

Historical and Comparative Sociology in a Globalizing World

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Introduction

Historical and comparative sociology or the so-called New Historical Sociology – resuming the older classical tradition of pre-WWII historical sociology – represents a specific theoretical and analytical perspective within sociology in cooperation with history. As such, it is primarily a booming US-American and British undertaking, whereas it has barely taken roots in France and Germany or other Western European countries, but may experience a new beginning in East-Central or Eastern European sociology. In the German case the major reason has been the massive breach of the highly developed classical tradition due to the repression of the NS regime; the renewal of German post-WWII sociology under the impact of US-American modernization theory and social research; the reception of the New Historical Sociology primarily in the historical sciences in the form of social science history and later cultural science history; with the result that Historical Sociology has not yet found a systematic place in German sociology. But similar things can be said about other national traditions in European sociology.

In the meantime, however, Historical and Comparative Sociology has been established, following the American model, on the European level in the European Sociological Association as well as on the international level in the International Sociological Association. Thus, Johann Arnason, Wolfgang Knöbl and me have organized a Thematic Group “Historical and Comparative Sociology” in the ISA that is in the process of further consolidation and will be eventually transformed into a Working Group and a Research Committee. The core *problématique* of such an internationalization or tendential globalization of historical-comparative sociology however is that it has been created in the context of comparative modernization research, decisively shaped by methodological nationalism and, therefore, profoundly challenged by the contemporary globalization wave.

In this context, I am currently working on a book project: “Global, multiple and entangled modernities – research traditions and future agendas of comparative-historical sociology” that attempts a systematic overview on the new historical sociology first for a German public, and then in English translation for an international public. The core question is: how has comparative and historical sociology so far reacted to the globalization of the world and how should it develop in the future regarding its national and Eurocentric biases? A parallel development can be observed in the two reference disciplines of historical sociology: the sociology of globalization and world society as well as world history and global history.

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On this backdrop, I would like to explain in the first step of my presentation what I understand as historical and comparative sociology or which visions and research traditions are constitutive for it, and then outline in the second step what types of global historical sociology are in the making and should be more conscientiously pursued.

Vision and Research Tradition in New Historical Sociology

What is historical sociology? What are the visions, the research traditions and agenda as well as the research perspectives? In an attempt to find some answers to these basic questions, it is advisable to turn to three recently published editions that have given core definitions of historical sociology in different ways. These are: 1. the volume edited in 2003 by James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer *Comparative Historical Analyses in the Social Sciences*; 2. the edition in 2005 by Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens and Ann Orloff *Remaking Modernity. Politics, Sociology and History*; as well as 3. The *Handbook of Historical Sociology* edited by Gerard Delanty and Engin Isin in 2003. In following these recent publications, there reveals a common basic understanding of historical sociology, but at the same time also marked differences in its disciplinary, theoretical and methodological definition and with them a specific selection of authors, approaches and inquiries.

Let us start with the commonalities. As outlined in all three volumes, the epistemological and methodological core of historical sociology is based on the premise that the subject of sociology is a historically changing, time/space-bound social reality and that this ontological status of sociology has also consequences for social theory, sociological research strategies and methodological devices for analyzing the past as well as the present. On the basis of this guiding premise historical sociology should not be defined as a special sociology but as a specific theoretical perspective in general sociology as well as special sociologies. Accordingly, social theory warrants a systematic reference to time/space contexts, is reflexively related to historical change of social reality and has to consider its structural and contingent, constant and variable, universal as well as cultural specific aspects. The historical-sociological analysis concentrates on the historical constitution of the present, on historical-social processes in its general and specific components, in its macro- and micro-analytical levels as well as its socio-economic, political and cultural dimensions. Accordingly, it combines analytical, constructivist, explanatory and interpretative, quantitative and qualitative, historical and comparative methods. Of crucial importance is the comparative method because it is a tool to help to describe, interpret and explain commonalities and differences, generalities and specificities in historical-social processes and this reveals why historical sociology is often defined as comparative and historical sociology. An interdisciplinary cooperation with the historical sciences is essential, though not replacing the core tasks of the search for historical sources, the focus on historical events and the orientation to narrative historiography.

