

Global and transnational history, networks and violence

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This one-day workshop, realised within the Archive for Contemporary History (ETH Zurich), provided young scholars who currently study global and transnational history, social networks and phenomena of violence, with an opportunity to present their findings in an epoch-spanning and transdisciplinary environment. The first panel in particular attempted to provide a pre-modern perspective. Apart from the individual contributions, the conference included in-depth discussions, enhanced by expert talks concerning methods, theories and problems connected to current approaches in historiography.

Panel I examined the impacts of violence on elite networks in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. NIKOLAS HÄCHLER (Zurich) analysed the consequences of the so-called crisis of the Roman Empire (235-284 AD) for the senatorial order by prosopographical means. In reaction to a time of violent upheavals, emperors promoted successful members of the *ordo equester* much more frequently to high command posts in the Roman army and the provincial administration; in consequence, many senators lost their traditional hegemonic functions within the Roman state. However, these developments did not lead to a fundamental change of Rome's social or political order. Especially on an ideological and cultural level, the *ordo senatorius* remained of greatest importance for the Empire's identity in times of crisis.

MIRIAM BASTIAN (Zurich) focused on one member of Rome's social elite in particular and asked whether the actors behind the *damnatio memoriae* of C. Fulvius Plautianus, who served as a praetorian prefect under Caracalla, might be seen as members of a trans-provincially operating network. Although it is possible to reconstruct potentially

involved institutions, it is factually very difficult to identify all tangible actors. The discernible cases of *damnationes memoriae* then do not appear in a consistent manner. Bastian therefore concludes that other factors such as personal patronage played an important role for the actual implementation of imperial orders in the Roman Empire.

SIMON VAN REKUM (Zurich) turned his attention towards social elites in the Middle Ages and studied competing models of interpersonal relations between Scandinavian magnates and the continental courts, thereby focusing on the taxonomy for the social stratification. By examining denotations of social rank within the Scandinavian elite during the 12th and 13th century (e.g. „hersir“, „barún“) he concluded that the position of an individual within the nobility was not only labelled within the framework „domestic-alien“ but also within the paradigm „archaic-modern“. However, such denominations never played a crucial role during negotiations of a person's position among the Scandinavian elite per se and were sometimes adjusted, depending on social and cultural contexts as well as personal intent.

In the ensuing discussion, all three contributors emphasised certain difficulties in dealing with social networks in pre-modern times caused by the often fragmented sources. The first expert talk by MATTHIAS BIXLER (Zurich) appropriately addressed chances and limitations of Historical Network Research (HNR). Based on and in interaction with methods of Social Network Analysis, HNR tries to illustrate past phenomenological realities. It does this by depicting dynamic, multiplex and multi-nodal relationships between human beings through time as static, simple and one-modal connections between historical actors during a specifically defined period. As a result, such reconstructed networks present us with new perspectives on past social structures and possibly also on historical events. HNR is thereby potentially useful for every epoch. However, it needs enough source material and the right kind of scientific framework in order to provide us with new results.

The second panel revolved around questions concerning the connections between

global networks and developments in science and technology during modern times. MIKAEL PIERRE (Newcastle / Bordeaux) discussed the transnational trajectory of the wine industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by analysing the role of French wine experts in Australia. With the dramatic growth of South Australian vineyards between 1879 and 1910, outside experts were increasingly sought-after, including Egyptian-born Englishman Arthur J. Perkins, an agricultural scientist and viticulturist trained at the Ecole Nationale d'Agriculture at Montpellier. Perkins' transnational career illustrates the growing prominence of Franco-Australian academic and professional wine exchanges in this period.

JOANNA SIMONOW (Zurich) addressed global activist networks and media representations of famine and starvation in India in the first half of the 20th century. Despite the growth of transnational networks of journalists, missionaries, and other humanitarians that increased the possibility of international media attention, only a few of India's famines rose to the level of „global events“ in Western media coverage. This uneven media coverage was an outgrowth of problematic media framing of „slow violence“ as an event rather than a process, political contestation, and sensationalist newspaper agendas.

In order to conclude the second panel, MARTIN MEISKE (Munich) reflected on the role of geology and sea canals in U.S. imperial expansion at the turn of the 20th century. Following a rash of deadly landslides during the construction of the Panama Canal, the U.S. government sent its first official geologist, Donald McDonald, to „defeat nature“ just as global empire demanded the defeat of human enemies. These scientific projects comprised another element of the Roosevelt Corollary, complementing the use of economic investment and military force. Indeed, McDonald's surveys were used to settle a border dispute between Panama and Costa Rica and ultimately led to increased regional investment by U.S. fruit companies.

