



# **The Journal of Global History**

## **A critical journal review**

**2006-2011**

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*‘Global history refers to a wide range of research approaches that are typically characterized by a rising interest in alternative conceptions of space beyond methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism. It builds on a multitude of detailed research projects in all branches of historiography, ranging from economic history to cultural history and from gender history to environmental history.’<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction**

This description of the concept of global history by Dominic Sachsenmaier gives a good overview of the methodological ideas of this fairly new discipline within the field of History. Although many scholars are viewing global history as the successor to the idea of a *Histoire Totale* and on one line with historians of the grand narrative, like G.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, H.G. Wells, Oswald Spengler and Arnold J. Toynbee, this cannot be easily be said. It is far more likely that the actual founding father of the discipline is William H. McNeill (1917), who wrote in 1964 an influential work: *The Rise of the West: a History of the Human Community*. In this book, the Canadian historian explored the human history in terms of effect that different civilizations had on each other. By looking at the effect of the ideas and techniques of the dominant civilization on other regions in the world, McNeill let go of the old notion of Spengler and Toynbee that civilizations are solitary entities, subjected to rise and fall. Encounters, contacts and above all connections with ‘outsiders’ are at the base of economic, social, cultural, political and technological change in the history of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

As a new discipline, global history - more commonly known as ‘world history’ – became more established after the foundation in the 1982 of the *World History Association*. In the last couple of decades, it became in the United States one of the leading methods on teaching history in high schools and colleges, replacing courses on ‘Western civilization.’ Since 1990, the association even publishes its own academic

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<sup>1</sup> Dominic Sachsenmaier, ‘Global History’ in: *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte* (written on 11 February 2010); accessed at [http://docupedia.de/zg/Global\\_History/](http://docupedia.de/zg/Global_History/). On 10 April 2011.

<sup>2</sup> For a more elaborate read on the historiography of global history, it is advisable to read the prolegomenon of Patrick O’Brien in JGH. Patrick O’Brien, ‘The historiographical traditions and modern imperatives for the restoration of global history’ in: *The Journal of Global History* 1, is.1 (2006) 3-39.



quarterly: *The Journal of World History*.<sup>3</sup> So, the interesting question arises why a new journal on global/world history, called *The Journal of Global History*, was founded in 2006? To answer that, we have to look more carefully to its founders, the publisher and its mission statement. This paper will also give an analysis if its table of contents from 2006 (Volume 1) till 2011 (Volume 6, issue 1) is living up to the expectations instigated by its mission statement. This is done by a process of quantification and qualification of all the articles in this period. An analysis on the background of the authors and its role in the journal rankings will conclude this paper.

### **1. Introducing the Journal of Global History**

The Journal of Global History (JGH) was founded in 2006 by three academics from three different countries: prof. dr. William Gervase Clarence-Smith (British), prof. dr. Kenneth Pomeranz (American) and prof. dr. Peer Vries (Dutch). All three of them had earned their credentials in the field of Economic and Social History. A brief overview is given of the three founders, before introducing the rest of the journal and its inner workings.

#### *Founders*

Kenneth Pomeranz (1958) is a professor of History at the University of California – Irvine. He is specialized at the economic history of China and the origins of the modern world economy. Especially this last subject propelled Pomeranz career as an eminent academic. In 2000, he published an award-winning book on the question why Great Britain did industrialize in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and why China did not: *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. The main argument that Pomeranz formulates in his book is that Europe did not had a much higher level of economic development and more advanced technologies than China and other Asian regions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Both areas had actually the same problem of great ecological damage due to deforestation and a resulting energy crisis. Britain overcame this problem by its ‘geographic good luck’ of easy access to coal as an energy resource for

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<sup>3</sup> The World History Association (<http://www.thewha.org/>), accessed on 10 April 2011.



industrialization.<sup>4</sup> Another major benefit for the British was the great colonial hinterland of the New World and the British Empire, providing an area for the export of industrial commodities and the European surplus labour force. And, the same areas were great producers of land-intensive commodities as wheat and meat, which could be cheaply imported.