Within this guiding perspective, however, there are considerable differences in the epistemological, theoretical and analytical visions of historical and comparative sociology. Thus, there can be distinguished three forms: the social-scientific, the cultural-scientific and the post-disciplinary-reflexive types of historical sociology. Firstly, James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer and the assembled authors such as Jack Goldstone, Paul Pierson, Kathleen Thelen, Roger Gould, Ira Katznelson or Theda Skocpol stand for a social-scientifically oriented comparative-historical sociology. Its reference point is

comparative modernization research on politics and its social bases as developed particularly by Seymour M. Lipset, Stein Rokkan or Samuel Huntington; its starting point represents the historical-sociological research strategies as formulated by Theda Skocpol, Charles Tilly and Michael Mann that attempt to interpret and explain historical-social processes in its different forms, phases and outcomes in a constellative-causal way by systematic reference to historical case studies; and its historical reference discipline is a concept of social science history taken up particularly in German historical science in a version that translated the modernization approach into a sociological form of national societal historiography. Social-scientifically oriented historical sociology aims at explaining path-dependent macro-processes of social change by particular reference to institutional structures on the meso-level and rationally oriented actions on the micro-level. Here, there is a combination of historical-institutionalist and rational-choice approaches that for example are represented in Germany by the actor-centred institutionalism of Renate Mayntz and Fritz Scharpf, but internationally characterized by a more in-depth historical orientation and a larger comparative horizon.

Secondly, Julia Adams, Elizabeth Clemens and Ann Orloff and the assembled authors like Richard Berniacki, Zine Mugabane, George Steinmetz, Philip Gorski, Margaret Somers or Rogers Brubaker represent a more comprehensive conception of a cultural-scientific historical sociology that consider the social-scientific versions of historical sociology for limited and include instead, strongly influenced by the cultural turn in the social and historical sciences particularly also constructivist, postmodernist and postcolonial approaches. In contrast to the analytical core of social-scientific historical sociology, there can be found a considerable pluralisation of research themes: the topics revolve not only around the historical macro-process of democratic nation-state building and its social, institutional and practical foundations but also include religion, social policy and bureaucracy; political contention and social movements; civil rights and collective identities; economic institutions and cultures; as well as the epistemological foundations of historical sociology in terms of agency, globalization, and post modernity. In particular, there is emphasized the premise of the cultural turn that historical-social reality is mediated or constructed through language, culture and knowledge and therefore historical sociology needs particularly also interpretative, deconstructivist and hermeneutic methods. In addition, these issues combine with a postmodern and postcolonial critique of the predominant methodological nationalism within social-scientific historical sociology. In these directions the methodological focus of the cultural-scientific versions of historical sociology is more on the meso- and micro-analysis and interpretation of historical processes and less on a causal-analytical perspective of comparison and explanation.

A third conception in historical sociology presents the handbook edited by Gerard Delanty and Engin Isin. Here, the focus is primarily on European authors (namely British but also some German authors who discuss, on the one hand, the European classical legacy from Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber to the renewals in Norbert Elias, Benjamin Nelson, and Shmuel Eisenstadt; reconsider on the other a variety of contemporary approaches: from historical materialism to modernization theory, postmodern genealogy, and historical semantics; and renew a variety of classical topics such as orient and occident, religion, nation, city, architecture, memory and moral regulation. The editors of this handbook understand their vision of historical sociology as postmod-

ern (transcending the confines of the modern nation-state), post-oriental (bridging the cleavage between orientalist and occidentalist biases), and post-disciplinary in the sense of overcoming the disciplinary divisions between social-scientific and cultural-scientific conceptions of historical sociology so characteristic for the US-American and international state of discussion and research (including the German opposition between historical social science and historical cultural science). In a nut-shell it represents a conception of historical sociology that I would like to call following Arpad Szokolczai a post-disciplinary-reflexive one, because it bridges the oppositions between the social- and cultural-scientific versions of historical sociology in rather reflexive-theoretical than methodological-analytical ways.

