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1
The Various Forms of Transcending the Horizon of National History Writing

Matthias Middell and Lluis Roura

The starting point for the project “Writing the Nation: National Historiographies and the Making of the Nation-States in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe,” sponsored by the European Science Foundation (ESF) between 2005 and 2009, was the observation that the European study of history (and the international study) currently is experiencing a multifaceted process of transformation. Admittedly, many historiographies in Europe remain organized according to national criteria into associations and societies, systems of higher education, museum networks, and journals, but they are supplemented by regional patterns and increasingly overarched by transnationality and internationality. Within this framework, an intensified dialogue between the historiographies has developed. As a consequence of this dialogue, increased importance has been assigned to the question of similarities and differences in historiographies that developed over the course of the last 150 years. Whether a homogenous European historical science has emerged, or at least plausible approaches for such a science already exist is subject to varying opinions. While some look for specific European features and refer to the fact that history had perhaps a larger impact on European affairs than on and in any other world region, others insist on global connections and mutual influences transcending the limits of single continents. However a growing interest in the collective history of historians (male and female alike) is undeniable.

With the financial support of the ESF and the national science organizations of more than 25 nations across the continent, a group of European historians divided into four teams have dedicated themselves to the question of how the relationship of national history writing to potential alternative approaches developed over the course of the last two centuries.

For this project, a division of labor seemed appropriate, in order to facilitate an efficient exploration of conceptions of history as they were taught and researched. One team focused on the institutionalization of historiography and thus the “iron cage,” in which work increasingly took place. Three teams dealt with concepts and narratives, whereupon their efforts were directed at the broadest possible coverage of the diversity of national representations and the existing alternatives.
In the meanwhile the existing Atlas of European Historiography also made clear what the accompanying studies elucidated in detail: The study of history numbers among the older subjects taught in European universities. Neither sought history – like its younger sister sociology – its place in the canon of subjects only at beginning of the twentieth century, nor received it – like political science, which had significant overlaps in content with history departments – full citizenship in the universitas litterarum only after World War II. Yet, its long presence in many European universities did not change the fact that historiography had to adapt to a profound nationalizing process that played out in European societies in the second half of the nineteenth century. This process massively encompassed the universities. This is not surprising if you keep in mind that the (imagined) history community along with the linguistic community constituted an important dimension in the legitimation of the nation and contributed indispensable material (or testimony to its alleged authenticity) for the “invention of the nation.”

However the aforementioned atlas also demonstrates that the majority of historians were not willing to serve the nation alone. They became involved in historical associations at the regional level and dedicated themselves to the history of those provinces in which their universities were located. They also traveled to the vestiges of Antiquity in order to establish the origin of European history. Nor should we forget that although historians referenced the emerging nation, a significant portion of European territory before 1918 belonged to empires, thus historians frequently lived in empires, not nation-states and were therefore writing on empire. Neither was this perspective necessarily marginal, as some of the articles in this volume will show, nor would it be appropriate to portray it as backwards. After all the relationship between nation and empire cannot be envisioned as a teleological progression from pre-modern to modern state form, rather it has to be conceived as a complex balance. This again implies that the various forms of territoriality in nineteenth-century Europe were also expressed in historiography. Indeed one finds at a closer look that Eastern European historians who worked at the intersection of Russian, German, and Habsburg regimes challenged the national framework, as their colleagues in Spain were disturbed by and wrestled with the peculiar overlapping processes of nationalization together with a large imperial past that disrupted any clarity of territorial relations. Even British and French historians debated the dual character of their nations and identified the imperial and colonial dimensions as part of their own history – a history that they realized was not necessarily only national. In addition, the growing international entanglement fostered an interest in the history of those neighboring nations with whom they coexisted in strife or alternatively in alliance.

If we keep in mind all these tendencies that transcended national frontiers, about which this book will speak in more depth, then a limitation to the representational power of maps is apparent. This limitation was also noted by the authors of the Atlas of European Historiography. While it is relatively simple – at least in the framework of more traditional cartographic convention – to project the organizational form of various historiographies on the territories of nation-states, it is
not so simple to discern transnational activities from maps. To take the example of the Comité International des Sciences Historiques (International Committee of Historical Sciences, CISH): The Comité, like most international organizations that arose at the beginning of the twentieth century, was based on collaboration and competition between national committees. However, gradually the Comité gave more weight to thematically oriented (and later internationally composed) commissions in which the citizenship of their members was a secondary importance. It would, by the way, be highly illuminating to reconstruct the composition of these commissions (and their change) to retrieve transnational research connections. To a large extent they manifested themselves in exchanges of letters and by means of occasional visits in the tradition of the république des lettres from Erasmus to D’Alembert, which are difficult to display in maps. The same holds true for the congresses the CISH held, and still holds every five years, at which delegations of the national committees mingled.

Precisely because the study of history, both in its institutional form and in its practice, was not solely the fruit of the nationalization processes of the late nineteenth century, but also can be traced back to earlier paradigms (and given at that time professional reflection about the past was particularly keen on references to earlier histories of the discipline), historians could easily mobilize these older heritages. For those historians who were uncomfortable with the national use of history, they could contemplate the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment. Moreover, they were able to trace the disassociation of intellectuals from service to the state back to ancient motives and to the intellectual leaders of the Renaissance.

Leopold von Ranke, who in the neo-historical turn of the 1890s immediately gained cult status as founder of a scientific historiography, propagated not only a source-based history of politics (and demonstrated how useful it could be to maintain excellent relations to the rulers), but he also went down in the annals of the discipline as the author of an (incomplete) world history. Consequently, von Ranke was invoked not only by conservative political historians but also by those who believed a renewal of universal history to be the most pressing desideratum. This phenomenon was perceptible, for example, in the struggle for the takeover of the prestigious journal Historische Zeitschrift in the mid-1890s, when the dual legacy of Ranke was wielded by both the national-political arguing Neo-Rankeans and cultural historians in the discipline.

For the interpretation of these debates, it is not helpful to rely on a simplistic schema, in which the national-political reactionaries within the discipline of history are contrasted with those men of progress who supported transnationalism and a universal perspective. This fallacy is perhaps most dramatically illustrated by the example of the sociologist Hans Freyer. In his contribution to Weltgeschichte ("World History") published by Ullstein in 1929, Freyer opened with a clear avowal of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism. However, only a few years later in a brochure on the desired "revolution from the right," he expressed his affinity for the Nazi regime. His subsequent world history, which he developed temporally parallel to the course of World War II, illustrates that enthusiasm for and disillusionment
with the expansionist project of an aggressive nation-state can be expressed in the mode of world history.20

In contrast, the (pre-)history of the French Annales offers abundant indications for an entangled history of historiography. The young Marc Bloch traveled to Germany, where he attempted to determine through the activities of Karl Lamprecht (among other things), how the new social and cultural history was consistent with the nationalism of imperial Germany.21 When the war tore a deep rift between Western European and German historiography, it was the mentorship of the Belgian Henri Pirenne that provided the momentum for the ambitious project of Bloch and Fevre, who were now both teaching in Strasbourg.22 Pirenne, among others, had directed the 1922 International Congress held in Brussels. Finally, we learn from the extensive correspondence with a pleiad of colleagues maintained by both Bloch and Fevre (now collected in several edited volumes), how they kept in view the international historical sciences and also promoted their own approach.23

The history of the Annales School24 is an excellent example not only of international action, but also of the international networking within the historical sciences of the twentieth century. It was no coincidence that the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales under the leadership of Fernand Braudel became a mecca for many historians, especially those from Latin America25 nor that on the other side of the Atlantic at Binghamton University in New York a Braudel-Center arose, whose aim was to combine the approach of the French historical school with world-system analysis.26

These few references may suffice to make comprehensible that on the one hand, the history of historiography, which organized its subject matter according to nations,27 claimed to reproduce a very important component of the organization of the discipline. Without doubt, the working reality of most historians during our period of investigation was and is shaped by affiliation to an institution that owes its establishment and continued existence to state financing.28 In addition, communication continued for a long time primarily within this national framework, as evidenced by the relatively low representation of foreign authors in the relevant professional journals.29 However, the historical profession has also a transnational past. While it was for a long time relatively plausible to fade it out, doing so has became less convincing in the last decade. Current history writing is increasingly done in contexts that transcend political borders. New institutions have been established in which doctoral candidates from various nations are educated together. New research approaches to transnational and global history require knowledge and use of archives in different nations. Together with the new possibilities of digitalization and electronic communication, this interest has led to a new relation of historians to the national character of archives. Increasingly transnational groups, who were concerned with the history of more than one nation, formed for the use of archives. We need only recall the archival holdings on the great wars of the twentieth century or those on the history of communist movements.30 At the same time internationality became an increasingly important catchword in the universities. Insistence on the national quality of historiography
was displaced by the idea of global competition. Immigration also contributed its part in shattering identification with national and imperial history. Concurrently the institutions that examined the intervention of European powers in the history of only seemingly distant continents were changing. Moreover, new insights facilitate the integration of the history of colonialism into contemporary instruction and the public debate. These trends provoke the question whether there is a prehistory that is a longer tradition of the transnationalization of historical culture and historical science – at least if the main intellectual tool of historians, namely to question discourses of and claims for newness, is applied to the development of history writing.