Pomeranz' book got quite some positive reviews. The late Andre Gunder Frank, one of the founders and promoters of the neo-Marxist Dependence Theory, named it 'the biggest and most important contribution to our new understanding of the causes and mechanisms of the great divergence.'<sup>5</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu named it in a review in *Agricultural History* a brilliant example of a 'reciprocal comparison' between different cultures and societies and proclaims that Pomeranz book should lead to 'the rewriting of both Asian and European histories.'<sup>6</sup> There were of course also some scholars who are not that positive, as for example Richard N. Cooper who attributes to Pomeranz a 'neo-Malthusian approach' and the fact that he is relying on 'plausible guesstimates, based on extensive but fragmentary evidence.'<sup>7</sup> According to Gregory Clark, Pomeranz overlooked the emergence of free trade and declining transport costs, that also should have relaxed the economic constraints on China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his view, the 'sources of Western superiority have to be internal to the West', by which he is promulgating the old Eurocentric view on world history.<sup>8</sup>

Professor William Gervase Clarence-Smith is working at the London University as leading professor on the economic history of Africa and Asia. His fields of interest is focused on the history of tropical beverages, like cacao and coffee, the history of Islam and slavery and the history of South East Asia. Especially the commodity history are seen back in his list of publications, with seven articles on coffee, cacao and rubber and one complete book on the trade and consumption of chocolate between 1765-1914.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton 2000) 66.

<sup>5</sup> Andre Gunder Frank, 'Book review' in: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, is.1 (2001) 180.

<sup>6</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu, 'Book review' in: *Agricultural History* 75, is. 3 (2001) 379.

<sup>7</sup> Richard N. Cooper, 'Book review' in: *Foreign Affairs* 79, is. 3 (2000) 163.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory Clark, 'Book review' in: *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32, is. 1 (2001) 102.

<sup>9</sup> William Gervase Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate, 1765-1914* (London 2000).



The Dutch professor Peer Vries is currently working in Austria at the Institute of Economic and Social History, part of the University of Vienna. In The Netherlands, he is best known as a leading historian on the economics of the Early Modern period. As such, he has contributed three chapters to one of the standard works in Dutch on economic history: *Van agrarische samenleving naar verzorgingsstaat. De modernisering van West-Europa*.<sup>10</sup> Since 2000, Vries has increasingly becoming interested in the economic history of China. But the underlying theme of his work remains, according to his own CV, ‘the origins of modern economic growth: comparisons and connections.’<sup>11</sup> Although he is not one of the chief editors anymore, he still remains a member of the editorial board.

### *The Journal of Global History*

The journal is printed and published online by the Cambridge University Press in the United Kingdom. This publishing house is the oldest continuous publishing enterprise, already starting in 1534. But the actual institute behind the publication of JGH is the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), one of the leading institutes on social science in the world. The grandeur of these great institutes of the academic world are reflected in the fees: a single print edition costing \$45,- and a single article \$30,-. The current subscription fee for organizations, like universities, is for one volume \$266,- for the online version only. An additional \$13,- is needed to get the journal also in a printed version. It is not possible to subscribe only to the printed edition. As with most academic journals, this is probably a sign that the publishers are increasingly looking to the digital spheres as their main market.

Every volume consists of three issues, with a mean article rate of 6,5 and a mean book review rate of 6,9.<sup>12</sup> Articles are not longer than 12.500 words, including footnotes, unless the authors have permission from the editorial board. Unsurprisingly, all material should be written in English, as well as all quotations in other languages should be

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<sup>10</sup> B.A.M. de Vries ed., *Van agrarische samenleving naar verzorgingsstaat. De modernisering van West-Europa* (Groningen 2000).

<sup>11</sup> The CV of Peer Vries: [http://wirtges.univie.ac.at/Wiso/Vries/CV\\_Vries.html](http://wirtges.univie.ac.at/Wiso/Vries/CV_Vries.html); accessed on 6 April 2011.