In summarizing this brief sketch in a chart, three main tendencies in the research field of historical-comparative sociology can be highlighted:

Chart 1. Theoretical-analytical directions in historical sociology

	MODEL THEORY	CAUSAL ANALYSIS	INTERPRETATION
Macro-analysis	Lipset 1959 Lipset – Rokkan 1967 Smelser 1959 Wallerstein 1979 Gellner 1984	Moore 1966 Skocpol 1979 Trimberger 1978 Rueschemeyer – Huber – Stephens 1992 Mann 1986/1993	Elias 1936/1969 Eisenstadt 1963, 1992, 1996, 2000 Bendix 1956, 1978 McDaniel 1987,1992 Arnason 1998
Meso-analysis	Katznelson – Zolberg 1986 Hall, Peter 1997 De Swaan 1988 Smelser 1992 Brenner 1993 Stark – Bruszt 1998	Wuthnow 1989 Spohn 1995 Brubaker 1992 Collins 1999 Dobbin 1994 Ertmann 1997 Skocpol 1992 Charrad 2001 Tilly 1990 Mann 2004a, 2004b	Biernacki Bendix 1964 Chirot Ikegami 1995, 2004 Smith 2005 Steinmetz 1995 Gorski 2000, 2003
Micro-analysis	Abbot 2001 Boswell 1989 Hechter 2000 Kiser – Kane 2001 Kiser – Tong 2002	Tilly 1964, 1979, 1985, 1995, 2004 Tilly – McAdam – Tarrow 2001 Traugott 1985 Markoff 1996	Thompson 1963 Macfarlane 1978 Bonnell 1983 Sewell 1981, 2004 Zaret 1985 Aminzade 1992 Comaroff 1991,1998 Morawska 1993 Zerubavel 2003 Magubane 2003 Burawoy – Verdery 1999

Firstly, it can be stated that there is on the whole a marked movement from historical-macro-sociological to meso- and micro-sociological orientations. This happens in different variants of historical institutionalism – either social- or cultural-scientific – and

in different variants of agency analysis – from rational-choice approaches to Weberian or Foucaultian varieties of hermeneutic or deconstructivist approaches.

Secondly, it can be observed that with the cultural turn there has taken place a conspicuous movement to cultural-scientific approaches and analyses and this movement has led all in all to a considerable pluralization in the research field of historical sociology. By this, the comparative method has lost its central place as the *royal path* in historical-sociological research and with it historical sociology in many varieties has moved towards a theoretically oriented form of narrative historiography.

Thirdly, this movement towards a social- and cultural-scientific form of meso- and microanalysis combines with the tendency that historical and comparative sociology has taken up within limits the processes of globalization and the formation of a world society. There are traditionally particularly three pillars of such a global orientation within historical sociology. The first one is the historical-sociological analysis of the world-system by Immanuel Wallerstein that however due to its neo-Marxist economism has remained a rather critical point of reference and has developed in a separate form. The second pillar is the historical sociology of globalization by Michael Mann who analyses the historical change of the configurations between the several economic, political, military and ideological dimensions of globalization. And the third one centers on the historical civilizational analysis of Shmuel Eisenstadt, Johann Arnason and Björn Wittrock, who analyze the multiple forms of modernities and their entanglements throughout world history. However, these three approaches follow theoretically and methodologically very different designs and therefore do not form a common basis for historical sociology. In the following, therefore, I would like to outline some systematic building blocs in between global sociology and global history for such an enterprise of a globally oriented historical sociology.