This volume centers on this question and seeks to substantiate that history writing reflected the globality of its time as much as it followed the nationalization of the societies in which it was produced. While postulations of the newness of transnational and worldwide entanglement were first questioned by studies on economic and social processes, in the meanwhile they have also frequently been called into question in regard to intellectual developments.

Analogous efforts also emerged for the history of historiography, essentially by expanding the subject matter of investigation and by integrating the quarrel with post-colonialism and orientalism into the methodological debate. So, on the one hand, the extremely meritorious *Oxford History of Historiography*, which was prepared parallel to the ESF project, made tremendous efforts to cover for the first time the entire globe and to find authors to portray with sophistication the discrete historiographies of Asia, Africa, and South America, so that these historiographies were placed on a par with the previous traditional offerings of “Western” historiography. In contrast, Georg Iggers together with Edward Wang and Surpriya Mukherjee have updated and globalized the preexisting panorama of the most important historical scientific approaches. Both undertakings point to the necessity of transcending previous horizons. While it may be contentious whether the concept of history actually is one of the weapons developed by the West for intellectual domination or whether it is possible to break free from the preexisting frame of thought, the history of historiography first approaches the problem from a different direction. It notes the various forms and effects of historical self-assurance and in doing so endeavors to delineate professionalized forms from other forms. As the studies by Stuart Woolf and Iggers illustrate, historiography is a globally encountered phenomenon, even though the institutional fixtures on the one hand and the relationships to political discourses, school instruction, and other forms of public practice on the other hand may vary according to region.

There is another argument why focusing solely on national history obstructs as much as it reveals. Traditionally histories of historiographies concentrated on concepts and the repeated flare-ups of methodological disputes and thus highlighted individual authors underestimating the institutional anchorage. Since the 1980s this limitation has become doubtful and thus the attention has turned to institutions, practices, and communication forms. But because the organizational settings have largely been national, following them bears the danger of neglecting
international and transnational entanglements (as well as the connections to other disciplines).

Our own project seeks to counter this bias, in a modest way. We concentrate on Europe despite the fact that we treat the rest of the world as the subject matter of European historians. To counter this shorting we have tried to include a comparative perspective on the historiographies of other continents wherever it was possible. The limitation remains, deriving from the origins of the whole project, the need for a feasible scope, and its European sponsorship. Still we are aware of and would like to state explicitly that what we do for the European historiography should be done for other regions as well and turned into global analyses.

This leads to a methodological remark. Our project is nourished by the insight that every comparison must be able to homogenize its objects of comparison to a certain extent, in order to be able to work out the similarities and differences to other objects of analysis. Our concern was thus not to contrast European historiographies as a more or less homogenized whole with those of other continents. Instead, we started from the observation that there was a glaring deficiency in the differentiated descriptions of the European historiographical landscape. Therefore we believe this project, which is limited to Europe, is an important complementary project for a more broadly conceived global investigation. The two should cross-pollinate one another.

The task of a collective European panorama finds variable conditions in certain places. For France, Italy, and Germany a very extensive literature on the development of their respective historiographies already exists and this literature has garnered attention beyond these nations’ respective borders. Moreover in recent years British historians have abandoned their reservations regarding the study of historiographical traditions. However the detailed and penetrative works for other nations oftentimes go unnoticed internationally.

This uneven reception has led to disequilibrium in the European history of historiography in favor of a few historiographies, and this imbalance could result in a twofold methodological trap. On the one hand, the impression could be cemented that some historiographies became professionalized and institutionalized earlier; generated more important methodological innovations, and therefore rightly have been the focus of attention. A closely related danger exists, namely dispensing with detailed investigation of the diversity of developments in the European space and contenting oneself with extrapolating relationships from the already better researched parts of Europe. Particularly vulnerable in this regard is Eastern Europe, whose archives during the Cold War were difficult or even impossible for Western researchers to access and whose historiographical traditions within the dominant Marxist–Leninist paradigm were articulated, remembered, and researched in a specific way. After 1989/1990 this skewed picture experienced much revision. The idiosyncratic interweaving of older historiographical traditions (which prior to 1989 had often been characterized as “bourgeois”), along with the appearance of a Marxist historiography which could develop in an orthodox and party-oriented direction or could be accompanied by an interest in social history and international comparison (and in some cases both
developmental patterns can be seen in the scholarship of the same person), shaped Eastern European historiography. Thus its complexity is not adequately reflected, if we dismiss the influence of Marxism and Stalinism as an episode without impact. At the same time, it is important to remember that the role of Marxism certainly is not limited to Eastern European scholarship. Therefore, it seems to preclude us from speaking of Marxism in the singular, since the differing variants of Marxism did not simply disagree, their disagreements led to frequent political controversies. Moreover the differing variants influence the present-day debate about Marxian thought as perhaps a continuing inspirational force and respectively the sustainability of any kind of Neo-Marxism.

The debate on the influence of Marxism has implications not only for the differentiated perception of European historiographies in the late nineteenth century and the “short” twentieth century, to the extent that the individual national fields have been shaped by the debate with Marxism in very different ways. The role of Marxism clearly was connected with the effort to establish an alternative way of writing history, which started from class affiliation and conversely deemphasized affiliation to the nation. Let us remember that the worker’s movement after the experience of the Revolution of 1848/1849 first sought to create transnational federations. The First International existed prior to the founding of socialist–democratic parties at the national level and was an effort to create an organization encompassing potentially all nations. The success of this effort is an entirely different matter.

A look at Marxist historiographies in Eastern Europe reveals these historians dealt primarily or exclusively with the histories of their respective nations. The political history of socialist nations was rooted in national history. The distinction between tradition (as the positively connoted historical line, which was drawn according to class) and heritage (as openness to the totality of the history of a nation) indicates how the politics of history became increasingly nationalized and how an effort was made to sell this process as a socialist one. In the special case of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), this process was particularly challenging, because of the parallel existence of another German state – the Federal Republic of Germany drawing on the same national heritage. The effort to create concepts corresponding to the “socialist GDR nation” found limited acceptance both internationally and within the GDR’s own population. This failure to invent a separate nation within the nation, however should not be misinterpreted as the product of a diminishing nationalization in Marxist historiography. Already by the 1920s Marxist historiography had its roots in the still very young Soviet Union. Under Stalin’s leadership and as a consequence of Lenin’s turn to the possibility of construction of a socialist regime exclusively in one nation, historians there had already encountered this dilemma. The interests of the worldwide communist movement were not identical with those of the Soviet Union. Thus, it is not surprising that the Soviet Union and the nations within its sphere of influence experienced a systematic division (and occasionally competition) in their systems of higher education between national history and general/world history. Sometimes even a separate department for the history of the communist movement
or of the socialist camp existed. The pattern of separate structures dealing with national history and the rest of all history is not confined to the former Eastern Bloc, although the conflict between national self-assurance and universal claims does express itself particular drastically there.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, the arrangement between the national writing of history and presumed other forms is manifested only in part in a division of Europe between East and West. Both in Western Europe and in Eastern Europe we find diverse constellations of national and transnational remembrance and history writing. The influence of Marxism could encompass both directions. Moreover, it was not limited to the Eastern Bloc, but showed its effects throughout Europe, albeit combined to different degrees with the exercise of political authority and its legitimation.

On this theme, a successful division of labor between the teams of the NHIST Project developed. One group, under the leadership of Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, proceeded from the hypothesis that “national history has been a dominant genre of history in Europe for almost two centuries.”\textsuperscript{46} This hypothesis of course, as the authors rightly asserted, applies not only to European historiography. National history writing exists in many places outside Europe and occupies there a comparable prominence. Whether we have already approximated a global history of national history writing, in which we assemble only examples for the significance of the national in all regions of the world is a different story. Such a global history surely would have to consider that the nation-state, which is portrayed in this history and correspondingly selected as the conceptual framework,\textsuperscript{47} found perhaps very different forms and functions in the framework of colonial and post-independent development. The focus of such a comparative analysis, more precisely stated, is not so much based on the nation-state than on the political framework. One could even question whether the writing of the political history of nation-states is still the dominant form of history writing in the world or even in Europe. One would be even less able to claim that the majority of historians have worked or are currently working on such books. If in fact national historical syntheses, which are bound to this traditional paradigm, can be established for all European nations and are renewed at regular intervals, then they obviously fulfill a need in the reader; nevertheless the number of such histories remains manageable.