<sup>12</sup> These figures are derived from the five volumes since 2006 and the first issue of the 6<sup>th</sup> volume (2011). All together, the Journal of Global History has published in this frame 6 editorials, 104 articles (including review articles) and 111 book reviews. For more extensive figures and tables, see Appendix C.



translated in English. Every submission is subject to a system of peer review by two members of the editorial board and two anonymous referees. In the editorial policy is stated that the journal is looking for scholarly articles on global change. The editors are particularly welcoming contributions of scholars from Latin America, Asia and Africa and/or contributions of other disciplines on global history. Articles should of course be unpublished in other academic journals or books, but exceptions are made for previous publications in minority languages.<sup>13</sup>

On the current editorial board, Clarence-Smith is still the chief editor, with the other major editors being Pomeranz and professor Merry Wiesner-Hanks of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Then, there is a separate editor for the reviews, dr. J. Chalcraft of the London School of Economics and Political Science. And finally, there are 21 ‘normal’ members at the editorial board coming from all over the world, including Australia, Austria, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. A complete list can be found in Appendix A.

## 2. Goals of the journal

In the first issue of the Journal of Global History, the editors are clearly explaining their ambitions and goals with the new journal.<sup>14</sup> In their view, the historical discipline and knowledge is still too fragmented; a problem which the new journal hopefully will overcome. They think the accurate methodology to accomplish this is to focus on being interdisciplinary. This interdisciplinary forum is not only for the specialists on written history, like historians, sociologists, economists, political scientists etc., but also for specialists in ‘non-written history’, like geographers, archaeologists, climatologists, biologists etc. The latter group should help in the writings on ‘big history,’ all encompassing articles from the emergence of Man till the present.

Main study objects are the processes of globalization, ‘life-cycles’ of commodities and cultures of consumption and labour. Especially the first study object is

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<sup>13</sup> See the *Instructions for Contributors* on the website of JGH (<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayMoreInfo?jid=JGH&type=eb>); accessed on 6 April 2011.

<sup>14</sup> William Gervase Clarence-Smith, Kenneth Pomeranz and Peer Vries, ‘Editorial’ in: *The Journal of Global History* 1, is.1 (2006) 1-2.



deemed important by the editors, since it forms the central debate of our time. They even are convinced that the process of globalization has not sparked enough ‘historical treatment’, even not from world historians. That is were they see a ‘subtle difference between the closely related endeavours of global and world history’, but were they actually seek their own sub-discipline, contrary to their previous statement on overcoming the fragmentation in historiography.

According to the editors, the current process of globalization is not an unique phenomenon of the late twentieth century, but a process of all times, with subsequent growth and decline phases. In order to understand this globalizing processes better, historians should not focus on flawed ideas of ‘the rise of the West’ and ‘Westernization of the rest’, but look better to other traditions for ‘more balanced and satisfactory understandings.’ Therefore, the editors think their journal can contribute to the ‘continuing deconstruction of the Western meta-narrative.’

An important methodological aspect, the editors of the journal are asking for, are the so-called ‘innovative comparisons’ between diverse societies and regions. The ‘reciprocal comparison’ Pomeranz conducted in *The Great Divergence* between Europe and China is probably the prime example for the editors. But they are also asking for new comparisons between different parts of the non-Western world. Apart from this, the journal wants to transcend the traditional focus on the nation state and wants more studies on zones of interaction between diverse societies, following the ideas of McNeill and his view on world history.

### **3. Actual subjects: 2006-2011**

In this section, an overview is given of the articles that have been published in JGH since the journal was founded in 2006. The articles are subdivided into three different categories: region, period and subject. By doing so, it helps to see if the journal is living up to its ambition of writing a global history, if it start investigations in the process of globalization that are stretching as far back as the period ‘before the appearance of written documents’ and if the journal is also focused on other globalizing subjects like the life-cycles of commodities and other global cultural outings.