Approaches to a global comparative-historical sociology

In sociology as well as history there can be distinguished to my mind four parallel modes of globalization analysis. By globalization I understand, following namely Roland Robertson and Jan Scholte (2006) the increasing connectivity or compression of the world in the contemporary era. The increasing compression of the world thereby proceeds through both material (socio-economic, technological, demographic, ecological, political and institutional) as well as cultural-cognitive (communicative as well as conscious) processes that are interrelated with each other but develop in a relatively autonomous way. Within sociology there are four different approaches to analyze these multi-dimensional globalization processes: 1. Modernization approaches emphasize the increasing and tendentially global scope of nation-state modernization processes as generators of global modernity. 2. Transnational and transcultural approaches see an increasing weight of the transnational and transcultural spaces in the socio-economic, political and cultural dimensions between nation-states. 3. On the bases of these increasing multiple transnational and transcultural connections there develops an intensifying global connectivity with related transformative repercussions on national modernities. 4. In a parallel, there emerges and evolves a world society or world system that is characterized by different forms of material and cognitive globality.

Also in the historical sciences there have recently developed parallel conceptions of world and global history. Firstly, under world history there is often understood, though

increasingly criticized, the tendentially global totality of the many civilizational and national histories that enable an increasingly global historical comparison between world regions, civilizational complexes and nation-states. Secondly, there is rapidly developing a transnationally and transculturally oriented history that investigates the historical connections and interactions between different nations, regions and civilizations and therefore focuses particularly on transfer-relations and relational comparisons. Thirdly, though these transnational and transcultural relations are historically mostly limited to specific regions, they nevertheless provide the building-blocs for the world-wide connections of globalization processes and are the subject of global history or history of globalization. And fourthly, there should be distinguished the history of the world system or world society that concentrates on the history of the global order in its material and cognitive dimensions.

In combining these fourfold distinctions in both global sociology and global history, I see four main forms of a globally oriented comparative historical sociology. As mentioned, they exist as specific research traditions, though theoretically and academically developing in separate directions and therefore in need of a more precise theoretical conceptualisation and methodological orientation. As I propose, these four forms of globally oriented historical-comparative sociology are: 1. a tendentially globally oriented international comparative-historical sociology; 2. a transnationally and transculturally oriented comparative-historical sociology; 3. a historical sociology of globalization; and 4. a historical sociology of the world-system or world society.

In the following, I would like to outline these four forms of a global comparative-historical sociology regarding the theoretical approaches and methodological research strategies in an exemplary way, concentrating topically on the research field "state formation, nation-building, nationalism and collective identities" – close to my own expertise. Chart 2 is intended here to serve as an orientation to the different levels of a global historical sociology in this research area.

International comparative-historical sociology

The international comparative-historical sociology represents the traditional core of the New Historical Sociology – primarily in its social-scientific, less in its cultural-scientific orientation. It is a well established research field with the core issues of state formation, revolution and democratisation; social policy, civil rights, and civil society; as well as nation-building, nationalism and ethnicity. The investigated countries have been first particularly Western Europe and the United States, then these Western cases have been complemented by the big non-Western cases of Russia, Turkey, India, China and Japan; later Eastern Europe and Latin America were added; and in the meantime, there are increasingly also historical-sociological analyses on the remaining Asian, African and Oceanic countries and regions.