The reason may be found both in the difficulty of placing all historical events into a national framework and in a certain event-centeredness, which only partially fulfills a need for clarification of structurally conditioned regularities.

In the framework of the NHIST project, a bibliography was prepared based on this narrow definition of national history studies.\textsuperscript{48} It resulted in a rather short list, although it is difficult to determine exactly what type of work was considered for this compilation and what type was excluded. Yet, if one observes the strict criterion of a formal history of the political entity termed the nation-state, then the overwhelming output of historians of the last two centuries largely does not come into consideration.

When there is talk about a national historical orientation as the dominant pattern, it concerns the implementation of a methodological nationalism\textsuperscript{49} that now in fact infected the lion’s share of historiographical production. This category
includes not only those studies which have the nation-state as the central actor. It also encompasses all those studies which understand the nation-state or the nationalizing society as the focal point of all historical events and consider it a quasi-natural framework for historical actions. The acceptance of the national framework as natural oftentimes does not reflect an explicit choice, but is presupposed in the collection of data and in the choice of sources, so that the nation creates an effectual framework for any further analysis. Where the nation cannot be selected as the framework because for example it has not yet been constituted, methodological nationalism falls back on a teleological design and searches out references to a developing nation. Moreover through the use of a territorializing language, methodological nationalism suggests that nation and nation-state are in the process of becoming, because ultimately all histories tend toward the creation of the nation and nation-state. Correspondingly, methodological nationalism can easily enter into symbiosis with assumptions about progress and modernization. In this symbiosis, the non-national is defined as pre-modern and incomplete. Potentially disruptive dimensions of history that contradict national historical narratives simply are not addressed in these studies. When they are included, they are dealt with as minority history or as history of opposition that plays out in the framework of the nation. Methodological nationalism exhibits an astonishing ability for symbiotic relationships with other narratives, paradigms, and theoretical approaches that needs to be explained. Yet, one also observes that these alternative approaches become radically devalued and marginalized within this paradigm. Attacks are launched against the scientific character of alternative approaches, such as class history or gender history. They are accused of representing particular interests and of being too closely tied to political movements. Although methodological nationalism does not deny its own connection to the national movement, it does deny any partisanship.50 There were also attacks on historians who distanced themselves from methodological nationalism or even openly reject it. These historians were labeled as irrelevant idealists and cosmopolitans or even as traitors to the national community by representatives of methodological nationalism. Through these tactics, proponents of methodological nationalism were able to gain hegemony over the discourse and became the agents of a territorial regime in which the nation-state existed at the center.51

The team lead by Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz investigated why possible alternative forms of collective identity did not become emancipated from national history writing, but remained associated with it and consequently accepted the preexisting framework. The authors concentrated on ethnicity, class affiliation, gender, and religion as anchoring points of collective identity.52 Their analysis revealed conflicting results: On the one hand the systematic contemplation of history writing in various European nations demonstrated that alternatives to national master narratives53 can be observed time and again. On the other hand, they concluded that no consistent alternative could be identified. The merging of social, cultural, religious, and gender history within the national framework remained constant and this amalgamation came to be perceived as quasi-natural. Thus, the “partisan” religious perspective was superseded by the
“objective” national viewpoint. Alternatively, a “merging of religion with nation” took place. As James Kennedy has argued, the nation was re-conceived as sacred and converted into a political religion.54

By studying the debates on the relationship of national history writing to social, cultural, gender, and religion histories, the conclusion can be drawn that for the time period under investigation the dominance of national history has been uninterrupted since the mid-nineteenth century. However this conclusion does not mean that refinement of scientific methods, for example in social and cultural history, did not have a potentially disruptive power. Methodological innovations in social and cultural history as well as the efforts of these fields to establish a separate institutional framework (in the form of chairs and institutes, journals and book series, congresses and international associations) were not completely ineffective in the past, nor has that been the case in the present. These alternative approaches, grouped around "the spatial other," can bring about a change in the fundamental territorial regime and liberate themselves from the clutches of national history writing by entering into different coalitions. In recent years such tendencies can be seen within academic historiography, where the forecast of a globalizing world and increased transnational interconnections has grown in importance. Perhaps even more significant for our context is that the emancipation from methodological nationalism also mobilized previously marginalized historical traditions. In the past, representatives of national history writing oftentimes consciously and successfully marginalized these alternative traditions.55 Yet, not only after globalization terminology gained prominent status,56 historians became interested in transnational phenomena and thus criticize the dominance of the framework of national history and methodological nationalism. The contributions in this volume will deal with these traditions in greater detail.

Admittedly, such tendencies are more likely to be observed in the academic discourse than elsewhere. Until very recently, the incorporation of such tendencies into history instruction has been blocked for the most part successfully by the politics of history. As a result history instruction seldom incorporates these new approaches. However, the first signs of change can be seen. A debate has begun about the need to adapt to a new socio-cultural reality; to allow for the growing importance of migrants in historical representations57; to underscore the porosity of societal borders58 through which the flow of capital, ideas, goods, and viruses occurs; and to highlight the global challenges posed by border crossing. If for years the nation-state was apprehended as suitable protection against the unreasonable demands of globalization and as bearer of a culturally and democratically protected sovereignty, now the inclination has shifted to recognizing the transnational character of markets and civil society.59

But, and this served as the starting point for the work of our team, already by the 1890s, this transnationalization had been addressed by a few historians, who concentrated on regions that transcended national borders. The concept of historical landscape was intended to recall structural communities that had already taken shape prior to their political division into two different nation-states.60 Out
of this effort to find an established position in the historical geography, multiple proposals for the development of regional, economic, and social history emerged. Interestingly, this same effort in the 1920s and 1930s led to another historical thread on “Volksgeschichte,” in which ethno-national arguments over the course of time became increasingly radicalized. Thus, interest in the history of regions could lead to the mechanics of a national history paradigm via claims to incorporation of “lost” regions and their special relationships to the population.

In a similar vein worked the NHIST team lead by Tibor Frank and Frank Hadler. It was able to clarify by means of multiple examples how competing claims to certain territories by various nation-states most noticeably created a sphere of activity for historians where victory, defeat, and trauma were dealt with as gains or forfeitures of borderlands. In this perspective, transnational ambitions and claims can be linked saliently to the idea that the nation must stand at the center of all historical consideration. The 15 examples of this study, from Finland’s eastern border with Russia to the ongoing conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, suffice to show above all the enormous flexibility of national master narratives, when it came to integrating territorial changes (usually brought about through aggression) and claims to regions controlled by other nations. These examples confirm a trend from the hero-worshipping history writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which above all knew victory or courageous downfall, to a competition of victims becoming dominant since the second half of the twentieth century.

One can draw hope from this partial pacification, when historians no longer simply give in to a historical justification for claims and areas outside of their own actual boundaries and their portrayals are no longer accompanied by maps of Greater Hungary or Greater Germany. One should not however overlook that history writing that stresses the trauma of history and promises to draw lessons in the form of peaceful relationships to neighbors, to minorities and to transnational groups within its own borders, can be subordinated to methodological nationalism. It has indeed been characterized as post-national, but it obviously is not immune to the revival of national history, albeit in new garb.

In particular, one finds among the studies into regional history some contributions that investigated elements of the nation-state’s history or examined the nation-state in detail. Those studies that made no reference to the nation-state were deemed positivistic fact collecting and viewed with contempt, since most authors had renounced the explicit search for a new master narrative that moved beyond the national. The immense output of studies addressing regional history thus did not succeed in shattering the supremacy of the national element, even though they contained sufficient material for a subversive undermining of the homogenizing assumptions of national historiography. The relationship between regional and national history generated crisis only when political actors insisted on the peculiarity of the precedence of the history of the region, over the process of the nationalization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If regional history gained a reputation of entering alliances with separatists, it experienced a growing interest even beyond regional and national borders.
Various Forms of Transcending National History Writing

For example, the history of the Basque Provinces, of Corsica or Brittany was compared oftentimes with other regional varieties in the 1970s because of the prominent place of separatist movements. But with the marginalization of these separatist endeavors, the methodological uneasiness of historians came to an end. This situation at any case could not be remedied outside Spain – due to the fact that the case of Catalonia could not readily be dissolved into a Spanish national history or into the special case of phosphorescent separatism.

After 1989, historiography was confronted again with (now much more impressive) separatisms in Southeastern and Eastern Central Europe which had emerged from the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. It interpreted them as newly blazing nationalism and as legacy of multi-ethnic empires.