### Regions

In this review, there is chosen for the geoscheme of the United Nations, created by their Statistics Division (see Appendix B for map and list). Such a scheme is far more precise than a simplified division into continents and gives more right to the diversity of the different subregions within continents. It is also enhances the analysis of the articles and gives a better overview on which parts of the world the emphasis of the journal lies. Dividing the articles to different regions always remains arbitrary, especially since there are quite some articles that engage in a comparison between different regions of the world. In order to overcome this problem, such articles are grouped under the region the author is the most elaborate about or under the group ‘*World*’. All articles primarily dealing with theories and/or historical debates, including editorials, are grouped under ‘*Other*.’ This leads to the following results<sup>15</sup>:

### Map 1: Geographical regions of articles



**Yellow: 1-4 articles; Orange: 5-10 articles; Red: 10+ articles; White: 0 articles**

Although the editorial board already confirmed in their first editorial that writing a global history does not necessarily take the whole world as the framework for analysis, some

<sup>15</sup> For a complete table of results, see Appendix B, table 1.



interesting points arise from this regional analysis of the articles. First of all, and maybe unsurprisingly, almost a fifth of the articles has the world as its primary region of analysis. This region is followed by Northern Europe (10%) – not surprisingly since Great Britain, as the first industrializing country, is situated here according to the UN – and, here is a bit of a surprise, by Southern Asia (10%). The latter region is of course dominated by India, the former Crown colony of the British. An explanation for this can be twofold. First, India plays quite a big role in the debate on the Great Divergence as one of the prime examples of a region with great cultures and economies that starts lacking behind Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Following up on that, India is also a very good English documented region, making it a far easier object of study for historians and other scholars than, for example, Mandarin China.

Regions that have not sparked much interest within the field of global history are Oceania in total – only one article on the Pacific in the first issue of the journal – and regions in Africa and the Americas. In a wider scope, Africa and the Americas both have been the main object of study in 9 articles. Quite meager compared with the 26 articles on Europe and 31 articles on Asia, although the figure of the latter was boosted by an entire special issue devoted to South-Eastern Asia. An explanation cannot be found in the assumption that Africa and the Americas did not play a significant role in the globalization process. It is impossible to say that for the latter, regarding the emergence of the United States as the hegemonic nation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And the former also played its part, not only in the Atlantic slave trade, but also as the producer of ivory, gold and even peppers. So there must be another reason why these regions are less represented in the JGH than Asia and Europe.

For Africa, the main argument was pretty good described by the American historian Jonathan T. Reynolds in *History Compass* 5/6 (2007).<sup>16</sup> According to him, the emergence of Area Studies after the Second World War played a major role in setting Africa on the historical world stage, since it was a field of study neglected in previous eras. But this new field of study wore a significant political gown. Instigated by the United States government, the primary objective of the Area Studies programmes was to

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<sup>16</sup> Jonathan T. Reynolds, 'Africa and World History: from antipathy to synergy' in: *History Compass* 5 (2007) 1998-2013.



give better understanding of the rapidly decolonizing Third World. Deriving from this studies, the United States could assess the chance that new states would walk straight to the side of the communist Soviet Union. But as a counter reaction, the Area Studies programmes became virulently non-Western, following the rise of the left in American and European academic circles. Africanists wanted to show the Western world that Africa had its own history and homegrown civilizations, as a reaction to the old assumption that Europe brought civilization to the ‘Dark continent.’ They were strongly opposed to the Eurocentrism that had shaped Western historiography throughout the centuries. World History was also, according to them, too much influenced by a Western-based view on history. That is why Africanists took, until recently, a quite isolationist stand towards the discipline of World History. In the five volumes of JGH, there is only one out of sixteen scholars of Area Studies that works at an African Studies Centre.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, there is not a distinct argument for the lack of interest in the Americas in the five volumes. North America is five times the main subject of an article, less than half the amount on Britain, but still as much as the Chinese and Japanese region of Eastern Asia. South America and the Caribbean are both named twice, Central America none. Maybe the explanation can be found in the lack of writings that have survived pre-Columbian America. And articles on the - economic and social – history of the United States are probably more published and handed in to other journals. Although the majority of authors in JGH is working in the United States, they are most of the time not publishing on American topics.