Along with the tendentially global scope of an internationally comparative-historical sociology, the number of the cases compared have risen dramatically; multiplied the forms of modernization processes, their developmental paths and temporal sequences; increased the dimensions and factors involved in these trajectories; and therefore the question has moved to the centre whether the Western path follows a general modernization or developmental model that can be transferred to non-Western societies or whether

the Western and non-Western cases alike follow time/space specific paths of development with particular constellative patterns that require a historical-sociological, temporal-sequential comparison of path-dependent trajectories. The international comparative-historical sociology focuses on the analysis of the historical forms of these trajectories;

Chart 2: Global historical-sociological approaches to nation-building, nationalism and collective identities

	International comparative-hist. sociology	Transnational/transcivilizational hist. sociology	Historical sociology of globalization	Historical sociology of world society
Social-scientific approaches	Deutsch 1955 Merritt 1966 Tilly 1975 Seton-Watson 1977 Armstrong 1982 Breuilly 1982 Gellner 1964, 1983 Hroch 1985 Giddens 1986 Mann 1993 Hechter 2000	Rex 1996 Mann 2004a Mann 2004b Münkler 2005	Held, et al. 1999, 2002 Huber – Stephens 2001 Hopkins 2002 Osterhammel – Petersson 2002 Osterhammel 2006	Wallerstein 1974, 1979, 1988 Boli – Lechner 2005 Martinielli 2005 Mayall 1990 Meyer 2005 Greve – Heintz 2005
Cultural-scientific approaches	Znaniecki 1952 Geertz 1963 Bendix 1964 Smith 1981, 1991 Anderson 1983 Comaroff 1991 Giesen 1991 Brubaker 1992 Greenfeld 1993 Hutchinson 1994 Gellner 1995 Calhoun 1997 Hastings 1997 Gorski 2000 Delanty – Kumar 2003 Spohn 2003	Delanty 1995 Smith 1995 Veer 1994 Lehmann – Veer 1996 Morawska 1993 Eisenstadt 1996 Arnason 1997 Roniger – Waisman 2002 Sachsenmeyer – Riedel 2002 Arnason – Eisenstadt – Wittrock 2004 Delanty 2006	Collins 1998 Robertson 2006 Spohn 2008 Juergensmeyer 1993 Hodgson 1994 Barth – Osterhammel 2003 Lang 2006	Parsons 1977 Luhmann 2004 Nettl – Robertson 1968 Robertson 1991 Stichweh 2006 Grew 2006

compares their commonalities and differences; and attempts to interpret and explain them. In its main orientation, it is to be distinguished from comparative sociology as more generally comparative social and political sciences that aim at finding transcultural laws or regularities as well as from international comparative history that aims at investigating and representing national courses of history in their sequences of events on the basis of historical sources, focuses on the source/event-near comparison of individual

components and phases and develops generalizing statements on the logics of historical processes less by deduction rather than induction.

I would like to briefly explain the consequences of such a global extension of international-comparative historical sociology with reference to the topics of the new historical sociology of nation-building and nationalism. Of crucial importance has here been the modernization theory of nationalism of Ernest Gellner, generally assuming industrialization and its correlates of the division of labour and social mobility as the basis for generating a nationally integrated high culture and thus for the construction of nationalism. As the critical debate on Gellner's theory has however demonstrated, there are basic difficulties to project the Western European model onto other world regions. To mention here only the developmental theory of the revival of small nations in East Central Europe by Miroslav Hroch; the comparative analyses of Western and Eastern Europe by Anthony Smith, Adrian Hastings and also myself that show the impact also of state formation and religion; the postmodernist approach by Benedict Anderson who focuses on the imagination and construction of a national community and its dissemination through print-capitalism; the (through Anderson influenced) Latin American debate, in which Claudio Lomnitz and Andreas Wimmer have shown in the case of Mexico that neither the theory of Gellner nor that of Benedict Anderson cannot be without reservations applied to a post-colonial country with strong ethnic heterogeneity and little infrastructural power of the state. Similar difficulties are arising in the growing literature on nation-building and nationalism in Africa, the Islamic world as well as South and East Asia. Without being able to enter more into the details of the international comparative-historical sociology of nationalism, this example demonstrates that it is precisely the global extension of this research field that has led to a considerable precision of the varying combinations of general structural pattern and cultural-specific factors in the world-wide formation of nations, nationalisms and national identities.