In practice, historians writing about these new entities followed the political decision on the formation of sovereign states, even though this sovereignty was soon again called into question by the entry of these states into supranational structures like the European Union (EU). Under the influence of the European east and southeast, the “translation” of the ongoing process into one of overtaking areas of nation building seemed sufficiently plausible.

However, increasingly erosions in this perception can be observed. This phenomenon can be illustrated by means of the Italian case, which was a focal point of the 2004 workshop in Budapest sponsored by the NHIST team working on the spatial other in national history writing. Interestingly, the sub-discipline of regional historiography has never fully developed in Italy, even though one would have assumed the existence of a particularly detailed regional history, given the tremendous differences between the varying parts of the country and Italy’s frequently referenced “belated” nationalization.

Edoardo Tortarolo attributed the relative weakness of regional history in Italy to two factors: The long tradition of historiography centered on the nation-state and the plurality of regional specificities which are hard to incorporate in a single overarching picture. More concretely:

The central concept of Italian history has been the nation for a long time. The monarchy and the state played the role of active agents of the unification process that was achieved in 1918. The fact that this state could not prevent the Fascist movement from taking over power in 1922 and the collapse of this monarchical rule on September 8, 1943 have discredited the traditional interpretation of a national history of Italy that has been particularly vital in the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century.67

As a reaction to this development some historians turned to the region as the unit for historical narrative. A first wave of regional histories appeared in the 1970s. But regions were considered only as partially autonomous agencies within the national state framework. Historians felt compelled to investigate the historical origins of these late twentieth-century regions and in some cases to construct a sort of historical legitimacy dating back to the Medieval Age or to a pre-modern territorial state. But here, the second factor influencing the fate of regional history

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in Italy plays an important role. In Italy, as was the case in many other parts of Europe, regional identities came into being during the nineteenth century as a result of a complex multifaceted development. This development included emotional attachment to a dynasty or a republican tradition (and therefore a shared historical experience). In addition, it entailed a linguistic, cultural, and literary awareness of specificity that was expressed in folklore as well as in self-conscious artistic products. The diversity of these regional identities remained high and in more than one case led to overlapping regions and contested identities:

In Veneto it was very strong, despite the tense relationships between Venice, la Dominante, with the rest of the territory and their elites. Sicily had a very strong regional, in fact insular, identity that was politically recognized when the kingdom was renamed Regno delle due Sicilie: but the polarity between Palermo and Catania always had a disruptive effect. Lombard regional identity has been quite uncertain as its borders were fluid from all possible points of view. And, to quote one more example, Piedmontese regional identity has for centuries coincided with the capital Turin driving local identities to a position of irrelevant subcultures that nonetheless prospered.

The Iberian Peninsula is a similarly interesting area for investigating the interplay of the concepts of “nation,” “region,” and “empire.” It seems paradoxical that one of the earliest culminations of the modern state in Western Europe (seventeenth and eighteenth century in the case of Portugal, and eighteenth century in Spain) resulted in a very slow, problematic, and unsatisfying process of state formation. This was particularly true in the case of Spain. The numerous, interesting historical works from the Iberian Peninsula addressing the entangled and contradictory relationships between state, nation, and region confirm the social importance of that paradoxical situation.

The breakdown of the model of the state in Eastern Europe is obvious, but we should not forget that structures of the state have also been weakened in Western Europe by the ongoing transfer of power and decision-making to the European Union (EU) and by the acceleration of processes of globalization that characterize today’s world.

The identification with the regional level of belonging is at the same time strengthened by Europeanization (especially in the countries of the Iberian Peninsula but also in Eastern Europe) and makes the interplay of various spatial levels even more complex. In addition, at least in Spain, it has challenged a political concept of the nation that is based on the assumption of its indissoluble link with the state. In this context, the EU has become enough of a reality to be useful to those regions that aspire to be recognized as players on the international stage. At the same time it remains vague enough not to be experienced as a pressure. In Eastern Europe the aspirations of a number of “regions/nations without state” have culminated in the formation of new nation-states. In Western Europe, especially in Spain, there is a demand for public and institutional recognition of regional/national aspirations; however, this demand does not necessarily always
extend to the formation of new states. This situation is valid especially for the two most belligerent societies within Spain – Catalonia and the Basque Region.

There is an interest in comparing the processes and results of political transitions from authoritarian states to democracies in Europe. This process occurred in Portugal and in Spain during the 1970s and can easily be compared with the fall of authoritarian states in Eastern Europe during the 1980s. Indeed, it raises the question: In what way did the overcoming of the authoritarian regimes determine the relationship between region, nation, and state in Europe in the late twentieth century? Like in Eastern Europe, this process in Spain and Portugal began with the emergence of new forms of the nation-state. The peculiarity in Spain was the political transition from Francoism to democracy without any explicit “rupture” in the short run. This proved to be the determining factor for the institutionalization of the multiregional state (a state of “autonomous” entities) – the artificiality of which has left an evident dissatisfaction in those regions/nations which consider themselves as “historical” like Catalonia, the Basque Region, or Galicia.69 In Portugal, the revolution of 1974 never questioned the unifying character of the nation-state; but the end of Caciquism has introduced new dynamics in the relationship between the states and the local political powers. In particular, it has meant the peripheral extensions of central power.70 These parallels with Eastern Europe will also result in parallels in their respective historiographical products.

In the 1980s there was a considerable conjuncture of local as well as regional/national historiography in all the autonomous communities in Spain.71 This conjuncture coincided with two other developments – an increased interest in history in Spanish society and liberation from a long-standing tradition of historiographical isolation from the approaches and scientific methods in international academia. These developments can be related to similar processes in Eastern Europe, where there was also a concurrent increased interest in national history and in cooperating with international historiography.72 In Portugal, the new interest in history and the renewal of historiography have been particularly spectacular. Like in Spain, it entailed the restoration of the lost memory of the nineteenth century and the introduction of a contemporary history that focused particularly on twentieth-century history. It also involved new methods in social, economic, and cultural history as well as new approaches in political history to the local, the national, and the imperial past.

Within this panorama only the idea of Empire seems to be more or less neglected. The influence of those remembering a glorious imperial past – traditionally very common in both Spanish and Portuguese historiography – seems to be decreasing. However, the imperial past maintains its position when it comes to the role that the two countries played in the formation and expansion of European civilization.73 The national historiographies of Spain and Portugal have always been particularly prolific concerning the historical significance of their imperial past. These historiographies have not yet been completely transformed into critical approaches.74

The different levels of opposition and contrast between region/nation, nation/state, state/Europe, and Europe/world display a fundamental dialectic of
centrifugence and centripetence, which is at the disposal of a specific entity exercising political and economic power. These counterforces are central to the formation and the evolution of the state. In the case of Spain, the historiographical debate reflects both attitudes. On the one hand, there are formulations close to the centrifugal political attitudes corresponding to the idea of national plurality against the idea of a centralized and uniform state. On the other hand, there are more centripetal approaches (which in Spain takes one part – Castile – as reference and foundation of the whole and identifies it with the state) confirming the idea of national unity against plurality and diversity. In reality, both approaches started from the same point of departure, namely the desire for their national character to be recognized. This dialectic in the Spanish case is always accompanied by an anachronistic and teleological concept of the formation and evolution of the state. In this respect, Portuguese historiography developed in sharp contrast to that of its neighbor. Here we can observe the dialectic of centrifugal and centripetal forces only when it comes to the colonial question.

The term “regional history” has retained some of its glamor despite its extensive integration into the national history paradigm. However, it is not completely clear whether the term relates to subnational or supranational spaces. Oftentimes the boundaries remain unclear because regions in contrast to nation-states have never completely been territorialized. As a result, multiple overlaps with neighboring regions exist, and an individual’s affiliation to a region in no way features the same exclusivity that the national state often tries to impose by means of a one-nation/one-citizenship rule. The observance of various forms of regional history – even though, as we have seen in some nations they do not appear under this rubric – allows us consistently to recognize an irritation that is the product of regionality. At moments when the national history paradigm comes into crisis, this irritation can be an indicator of crisis, because it demonstrates that regional history is not simply a part of national history, but bears the potential for emancipation and seeks new coalitions in the sub-disciplines of historical science.

But how can one explain the dominance and persistence of national history writing over the course of a relatively long period of time? For approximately 150 years, many people became accustomed to the presentation of history in national terms. This framework came to be understood as quasi-natural for the historical narrative. School curriculums and many museums solidified this view in the collective conscious. Our language subsequently became so shaped by this perspective that it hardly seems possible not to choose nationalization as the territorial identifier for remembering. History is prefigured, for example, as French history or Russian history. And the audience for popular narratives as well as for academic studies seems immediately to grasp this formulation. Even when studies are about a particular region or about the history of towns and cities, most are represented and received as contributions to national history. Secondary school students answer the question concerning the value of national history usually by referencing the necessity of identity, which is furnished by this kind of history representation in the most authoritative way. In any case, secondary school students
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bring to the university this conception of history, where oftentimes it receives further confirmation.