DANIEL NERLICH (Zurich), deputy director of the Archive for Contemporary History, started the afternoon with a presentation on the global collections of the Archives of Con-

temporary History at ETH Zurich. These 745 holdings include digitised First World War photographs, witness accounts of Swiss humanitarian missions, refugee documents from the 1940s, and Cold War-era files. Recent travelling exhibitions have included the accounts of Holocaust survivors and those who experienced the 1944 siege of Budapest. His remarks provided the audience with valuable insights into the archives' rich inventory.

Panel III presented three different perspectives on the constitution of social networks in the context of international relations and increasing mobility. As the first speaker, STEVE MARTI (Ontario) analysed why British dominion populations were so emotionally invested in the First World War effort despite their great distance from the battlefronts. Voluntary action manifested itself as far afield as Australia and Canada in citizens' „donation“ of machine guns, planes, and ambulances. These tangible displays of local support were not unconditional, however. Donor communities made demands on their respective states as to the use of their contributions, for example by earmarking them for local regiments.

LUCAS FEDERER (Zurich) addressed the role of Swiss Trotskyist solidarity networks during the Algerian War. Zurich emerged as a particularly important hub of transnational revolutionary activity in this period, not only as a rendezvous point for exiled activists but also as the home of the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) considerable war chest. More broadly, networks of safe houses operated throughout French-speaking western Switzerland while the head of the FLN's rival, *Mouvement national algérien* (MNA), frequently stayed in the country.

ELISABETH MARIE PILLER (Trondheim) concluded the panel by focusing on the mobilisation of humanitarian relief during the First World War through an examination of the Herbert Hoover-led Committee for Relief in Belgium. The CRB's work, neutrally administering relief while conducting „humanitarian diplomacy“ with belligerent governments, anticipates the operations of present-day non-governmental organisations. Additionally, these cross-border activities continue to challenge definitional dichotomies of „in-

ternational“ vs. „trans-national“ and „global“ vs. „imperial“.

Panel IV provided papers about the connection between social and political networks and different forms of violence. JACOPO LORENZINI (Naples) reflected on domestic and transnational connections of Italian army staff officers during the late 19th century. By examining an Italian officer's collection of visiting cards, he was able to build an extensive database containing information about the number and quality of his social affiliations as well as his whereabouts at the *fin-de-siècle*. In consequence, he reconstructed frequent career patterns as well as forms of cultural and social habits among parts of the military elite.

KONSTANTINOS KARATZAS (Athens / London) analysed the strategies of the Greek dictatorship during 1967-1974 in order to secure its supremacy in state and society. In doing so, it used different forms of violence and coercion. By controlling the media and the school systems in particular, the military *junta* was, on the one hand, able to alter the collective memory and subsequently the identity of great part of the Greek population which led to glorified forms of nationalism and patriotism. On the other hand, it neglected the urban development and was incapable of preventing corruption among its members which ultimately lead to its downfall.

MATEUSZ MAZZINI (Warsaw) looked at the development of a mnemonic landscape exemplified by the 1944 Warsaw Uprising in present-day Polish politics. He thereby discerned different forms of commemoration during the second half of the 20th century, starting with a phase of often private remembrance of events after the war, followed by the communist nationalism of the PRL, the glorified memory of a collective uprising during 1980-89 and today's grass-root movements of the far right. Against this background, Mazzini points out that a detailed scientific reappraisal of past events is very much needed.

The second expert talk by ADRIAN HÄNNI (Distance Learning University Switzerland) provided further insights into transnational political violence of the last century. Hänni thereby focused on different approaches and methods, exemplified by his

researches concerning contemporary criminal networks. Such organisations are often multi-layered, operating on a worldwide scale and entangled with different actors within and outside governmental structures in order to promote violent movements. For the analysis of such networks, it is vital that historians and sociologists cross national, institutional and intellectual borders, since their source materials are often fragmented and convoluted. The results of their research might consequentially be useful for contemporary politics.

The papers of the final panel addressed different aspects of global conflicts and transnational violence. DOMINIQUE BIEHL (Basel) presented results of his studies concerning the cities of Beijing and Baoding during the military occupation in Boxer War China. By focussing on the zones of occupation by imperialistic European nations within the two cities, he managed to get revealing insights into the inter-imperial dimension of the ongoing conflicts. The occupational forces were thereby pressed to find a *modus vivendi* with each other as well as with the Chinese population, which was not allowed to leave its settings.

In his contribution, SEBASTIAN WILLERT (Berlin) studied the interactions between leading German archaeologists and members of the Ottoman Empire in the context of political coalitions, scientific competition and different cultural backgrounds at the beginning of the 20th century. By forming the so-called „Deutsch-Türkisches Denkmalschutzkommando für Syrien und Palästina“ German and Turkish scholars examined, measured and documented cultural assets in a military environment between 1916 and 1918. As a consequence, the constructed collective memory as well as the scientific publications were a result of the collaboration between members of an international network of scholars.