Transnational and inter-civilizational comparative-historical sociology

The second variety of global historical sociology has been developed in a critique of the social-scientific orientation in international-comparative historical sociology. So it has been questioned of whether the one-sided concentration on structural dimensions in historical processes is sufficiently able to grasp and adequately explain the historical-social reality in its causal complexity or whether there has to be considered also culture, cognition and agency. The cultural turn on the basis of these core categories – either in a neo-Weberian-hermeneutic or in a Foucaultian constructivist direction – has also transformed the whole research field of historical sociology through the meso- and microanalytic recourse to institutions, culture, perceptions, knowledge, identities as well as individual and collective agency. As a corollary it has become questionable whether the assumption of a primarily endogenous change of national societies, the abstraction from exogenous influences, and the comparativist premise of independent national units are adequate presuppositions for an international comparative-historical sociology. This critique directed the attention to the transnational and transcultural relations and interactions between national states and civilizational complexes beyond nation-states.

One of the most influential approaches combining the cultural turn and transnationalism represents the civilizational-comparative multiple modernities perspective of

Shmuel Eisenstadt and his similar-minded colleagues Edward Tiryakian, Johann Arnason and Björn Wittrock. In contrast to mainstream modernization approaches this comparative-civilizational approach presupposes that the global dissemination of modernization processes does not go hand in hand with a globally unified modernity but rather with the formation of a multiplicity of modernities. The core argument states that modernity is not only formed by structural processes but also shaped by political and cultural programmes of modernity that however are based on different civilizational foundations and thus generate different types of modernity. An important point here is the distinction between axial age civilizations that are characterized by a principled opposition between the mundane and transcendental world, and non-axial-age civilizations that are lacking this opposition. At the same time, this comparison of civilizations combines with a world-historical civilizational analysis by attempting at reconstructing the emergence, development and demise of civilizational complexes and thereby considering particularly inter-civilizational exchange, cooperation and conflict in the context of world history. Under the notion of entangled modernities there is developing also an analysis of the transnational and transcultural bases of globalization processes.

Again, I would like to highlight this second form of a transnationally and transculturally oriented global historical sociology by an exemplary reference to the research field “nation-building, nationalism and national identity”. The civilizational-comparative approach, to begin with, considers particularly – in a parallel to the new cultural approaches in nationalism research – the cultural, religious and secular-religious dimensions of nation-building, nationalism and national identity. But in contrast to the usual twofold distinction between political-civic and ethnic-primordial codes of national-identity formation, it is introduced in addition a third religious-cultural code and analyzed, for instance, by Johann Arnason and Shmuel Eisenstadt in the case of Japan. As well, there is a particular emphasis on the tensions between pragmatic-pluralizing and utopian-chilastic dimensions in axial-age civilizations that in modern times play out in the form of religious or political fundamentalism. Further, there is a particular consideration of the over-arching civilizational complexes and the related interactions and conflicts between ethnic and national groups – to mention, for instance, the interesting comparison between Europe and India by Shmuel Eisenstadt as regards a certain commonality in the structural and cultural pluralism with marked differences in the type of political centralization and its cultural-institutional foundations. Finally, a core issue is the historically changing relationship between different civilizations that have an impact on the crystallization, development and transformation of civilizational complexes. Johann Arnason and Shmuel Eisenstadt have demonstrated this for the long civilizational history of Japan; Luis Roniger and Carlos Waisman in cooperation with Shmuel Eisenstadt have outlined the multiple interactive relationships between Europe, North America and Latin America; or Sachsenmeyer and Riedel have done it for the relationships between Europe and China. Even if one is critical about the large-long-term argumentation in these civilizational studies and demands a micro-sociological institutional as well as socio-economic foundation – as recently brought forward by Wolfgang Knöbl in his book *contingency of modernity*, there is no doubt that the comparative-civilizational approach provides a global framework for historical-comparative analysis that allows for fruitful developments in cooperation with corresponding approaches in global history.

