German history is globalized by connecting German and global history with each other. Our conference will be a contribution to this historiographical project.

¹ See for example the reflections in Mark Hewitson, *Germany and the Modern World, 1880-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 1-32. The relativization and recontextualization of the nation-state and German national history is part of a broad international trend as pointed out by Andreas Fahrmeir, “Vorwort,” in *Deutschland: Globalgeschichte einer Nation*, ed. by Andreas Fahrmeir, München: C.H. Beck, 2020, 15-23. For similar debates in the Netherlands, among others: Marjolein ‘t Hart, Manon van der Heijden, and Karel Davids, ed., *The World and the Netherlands: A Global History from a Dutch Perspective*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.

² Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. Sebastian Conrad and Andreas Eckert, “Globalgeschichte, Globalisierung, multiple Modernen: Zur Geschichtsschreibung der Modernen Welt,” in *Globalgeschichte: Theorien, Ansätze, Themen*, ed. by Sebastian Conrad, Andreas Eckert, and Ulrike Freitag, Frankfurt (Main): Campus, 2007, 7-49. Even though not focused on Germany, Jürgen Osterhammel’s bestselling opus magnum had a huge influence on the German global history community: Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, München: C.H. Beck, 2010.

³ It is nearly impossible to keep track of the sprawling Anglo-Saxon research world. To get a sense of the enormity of its output see for example the nine heavy volumes of *The Cambridge World History* (2015). A widely read example of a reappraisal of national history from a global perspective is Thomas Bender, *Nation Among Nations: America’s Place in World History*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2006. Also stimulating: Ian R. Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. For Germany, books like “Das Kaiserreich transnational,” edited by Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, or Conrad’s “Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich” (both 2006) were important milestones of the burgeoning. Sebastian Conrad, and Jürgen Osterhammel, ed., *Das Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt, 1871-1914*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006. Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, München: C.H. Beck, 2006.

⁴ David Blackbourn, *Germany in the World: A Global History, 1500-2000*, New York: Liverlight, 2023. H. Glenn Penny, *German History Unbound: From 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Eric Kurlander, Douglas T. McGetchin, and Bernd-Stefan Grewe, *Modern Germany: A Global History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023.