MARTIN DORN (Göttingen) analysed the historical contexts and premises of the pogrom in Russian Kishinev in 1903. The city played a dominant role in the national and international commerce at the end of the 19th century. Despite their impact on the city's development, the Jewish inhabitants had no political power. Together with racial prejudice

and rabble-rousing articles in the newspapers, these conditions prepared the stage for one of the most violent pogroms in Russia during this period. Consequentially, many surviving Jewish families emigrated from Kishinev.

In the final paper of the workshop, CAROLINE SCHNEIDER (Newcastle) focused on the Yazidi genocide by ISIL since 2014 as an example for state conducted forcible child transfer. According to the Geneva Conventions, such abductions are considered to be an act of genocide and although widely regarded as a global phenomenon, there are currently no reliable numbers of the victims. Following her sources, Schneider states that in the case of the Yazidi genocide, children are purposefully kidnapped in order to train them as future fighters for ISIL. Consequentially, they endure physical and psychological harm and are torn apart from their previous social ties.

Though the final discussion did not provide a concluding synthesis of the presented approaches, the comprehensive contributions of the workshop's participants successfully illustrated different valuable lines of thought for the research of social networks and violence in global and transnational contexts.

Conference Overview:

Introduction:

Thomas Schmutz (Zurich / Newcastle)

Panel 1: Approaches to Global Phenomena in Pre-modern Times. Impacts of Violence on Elite Networks in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Chair: Johannes Luther (Zurich)

Nikolas Hächler (Zurich): The senatorial order during the crisis-ridden 3rd century. Impacts of violence and political change on the composition, function and importance of social elites in the Roman Empire

Miriam Bastian (Zurich): A global network of actors of Roman memory sanctions? The *Damnatio Memoriae* of C. Fulvius Plautianus (205 A.D.)

Simon van Rekum (Zurich): Entangled spaces, entangled times. A model of transculturality in the Middle Ages

Expert Talk 1:

Matthias Bixler (Zurich): Analyzing historical networks. Chances and limitations of an emerging field of research

Panel II: Transnational Entanglements, Global Networks and Science

Chair: Jacopo Lorenzini (Naples)

Mikael Pierre (Newcastle / Bordeaux): Arthur J. Perkins and the wine industry: A transnational trajectory in the late 19th-early 20th century

Joanna Simonow (Zurich): Staging victims of hunger in India: The expansion of global networks of famine relief and its prevention, c. 1900-1955

Martin Meiske (Munich): Exploring and exploiting in the shadow of technological infrastructures. Geology and sea canals in the Age of High Imperialism

Presentation of the Archives of Contemporary History (ETH Zurich) by Daniel Nerlich (Zurich), Deputy Director

Panel 3: Networks, Mobilization and Internationalism

Chair: Martin Deuerlein (Tübingen)

Steve Marti (Ontario): Networks of mobilization: Tracing the bonds and boundaries of nation and Empire through voluntary action in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

Lucas Federer (Zurich): Internationalism and transnational networks of the Swiss Trotskyist movement 1945-1968

Remzi Cagatay Cakirlar (Leiden): Revisiting the early 20th century French-Turkish political history from transnational and global perspective

Elisabeth Marie Piller (Trondheim): Global networks and humanitarian mobilization: Belgian relief during the Great War

Expert Talk II:

Martin Deuerlein (Tübingen): International – transnational – global: A history of key concepts

Panel 4: Networks of Violence

Adrian Hänni (Distance Learning University Switzerland)

Carl-Leo Graf von Hohenthal (Freiburg):
Global Middle East and the fight for the future
of Palestine: Transnational networks of poli-
tics and violence of Jews, Arabs and Britons
during the last year of the British Mandate on
Palestine (1939-1948)

Jacopo Lorenzini (Naples): Late XIX Century
army staff officers: Domestic and transna-
tional social networks

Konstantinos Karatzas (Athens / London):
Greek dictatorship 1967-1974: A network of
violence – Lessons and Interpretations

Mateusz Mazzini (Warsaw): Violence helps
memory remember itself. The case study of
1944 Warsaw Uprising in present-day Polish
politics

Expert Talk III:

Adrian Hänni (Distance Learning Univer-
sity Switzerland): Historiography of transna-
tional violence: Approaches, actors, methods

*Panel 5: Global Conflicts and Transnational
Violence*

Chair: Francesca Piana (Bern)

Dominique Biehl (Basel): Military occupa-
tions in Boxer War China – The cases of Bei-
jing and Baoding

Sebastian Willert (Berlin): Coalition, compe-
tition and culture. Transnational entangle-
ments in a global war

Martin Dorn (Göttingen): Kishinev 1903 – Dy-
namics of a Pogrom

Caroline Schneider (Newcastle): State Con-
ducted Forcible Child Transfer – A global phe-
nomenon illustrated with the Yazidi Genocide

Final Discussion

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