Historical sociology of globalization

The third form of global historical sociology concentrates on structural processes and configurational patterns in the genesis and development of transcultural, transnational and trans-civilizational networks in their growing global reach and compression. The one starting point of this historical sociology of globalization is the rather heterogeneous sociological and interdisciplinary debate and research on the contemporary forms of globalization. Primary attention here has been given to economic globalization processes as for example summarized by Malcom Waters; but this direction has been accompanied by investigations into political processes of globalization – only to mention David Held or Rudolf Zürn; as well as by research on cultural processes of globalization – to remind for example of Arjun Appadural or Roland Robertson. An obvious danger of this globalization research consists of isolating contemporary globalization processes from their multiple societal and civilizational contexts and to treat them as a-historical independent units without reference to time and place. This danger of globalism has gone hand in hand with premature diagnoses of the demise of the nation-state, but it has been countered for example by the transformationalist approach of David Held, David McGrew and others who analysed the constellative relationships between nation-states and globalization or by the sociological approaches of Roland Robertson and Michael Mann who outlined the changing configurational relationships between the various dimension of globalization in different historical phases.

The other starting points for a historical sociology of globalization are historical approaches to the history of globalization. Here, the history of transnational and transcultural networks and interrelationships are explored in a systematic way and serve as building blocs of a quickly developing historiography of globalization. The forerunner here is again US American and British historiography that has contributed in many ways to what John Hobson called the Eastern origins of the West, so for example through the analysis of the relations between China and Europe by Kenneth Pomeranz, the role of India by Charles Bayly or the importance of the *Islamicate* civilization by Marshall Hodgson. In the German context, particularly Jürgen Osterhammel and Sebastian Conrad have contributed to this type of research, only to mention Osterhammel's study of East-West relations in the 18th century under the title *The disenchantment of Asia*; his outline with Niels Petersson *History of Globalization. Dimensions, processes and time periods* or Sebastian Conrad's *Globalization and the Nation in the German Kaiserreich*.

Between these two reference disciplines of the sociology of contemporary globalization and the history of globalization a historical sociology of globalization should concentrate particularly on the comparative analysis, interpretation and explanation of transcultural and transcivilizational interactions and relationships in different world regions and historical globalization phases with different degrees, scopes and density grades of globalization. Also here, I will give some exemplary hints regarding the mentioned topic of nation-building, nationalism and collective identities. A key issue relates to the interrelationships between empire formation, nation-state building and collective identity in different phases of globalization. Following Anthony Hopkins, four major phases of globalization can be distinguished. In the archaic phase, the density of globalization is thin, but still permeates adjacent civilizations and empires – as analyzed by Johann Arnason in the case of China and Japan, by Wolfgang Reinhard for the Roman Empire and Europe

or by Marshall Hodgson in the case of the several centers of the Islamic civilization. This changes in the proto-modern and modern globalization phase along with the rise of European world hegemony where long-distance entanglements between the European imperial powers and their colonies were established and, despite the power asymmetries involved, influenced each other – as shown in an exemplary way by Hartmut Lehman and Peter van der Veer in the cases of Britain and India or by Anthony Pagden by comparing the European colonial empires of Britain, France and Spain. Particularly interesting, here, is also the comparative analysis of “civilizing missions” by Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel. Only in comparing this modern phase with the contemporary post-colonial phase of globalization, it would be possible to determine more precisely the transformations of civilizations, empires, nations, ethnicities and related collective identities with the intensifying compression of the world in the present.