This occurrence points to an underlying territorial regime, in which all other territorial spheres of social action become subsumed under the nation. The local and the regional appear primarily as the subnational – in the form of a “small nation within the nation-state” or as “an alternative form of nation building opposed to the ruling model of nation.” Even those developments that transcend the boundaries of the nation-state become subordinated to the dominance of the national. Internationality was apprehended primarily as the meeting of representatives of national sovereign states. This trend to some extent can be attributed to the analysis of so-called supranational entities, like the European Economic Community, where the coordination of national interests is moved to center stage. Thus, EU history reflects the desire of national regimes to restrict the transnational power of international federations and not to allocate control to supranational institutions (as for example the EU parliament). The explanation for this seemingly self-understood phenomenon is far from simple. Consequently many historians capitulate to the flexibility and survivability of an already much criticized but unvanquished form of historical representation which they describe without reflection as the normal case. Many contributions to the NHIST project not only underscored the power of methodological nationalism, which shaped their respective subjects of enquiry, but also acknowledged that this power has operated for so long that its imminent disappearance is not to be expected. At the 2005 International Congress of Historians in Sydney, Jürgen Kocka concluded that although transnational approaches offered many interesting insights and consequently represented a welcome addition to the historical sciences, he foresaw national history writing continuing to dominate the profession for at least another 50 years. This conclusion is perhaps not so surprising and a possible explanation already exists as to why this is the case. Younger historians, who are at a precarious point in their careers and consequently depend on at least the partial agreement of peers in their field, succumb to such a power of persuasion.

However, many critics of nationalism have tried by way of example to point out the dramatic consequences of national borders and the exclusion of foreigners. Catastrophic mass wars have been carried out in the name of the nation, and history repeatedly has played an important role in the mobilization for such wars. That the nation cannot manage many problems, which per se are transnational in scope, had already led to the creation of international organizations by the nineteenth century. These organizations attended to the civilian victims of war as well as to the injured at battlefields. Epidemics were to manage without thinking to stop for national barriers. Airwaves and shipping routes also present insurmountable difficulties for national regulatory mechanisms. The praxis and culture of these organizations, which oftentimes sprang from private initiatives, inspired the history of intergovernmental institutions as well as transnational non-governmental organizations. It also led to international credos that identified nationalism as a decisive hindrance to a peaceful and cooperative world. Additionally it has been demonstrated again and again that large parts
of the world population did not live in nation-states even for most parts of the twentieth century. Colonies, mandated territories, and foreign bases offer sufficient evidence of the persistence of imperial structures; the coexistence of settled societies and nomadic societies points to the inability of the national states in fact to be inclusive of all forms of life.80

From our perspective, three explanatory efforts can be differentiated that address why national history writing was able either to incorporate or marginalize all challenges to its dominance, so that for a long time the porosity in this historical form of representation was overlooked. The first attempt at explanation affirms the centrality of the national and its unparalleled ability to ensure sovereignty and democratic participation (albeit not always in pure and optimal form). Inherent to the formation of nations is a formidable force which at the same time is emancipatory and unifying. The nation-state overcame previous inequality and promised in the future an open process of creating equality—before the law, as citizen of the state, and later also as consumer. Consequently, it was almost natural that historians could not extract themselves from this fascinating phenomenon and instead committed themselves to the development, anchoring, and defense of the national. Although aristocratic conservatives did point to the destruction of the God-willed order, traditional hierarchies, and the consequent guarantee of prosperity and inner peace, their opposition became increasingly weaker and ultimately they surrendered. In this explanation, the national narrative of history appears as a permanent self-affirmation of being on the right historical path. At the same time it reflected a process of selection in which only those historians were left standing, who had aligned themselves with the powerful national political movements before the clock ran out on the old aristocratic conservatism.

The works of Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawm on the imagined community and the inventing of traditions developed a constructivist variant to this approach. They were able to show that the nation was not the product of a long process in which over the course of many centuries it had slowly become more strongly self-aware. Instead, the nation represented a relatively recent invention that originated out of a conscious decision to create collective meaning. Ostensibly, it was introduced in order to overthrow the power of the established opponent.81 In this variant, historians appear more strongly as actors and not simply as gears in a seemingly natural process. They try to master rapid transformations, by insisting precisely at this moment on the continuities to which the traditions seemingly attested. Yet at the same time a process of professionalization is underway, which for all intents and purposes was intended to draw a divide between the invention of tradition and the scientifically observed representation of history by academics. Thus, Hobsbawm in complete awareness of the tension between these two developments stated:

Nations and states long for history, albeit not in the way it is written by modern historians. As Ernest Renan already established over a century ago ‘forgetting or even misapprehending is an essential element in the formation of a nation.’
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For this reason historians, including this author, as a rule confront national ideologies and their corresponding versions of history rather skeptically.\(^82\)

For the British Marxist, this skepticism was fostered by two interrelated theses. First, he argued that it was unrealistic for every ethnically and linguistically legitimate nation to aim for its own national state. Second, he believed that there was a high probability that such ambitions would have negative consequences. These negative consequences could already be seen in the immediate aftermath of World War I. Over the course of the twentieth century, Woodrow Wilson's declaration on the right to self-determination, which he did not intend for the whole world, led to catastrophic consequences.\(^83\) One can leave it undecided whether in fact all historians have been so steadfast in their defense of their professional standards, when confronted with the temptation to assume the role of herald of a national history. In any case, the first explanation for the dominance of methodological nationalism reveals a profound and reciprocal political affinity between those historians, who were successful because they provided the nation with its history and the political movements which sought to disguise their break with tradition through the invention of a national history that reached far back into the past. Conversely it can be assumed that alternatives to this approach can more readily be detected outside this political–professional coalition. This situation raises a critical problem for the practice of the history of historiography, which frequently focuses on successes and equates marginality with meaninglessness. The history of historiography as a succession of highbrow citations tends to cement an impression that it should have in fact analytically broken through: Historians associated with the political elites of the national state served as proof of the supremacy of the national history paradigm, even though their success is explained precisely by the fact that they wrote the nation in order to defend themselves from their critics (\textit{Nestbeschmutzer}) and to transfigure the nation as the ultimate purpose of all historical development.

It can be assumed that the imprint of a powerful coalition of national political movements and historians arguing preferably or exclusively for national history writing is not possible without the complicity of a history of historiography, which this coalition pushed to the center of their oftentimes normatively charged studies. However, recent professionalization of history of historiography as a sub-discipline results in a beginning emancipation from a type of historiography, which rested in the hands of the leaders of the profession and which served more as a legitimation of its own methodological core convictions than as a reconstruction of historiographical development \textit{sine ira et studio}.\(^84\)

Only at the twilight\(^85\) of this successful coalition between nation and historiography did the recourse to the national appear somewhat old-fashioned, at least in light of criticisms from other nations, who sometimes conveyed their lead in the transnationalization of historical representations with quite nationalistic zeal.