Historical sociology of world society

The fourth and last form of global historical sociology concerns not only individual dimensions of globalization and their regional-cultural forms but the overall structure of the emerging world system or world society. As mentioned, the central starting point here within historical sociology has been the theory and analysis of the capitalist world system by Immanuel Wallerstein as well as a number of often critical follow-up investigations for example by Janet Abu-Lughod, Giovanni Arrighi, Terence Hopkins or Christopher Chase-Dunn who improved on the pre-history, the developmental changes and current transformations of the capitalist world system. In sociology, there then developed a variety of sociological approaches to world society that attempted to overcome the economic and evolutionist biases of this political-economic approach – only to mention here the theory of world society by Niklas Luhmann that emphasizes the global communicative structures and is further developed by his disciple Rudolf Stichweh; the world polity approach by John Meyer and his Stanford colleagues that concentrates on the institutional and cultural dimensions of a rationalizing world culture and has been specified in a historical direction by John Boli and Frank Lechner in their study on world culture; or also the reflexive approach by Ulrich Beck who brings together the many currents in the debate on globalization and world society in a cosmopolitan perspective.

It is however characteristic for the sociological counter-approaches to Wallerstein’s world systems theory that they are rather heterogeneous and do translate only selectively in a historical-sociological research programme on the genesis, development and contemporary transformations of world society. Here, it would be absolutely necessary to take on the new approaches in transnational and transcultural global history and globalization history as well as to combine the different historical-sociological approaches in civilizational analysis and globalization research into a systematic historical sociology of world society. Thus, the transnational and transcultural global and globalization history will rapidly increase the historical knowledge about the manifold relationships and perceptions between different civilizations, states and cultures in the many dimensions and phases of globalization. The historical-civilizational comparison over long time-spans will contribute to the comparative relation and transfer analysis between different civilizational complexes. And the historical sociology of globalization will provide a time- and

space-specific comparison of historically and regionally varying: transnational, transcultural and transcivilizational relational patterns.

On these foundations, a historical sociology of world society would have particularly the following tasks: 1. the synthesizing analysis of the form and change of the interconnected but relatively autonomous world-societal structures in their manifold ecological, technological, socio-economic, political, cultural and cognitive dimensions; 2. the synthesizing analysis of the economic, political and cultural power hierarchies, cognitive perceptions and legitimation modes between the different centers and peripheries of the world society; 3. the comparative analysis between the past and present forms of world society in their structural patterns, power hierarchies and forms of legitimation; and 4. the comparative analysis of different degrees, scopes and intensities of networks and their impacts on the structure of world society in the different globalization phases. These macro-sociological analyses have again to be grounded on systematic meso- and micro-analytical studies that aim at comparative interpretation and explanation of the constitutive components, parts and mechanisms of the overall global system. Such a historical sociology of the world system would not as in the cases of Wallerstein, Luhmann or Meyer project a deductive and selective model of world society or world system on world and global history, but it would, on the basis of world and global history, concentrate in synthetic-analytic ways on the manifold historical configurations in the differing structural dimensions in different regions and phases and, on these historical foundations, would try to explain the developing world society in the present. Core topics here are the constellative relationships between the different dimensions of world ecology, world economy, world polity and world culture and related power hierarchies between centers and peripheries in material as well as cognitive terms; as well as the transformation of the power position of nation-states, civilizations, collective and individual actors within the evolving world society.

Conclusion

I have tried to outline the directions in which historical-comparative sociology, on its classical foundation and modernization background, has so far addressed the contemporary challenges of a globalizing world and should meet these challenges in the future. I have outlined four directions that seem to me particularly important: 1. an internationally comparative historical sociology; 2. a transnational and transcivilizational historical sociology; 3. a historical sociology of globalization; and 4. a historical sociology of world society. I hope to have shown that such a global historical sociology is in many ways critical to the predominantly a-historical sociology of globalization and world society, but also is not identical with global history and the historiography of globalization. Rather, global historical sociology in an inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary in-between position pursues vis-à-vis its reference discipline of sociology a systemic orientation towards historicization and contextualization and vis-à-vis its reference discipline of history a systematic theoretical and reflective orientation. In this sense, global historical sociology is not only basically dependent on both reference disciplines but also able to contribute to both in theoretical-reflexive, methodological and research-analytical ways.

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