The second explanation augments the first approach by historicizing it. Here it is not about glorifying the nation-state as the endpoint of all historical development. Instead the focus is on describing the nation-state as a potential and completely
From approximately the middle of the nineteenth century, all societies worldwide increasingly were compelled under penalty of ruin or at least forfeiture of competitiveness to enter into transnational and global interrelationships. This process was accelerated by new technologies of communication and of transportation that in the 1840s became effective regulatory regimes interconnecting geographically distant regions. In these regulatory regimes, the fate of people in one part of the world was codetermined by people in another part of the world. Global cash flows and particularly the stock exchanges for various goods connected previously *grosso modo* separately regulated regions. That is not to say that no cultural exchange, colonialism, or circulation of goods and capital previously existed. In recent years, research has produced impressive findings concerning these encounters before 1800/1840. However this archaic globalization, as Christopher Bayly has termed it, differs from that of the global condition postulated by Charles Bright and Michael Geyer for the period since the middle of the nineteenth century. As Patrick O’Brien has intoned, pre-1800 societies remained fundamentally and overwhelmingly agrarian; only a comparably marginal portion of social and economic development owed to contact and exchange with other societies. However, the fundamental transformation that took place circa the middle of the nineteenth century did not lead to the emergence of a “flat” world of homogenized free trade societies. Instead contemporaneously, we can observe the process of nationalization as that form of assertion and redefinition of sovereignty, which was best able to garner a position within the global condition. The nation-state in its modern form provided its citizens with universal suffrage, equal rights, and socio-cultural integration into a symbolic and richly endowed nation. By doing so, it became the instrument through which to win back control over the growing flow of global interactions. This transition was neither conflict free nor did it lead to the same results in all parts of the world. Instead this process was carried out at critical junctures of globalization; moments and places at which the relationship of flows and controls were renegotiated and reaffixed. It has rightly been noted that not everywhere in the world were successful nation-states created that were able to manage and contain the global condition. Instead many regions of the earth fell subject to powers, which admittedly were able through nationalization to stabilize internal relationships, but at the same time formed imperial complementary spaces in which – to some extent extraterritorially – global flows were kept under control and rerouted to their advantage. Although the nation-state provided an effective political program of nationalization that was ideologically reinforced by Euro-centrism and Social Darwinism, it was not as successful at dealing with transnational challenges, as the national rhetoric believed that it could and should be. The performance of nation-state regimes depended on two factors. On the one hand, a nation-state regime needed repeatedly to give concrete proof of its centrality for the control of global connectedness (for example through the defense of complete population groups from the consequences of the global market or by supporting expansionist ventures – to name only two dimensions). On the other hand, the nation-state had to demonstrate its ability to integrate and link
other regulatory regimes with nationalization. If we envisage this process also as a challenge for historians, who intellectually steered and shaped the nation-state, then the sphere of investigation is much broader than the first explanatory approach suggested. First, it is about understanding nationalization not only as a derivation of contemporary society based on mythically romanticized roots. It was also about understanding the nation in its relationship to competitors and to the global condition. Two approaches based on this latter understanding developed. On the one hand, there were comparative histories that moved to center stage the path dependence of opportunities which a nation would have in the competitive environment. On the other hand, there were histories of global moments and world wars that offered rich material for understanding a new world order. It also entailed appreciating the capacity of other regulatory regimes, such as the city, the region, or the international organization, albeit without admitting their supremacy over the nationalization project. As already noted, this approach was so successful that for most of the twentieth century urban history, the history of regions and provinces, as well as the history of international relations could not be conceptualized or apprehended independently of the national paradigm.

This second explanatory approach not only attempts to explain how national history writing developed such a dynamic from the middle of the nineteenth century; it also addresses the impermanence of this power. By interpreting history writing as part of much broader regulatory regimes, that need orientational knowledge and legitimation, it brings historians more clearly into view. Many historians were not primarily preoccupied with the nation and the nation-state. Instead they related their work on local, regional, and international subjects to the presumed power of the nation-state, as a means of integrating all these dimensions. Correlatively a history of historiography needed to concentrate on the relationships between various kinds of history writing. It was not simply about the question of whether national history writing was the dominant paradigm, but how it became so. By what means did it establish, preserve, and perhaps to some extent already lose its control over other spheres of history? Undeniably in the last two decades increased dissatisfaction with the national paradigm has been expressed. The historicity of a paradigm that some held for eternal, is more and more frequently addressed and in this way slowly transformed from a critical incantation into a reality. In many places in the world today a plea is made for a form of history writing that moves beyond the nation-state and a new generation of historians takes on the investigation of new subject matters, or respectively views old subject matters in a new light. This volume not least of all has been inspired and influenced by this movement, which has grown larger during the course of our team’s investigation. This influence makes itself felt at two levels. First, an effort is made to incorporate more attentively history beyond the nation-state and to take it more seriously as a subject of the history of historiography. Second, historiography beyond the nation-state is understood as including the collective and individual experiences of historians with the transnationalization of their work environment, their careers, and their communication. Thus, not only is the subject matter of historians understood as undergoing transformation, so
too is the array of historians. Again this process varies greatly in different regions of the world, and the end product of this process cannot be predicted. Yet, one already can discern an increasing pluralism in possible approaches that represents more than just greater variety. Instead this pluralism is also expressed in a greater tolerance toward diversity in approaches and subject matter. Yet, greater pluralism may be detrimental to the clarity of the discipline and thus it is regretted by some. At the same time, however, this situation makes possible new experiments that move beyond national history writing. From the perspective of the explanatory approaches introduced here, one could interpret this development as an expression of a transition to a new regulatory regime and a new regime of territorialization. Obviously the nation-state does not disappear, as some rash supporters of homogenous global governance in the 1990s presumed. However, it does acquire a new function in interaction with other territorial levels. This function in a world of competing global markets, global cities, multinational corporations, and transnational commodity chains must yet be identified. The current financial crisis offers rich illustrative material as to how difficult it is and in what ways the representatives of the national history paradigm are engaged with the problem of formulating this new function.

A third explanation by historians for the long dominance of the national framework focuses on the work conditions that are required for a professionalized historical science. It has been argued somewhat persuasively that the adherence of many historians to the idea of nation involved an advantageous deal. Historians benefited from the funding of teaching chairs, archives, libraries, organizations of national and international congresses, journals, and professional associations. For this reason, historians were ready in a more or less critically intoned voice to sing the praises of the national. The appearance of a deal is most evident where collective representations of national history were conceived and written with large institutional and financial input. This explanatory approach is associated with the first approach but adds significantly to the study of institutional structure and disciplinary self-organization. According to this approach, historians exchanged excellent work conditions and an optimal access to the public for loyalty to the nation-state. Of course one objection to this explanation is that it has a conspiratorial-theoretical element. Opponents argue that not once in the relatively strictly controlled historiography of socialist nations (outside the dramatic, but nevertheless comparably rare open conflict situations between historians and the Communist Party) can it be substantiated how the rulers exacted a price for the deal. The "gilded cage" functioned clearly without strict controls and on the basis of intrinsic motivations. These intrinsic motivations encouraged presenting new knowledge within a preexisting paradigm or in such a way as to ensure that one aligned oneself on the side of the victor.

At the same time this fixation on the nation-state combined in interesting ways with the concurrent process of professionalization and disciplining in the modern universities. It made it possible for historians to push subjects that threatened to undermine the clear arrangement of methodological nationalism into neighboring disciplines, and to stand up against the verdict of deficient scholarship.
Thus numerous subject matters, which a comprehensive historiography should have claimed for itself, migrated to so-called area studies or regional studies, even though many representatives of the discipline had argued at that time for their inclusion. As a result, history lost access to a large part of empire, which would have been necessary for world historical analysis. Paradoxically, this very loss enabled some leading representatives to claim that a science of history that transcended Europe and the West was not possible without abandoning the newly attained standards of scholarship. Similarly, in some countries sociology succeeded in claiming a competency in explaining contemporary societies and their immediate past, and history became divorced from the recent past.\(^{101}\) This list easily can be expanded. We need only look at economic and/or legal histories, which also were surrendered in part to the neighboring faculties for economics and law. Despite the ascendancy of the study of literary and art, these two subjects remained within the purview of cultural history. However, even their study by historians suffered from the discipline’s willingness to reduce the subject matter of history. The study of history thus oftentimes excluded spheres of knowledge, in which political and social processes exhibited a tendency for the transnational and therefore could have advanced the methodological reopening of historiography. Ultimately, the study of history paid dearly for its seemingly profitable alliance with the nation-state. Recently, it has been argued that European history paid a higher price than its US counterpart, because European historians were constrained for a longer time by the pitfalls of national history writing than their colleagues in North America.\(^{102}\) Whether this is in fact the case requires further comparative analysis. However it is beyond dispute that increasingly more voices are raised against entrapment in methodological nationalism. These individuals search for reasons why the framework of the national narrative of history in most cases remains preserved, even in places where innovations has been used to combat traditional forms of national history writing. Neither social history in the 1960s nor the subsequent challenge of political and social history by a cultural–historical paradigm produced a break with methodological nationalism. Instead they joined a close alliance with the nation-state and provided it a seemingly refurbished tool of legitimation and were recompensed by a further growth in facilities. The histories of the military, the churches, and forms of religiosity followed a similar trajectory. However, because of its long-time marginalization in the European system of higher education, the history of gender relations developed a transnational praxis relatively early on, although it also frequently was studied within the national framework.\(^{103}\)

The recent intensive discussion\(^{104}\) about possible forms for a transnational history, which is understood as history beyond the nation-state, has underscored repeatedly that it wants to provide an alternative to the national paradigm and to methodological nationalism. Frequently this alternativeness is combined with a discourse of newness, in which the radical newness of this kind of history writing is underscored. This newness is understood to be the result of experiences unique to the late twentieth century – transnational commodity chains, increasing supranational political forms of organization, deeper awareness of migration, and
above all the realization of cultural interconnectedness through contacts between various cultures, that were made possible by the presence of new media.106

However doubts about this discourse of newness can be formulated,107 because in fact the conception of history as national history is merely a step in a longer history of historiography. For similar reasons it has been argued that history as history of collective humanity intrinsically can only be conceived as history of the whole globe. National history can only exist in its connection to a greater history, which reflects at any one time the historicity of all humanity.108

In this respect it seems appropriate for a project concerned with the history of European historiography in the last 150–200 years to dedicate a volume to analyzing possible spatial alternatives, which were tried out over the course of this time period and in part were brought into place in opposition to the national historic constriiction. A central leitmotif for global history and the various efforts at a transnational study of historical processes since the eighteenth century is pulled from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century world history. Yet, this leitmotif is neither particularly lineal nor can it be followed continuously. Interest increased and decreased. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the field of world history sometimes came under the suspicion of being amateurish and repeatedly was considered a threat to the identity of history writing and the national movement, even though many world historians paid homage to an explicit nationalism. A permanent institutionalization of world history, however, was found in only a few places. Consequently, its study entails selecting from the many artifacts, those which became particularly effective and whose influence on the efforts to overcome methodological nationalism can be substantiated to some extent up to the present day.

Through individual case studies, the contributions in this volume consider various dimensions of these alternative histories. This volume does not attempt to provide a comprehensive enumeration of every contribution to the “spatial other” in each European nation. This endeavor would be unrealistic for an even much larger team and would be beyond the scope of a single book. Moreover, it would mean much tiresome repetition in many places. Instead the chapters for this volume were selected so that key dimensions of the formation of spatial alternatives for the anchoring of the nation were considered. The selection process took place in the numerous workshops of the NHIST Team, which were held between Budapest and Barcelona.

The authors in their particular fields have contributed in prominent ways to giving this alternative way of writing history greater weight. But this volume is not about devising an alternative program for national history in the mode of a history of historiography. Instead our goal is to reconstruct the course of historiographical developments and to study the diversity of such developments in a Europe that is conceived as extending from the Atlantic to the Urals, rather than one that is limited to Western and Central Europe and excludes Eastern European history and historians. Precisely through the inclusion of historiographical developments in various nations, some of which were colonial powers, while others for years were integrated in foreign empires, it becomes clear that there is no single
alternative to national history writing. In each case, these alternatives were reconstituted depending on the interests of the individual historians, the institutional structures, and the respective historiographical and historical cultures.

The contribution of Michel Espagne points to a fundamental methodological problem which in the last two decades has led to frequent controversies in some European countries. It concerns the value of comparison as a central instrument of a history that transcends the national framework.

Since the 1960s, comparative historiography has experienced a renewed advance. In the 1920s, Pirenne, Bloch, Halvan Koht and others tried to create a central place for comparison in historiography. However, this effort stagnated during the wartime decline. Comparison quickly gained high prestige in the first decades of the twentieth century. On the one hand, this prestige was based on the close connection with the social sciences and scientism. Not only was comparison called the “Königsweg” of historiography, but under the special conditions of history it was said to replace the scientific experiment through which scientists differentiated between the verification and falsification of hypotheses. By means of comparison, history seems to be able to make plausible statements not only about individual historical facts and circumstances but, within certain limits, also to arrive at generalizations and predictions for the future. In the optimistic spirit of the 30 glorious years after World War II, this claim hardly raised any skeptical objections. On the other hand, the high prestige that comparison enjoyed was based on the fact that it could count on an everyday practice of both historical actors and the audience for historic representations.

Implicit and explicit (albeit less frequently methodically controlled) comparisons determine a number of central debates about identities and the opportunities for development within one’s own society. Comparison is a widely accepted instrument of measuring and even managing cultural differences (that is, the distance between populations that appeared different or foreign).

It is, however, true that many of these comparisons presupposed national units and without reflection made the national unit the basis of their design. Consequently, many comparisons did not become an instrument to overcome the orientation of nationalized societies. In practice, historians working on the basis of comparison all too often simply presupposed the existence of national units. They did not contemplate the historical development of the national and consequently ignored the transitory quality of the nation. This practice is best illustrated by one of the best-known comparative debates, that about the German special way (Sonderweg). However, other examples easily could be added.

This practice can explain why the advancement of a comparative science of history has not by itself led to a change, whereby entities other than the nation are moved to the focal point of interest. In recent years approaches that offer a history of entanglement as well as research on cultural transfer have gained in prominence and influence. They help to illustrate that the explanation of historical change cannot be ascertained primarily from the internal structures of a single society. Rather it derives from the exchange with other societies and thus it invites us to consider the concrete configurations of these entanglements.
It can be argued with good reason that important European approaches to world and global history have been informed by cultural transfer research. This argument is taken into consideration in the chapter by Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann. The influence of cultural transfer research is certainly even stronger in the case of the United States, whose world history movement since the early 1990s has been shaped by a strong mobilization of research on Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Near East and the Middle East. However, this US world history movement has shown little interest in methodological questions. Correspondingly the studies on world and global history exist in a particularly close connection to development of Area Studies, whose European fate Andreas Eckert considers. It shows that the investigation of the non-Western world was excluded for a long time from many historical institutions. Correspondingly departments that focused on regional scholarship or the departments of ethnology/anthropology had a more marginal influence on history writing, even though this began to change in the more recent past and in the comparison of former colonial powers was subjected to entirely different conjunctures. Since the colonial expansion by sea or by land is reflected in the establishment of imperial structures, three chapters of this book deal with imperial history. Anne Friedrichs and Mathias Mesenhöller undertake a far-reaching comparison between France and Great Britain on the one hand and Eastern Europe on the other hand. Lluis Roura offers a close examination of the Iberian Peninsula, and Martin Aust analyzes Russia’s imperial vision of history since the nineteenth century. In contrast Diana Mishkova, Bo Stråth, and Balázs Trencsényi compare the large regions of Southeastern and Northern Europe. These two regions have been marginalized in many European studies. Yet, perhaps precisely because of this marginalization, concepts developed there point to similarities in historical fortune and thus could both forward and undermine national/nationalist history. Antonis Liakos advances these ideas effectively by asking what are the principles of construction used in various historiographies to establish and cement a canon of historical knowledge, and Jean-Clément Martin points out that the French Revolution, whose international historiography is addressed in his chapter, is accepted in almost all European historiographies as a central narrative element, although explanations for its outbreak and its effects vary considerably and to some extent have given rise to frequent ideological strife. This concomitant significance of the French Revolution for French history and for the history of almost all parts of Europe has challenged historians again and again to consider the transnational quality of this revolution in particular as well as of revolutions in general. At the same time it is not an exaggeration if one assumed that the historiography of the French revolution was internationalized very early on and characterized by a particularly dense communication across national borders. Thus particularly favorable conditions existed here for a transnational history, which emerged from international praxis.

Edoardo Tortarolo traces a coerced transnationality and tracks European historians’ experiences of migration over the course of the twentieth century. He points out that many innovations are the products of violent transplantations to
a different intellectual and institutional context. At the same time, however he shows that these departures were always accompanied by a history of loss.

Finally, Geneviève Warland and Maarten Van Ginderachter consider the case of Belgium. On the one hand, Belgium is situated in the heart of Europe and today houses the most important European institutions. On the other hand, it is embroiled in an existential conflict which probably can no longer be solved by means of nationalization. Regionalization and transnationalization contribute more today to the continued existence of Belgium than national memory. To what extent this chapter bridges the different expectations for further development of transnational approaches in the European study of history remains an open question. Should the replacement of the national paradigm by this transnational approach be limited to Europe, as some representatives of a European history envision? And has the transnationalization of European histories always even addressed its global entanglements? These questions also remain open and will have to be analyzed by future historians of historiography.

Notes


6. A first overview was given in *Storia della Storiografia* 50 (2006).
14. For a convincing critique of these conventions and of the applicability of the persuasive power of maps, see D. Wood and J. Fels, *The Power of Maps* (New York, 1992).


26. See the issue of Review, I, 3/4 (Winter/Spring, 1978) which was entirely devoted to the connection between the Annales-School and the new approach offered by the Centre in Binghampton.

27. The same structuring principle was used for the Oxford History of Historiography coordinated by Daniel Woolf.


30. See, for example, B. Bayerlein et al. (eds), The International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Comintern, Communism and Stalinism (Mannheim, 1995); S. Combe, Archives internationales (Paris, 2010); M. Espagne, K. Middell and M. Middell (eds), Archiv und Gedächtnis. Studien zur interkulturellen Überlieferung (Leipzig, 2000).


33. This comes to the fore when comparing, for example, the approach chosen by Woolf for his Oxford History of Historiography with the otherwise very innovative work by W. Kuttler, J. Rüsen and E. Schulin (eds), Geschichtsdikurs, 5 vols (Frankfurt a. M., 1993–1999). The literature that was published in the short decade between the two works has contributed enormously to our knowledge about historiographies beyond the “classical three”.


35. A review of the record of relevant studies on history of historiography confirms this reductionist outlook; it provides a kind of master narrative, which perceives persons, concepts, and institutions simply on a migratory transcendental plane. In contrast, national and regional representations defiantly insist on “us too!” and are in danger of
Matthias Middell and Lluis Roura

exaggerating the innovative powers of the heroes of their own historiography and of emphasizing their national character more clearly than the material can support.


42. J. H. Brinks, Paradigms of political change: Luther, Frederick II, and Bismarck. The GDR on its way to German unity (Milwaukee, 2001).


44. For an impressive demonstration of this argument for the Austrian and Czechoslovakian case, see P. Kolár, Rewriting National History in Post-War Central Europe: Marxist Synthesis of Austrian and Czechoslovak History as New National Master Narratives. In S. Berger and C. Lorenz (eds), Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe (New York, 2010), 319–340.

45. This connection is described by R. Lindnet, Historiker und Herrschaft: Nationenbildung und Geschichtspolitik in Weißrussland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (München, 1999). The pattern of a separation of national history and the history of the other in the United States is justified differently. Here it has its roots in the discussion about the European origin of the majority of early immigrants (and as Western Civilization course experienced numerous peripeties before it was emancipated from the world history movement of the last 20 years). A another case in which this distinction between national and general history is encountered is the Japanese one, which knew this distinction likewise and had roots both in the American cultural policy in the time after World War II and in the strong role of Marxist historians in the 1950s
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and 1960s. See S. Conrad, Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Nation: Geschichtsschreibung in Westdeutschland und Japan, 1945–1960 (Göttingen, 1999); H. M. Kramer, T. Schölz and S. Conrad (eds), Geschichtswissenschaft in Japan: Themen, Ansätze und Theorien (Göttingen, 2006). Demarcated from this is the case of those European powers in which national history is to be distinguished from imperial history; see A. Friedrichs, Das Empire als Aufgabe des Historikers.


47. S. Berger (ed), Writing the Nation: A Global Perspective (New York, 2007).

48. The list originated from a request by Stefan Berger to historians in all European nations for the ten most important national histories of their respective nations. The list consciously renounced any rule of integrity, so that problems of demarcation for marginal publications did not occur. First, the list confirmed the thesis of the omnipresence of national history writing in all of Europe. Second, the deviations in titles given by historians for the same nation indicated that there was not always a fixed canon of definitive national histories. Third, the zenith of national history writing appeared to be over; the majority of studies appeared between the middle of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century. That conclusion does not mean that the genre would not advance undaunted to some extent in multi-volume endeavors. However, the number of thematic studies, which problematized the national framework in one way or another increased substantially even if one asked for national histories. See http://www.uni-leipzig.de/zhsesf/documents/cross_team/TopTen_Histories.pdf. For more general account: S. Berger, Constructing the Nation Through History (Basingstoke and New York, 2012).


53. The concept of a national master narrative has experienced a polymorphic career in the recent history of historiography. On the one hand, it has been applied in a narrow sense. But it also has been applied more broadly to the dominant social groups and the interests behind the master narrative. For an attempt to consolidate these two approaches and to add a third dimension of medial development and intercession, see M. Gibas, F. Hadler and M. Middell, Sinnstiftung und Systemlegitimation durch historisches Erzählen. Überlegungen zu Funktionsmechanismen von Repräsentationen des Vergangenen. Comparativ 10, 2 (2000): 7–35; K. H. Jarausch and M. Sabrow (eds), Die historische Meistererzählung. Deutungslinien der deutschen Nationalgeschichte nach 1945 (Göttingen, 2002); A. Rigney, The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution (Cambridge, 2002); A. Rigney, When the Monograph Is No Longer the Medium: Historical Narrative in the Online Age. History and Theory, 49 (2010): 100–117; S. Berger, L. Eriksonas and A. Mycock (eds), Narrating...
the Nation: Representations in History, Media, and the Arts (New York, 2008), especially the contribution by Mark Bevir, Chris Lorenz, and Allan Megill.


55. Just to point to one example, even a stronghold of national historians, like the University of Berlin sought to construct a continuous line of engagement with world history. See W. Hardtwig and P. Müller (eds), Die Vergangenheit der Weltgeschichte: Universalhistorisches Denken in Berlin 1800–1933 (Göttingen, 2010).


60. Karl Lamprecht, who later became famous for his work Deutsche Geschichte and subsequently conceived a comparative world history, began his career not coincidentally with a social, economic, and cultural historical analysis of the Rhineland. This history of the Rhineland was funded by industrialist from that region, whose interest in the socio-structural formation of their region exceeded the primacy of the national. See K. Lamprecht, Beiträge zur Geschichte des französischen Wirtschaftsleben im 11. Jahrhundert (Leipzig, 1878); On this history by Lamprecht see, L. Schorn-Schüte, Karl Lamprecht: Kulturgeschichtsschreibung zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik (Göttingen, 1984), 40–55; R. Chickering, Karl Lamprecht: A German Academic Life (New Jersey, 1993), 67–106. For a broader European panorama of this approach, see G. Warland, L’usage public de l’histoire. Grammaire de la nation et de l’Europe chez Blok, Lamprecht, Lavisse et Pirenne; Ferry et Rüsen (Brussels, 2011 (Diss.)).


63. T. Frank and F. Hadler (eds), Disputed Territories and Shared Pasts: Overlapping National Histories in Modern Europe (New York, 2011); see also as a case study J. M. Piskorski, J. Hackmann, and R. Jaworski (eds), Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik. Disziplinen im Vergleich (Osnabrück and Poznan, 2002).

64. For the history of Jews as transnational group, see D. Diner (ed), Synchrone Welten: Zeitenräume jüdischer Geschicht (=Toldot, vol. 1) (Göttingen, 2005).


68. Ibid.


70. See L. Nuno Espinha da Silveira (ed), Poder central, poder regional, poder local: Uma perspectiva histórica (Lisbon, 1997); Ibid., Territorio e Poder: Nas origens do Estado Contemporâneo em Portugal (Cascais, 1997).

71. We need to mention here a number of great syntheses in regional history for all the autonomous regions between 1985 and 1995 (Andalusia, Aragon, Basque Region, Castile, Catalonia, Galicia, Valencia etc.).


73. See the A. Herculano, História de Portugal (Lisbon, 1846–1953); see also J. P. Oliveira Martins, Historia de la civilización ibérica (Lisbon, 1885) and especially M. I. João, Memoria e Império (Lisbon, 2002); for the Spanish case, see L. Roura, L'Empire hispanique et l’idée d'empire dans l'historiographie espagnole moderne. Histoirein 5 (2005): 106–117.

74. For Portugal, see. J. Jobson Arruda and J. Manuel Tengarrinha, Historiografia Luso-Brasileira Contemporânea (Bauru, 1999), 123–124; for the Spanish case see, the scientific activities in the commemoration of Philipp II and Charles V in 1998 and 2000 by the “Sociedad Estatal para las Conmemoraciones Históricas”.


77. See on EU history the overview by W. Kaiser and A. Varsori (eds), European Union History. Themes and Debates (Basingstoke, 2010).

78. A. Iriye, Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World (Berkeley, 2002); M. Herren, Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung (Darmstadt, 2009).

79. A. Iriye, Cultural Internationalism and World Order (Baltimore, 1997).


84. F. Hadler and M. Middell, Challenges to the History of Historiography in an Age of Globalization. In E. Wang and F. L. Fillafer (eds), The Many Faces of Clio: Cross-Cultural

85. To paraphrase Hegel’s observation, whereupon the owl of Minerva takes off only when darkness slowly falls, thus when an observed phenomenon had definitively passed its zenith.


93. For example, S. Conrad, Globalisierung und Nation im deutschen Kaiserreich (München, 2006).


96. U. Engel and M. Middell (eds), World Orders Revisited (Leipzig, 2010).


98. S. Sassen, Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages (Princeton, 2006); A. D. Chandler and B. Mazlish (eds), Leviathans: Multinational Corporations


101. For the definition of contemporary/modern history in different European countries, See A. Nützenadel and W. Schieder (eds), Zeitgeschichte als Problem. Nationale Traditionen und Perspektiven der Forschung in Europa (Göttingen, 2004).


104. See the debates in geschichte.transnational and H-German.


112. T. Welskopp, Identität ex negativo: Der “deutsche Sonderweg” als Metaerzählung in der bundesdeutschen Geschichtswissenschaft der siebziger und achtziger Jahre.


114. Thus it was not accidental that the Third European Congress on World and Global History held in London in 2011 had the title “Global Connections and Comparisons.” This congress combined the interests of economic and social historians on the one hand and on the other hand addressed the methodological tensions of comparison and entanglement.

115. But the number of works translating some of the European debates to the American audience is increasing. See, for example, D. Cohen and M. O’Connor (eds), *Comparison and History. Europe in Cross National Perspective* (New York, 2004) and the efforts by Berghahn Books to make texts written by German and French authors available in English.
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