### *Time period*

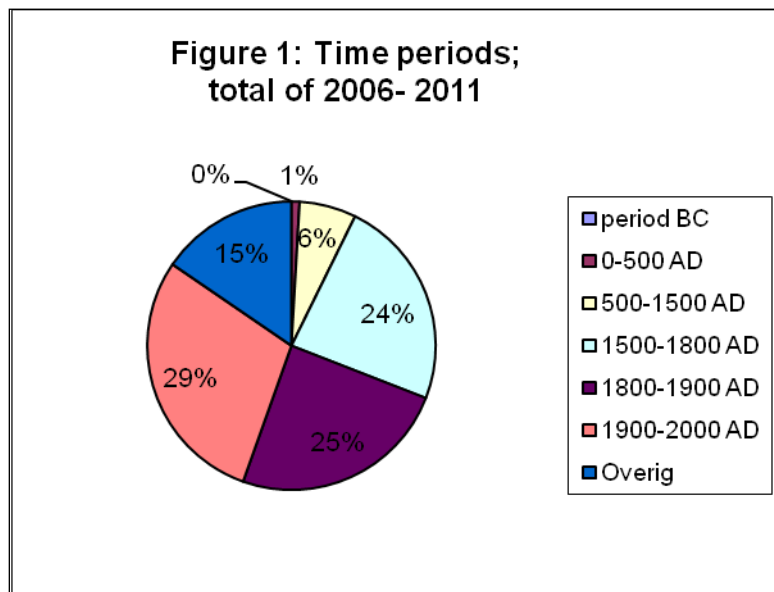
To a certain degree, it is even harder to categorize the articles into distinctive time periods. That is due to the habit of many economic historians to look at a ‘longue durée’ perspective of development. It is quite common in the Journal to have articles spanning over a period of more than 400 years. In order to create some kind of a representation, I have chosen for a division in a few large, and classical, periods. Although it is becoming

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<sup>17</sup> Sandip Hazareesingh, a researcher at the Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies at The Open University in Walton Hall (UK). Unfortunately, he is not specialized in the field of African Studies but, as his surname suggests, in Indian history.

increasingly popular, especially in the fields of archaeology and geology, to talk in terms of ‘Before Present’ (BP), I stick to the old distinction of ‘Before Christ Era’ (BCE) and ‘Christian Era/Common Era’ (CE). The first category is the period BCE, the second the – Late – Classical times of 0-500 CE, followed by Medieval times (500-1500 CE), the Early-Modern period (1500-1800 CE), the Industrial age of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1800-1900 CE) and concluded with Modern times (1900-present). A final category is made for all articles that do not fit into a certain timeframe, because of their historiographical or editorial nature.

Following from this, as seen in figure 1, the overwhelming majority of articles are found in the period 1500-present (77,3%). The biggest category is are the modern times with 29,1% of the articles situated in this timeframe. It is followed by the 19<sup>th</sup> century (27 articles) with just one article more than the early modern period (26 articles). A big history with its roots in the period BCE still has to be written, since there is not one article devoted to this period and only one article to the Late Classical period. A probable explanation is the general lack of written sources before BCE and the severely fragmentation in source material from 0-1500 CE, especially within the economic field.





### *Themes*

The most difficult part of categorizing articles is to give it a certain theme label, because it asks for generalizing the uniqueness of each narrative to a distinct theme. But it must be done in order to look for some coherence within the journal and the search for certain debates and trending topics. So, this review comes up with 9 different groups of themes. Although these labels might not always fit the entire article, all articles have been divided between these different groups. The first group is that of historiography, theory and debates - good for 20% of the total, - consisting of all articles with that label and all review articles. The latter are short, debating, articles with a theme derived from two or more monographies.

The second group is consisting of the articles that primarily deal with Economic History. Since such a group is too big, it has been subdivided into three smaller groups called: *economic development*, *commodity history* and *international trade*. Within the group *Economic development* are all articles that are considered fitting in the field of economic development of nations, regions and the world. These articles are dealing primarily with general economic development. For the more specific articles on trade relations and trade connections between different parts of the world is another group: *International Trade*. Following on that is the last group within the economic paradigm, '*Commodity history*.' This group is a distinct one for this journal, mentioned in its founding editorial as an important trend in historical writing on the impact of new commodities on intellectual, political, religious and social life. For example, the impact of Russian wheat on the Great Plains of America.<sup>18</sup> In this group are also histories on new innovations like technological studies on the communication and transport revolution. In total, the economic themes make up almost a third of the total of articles in the journal.

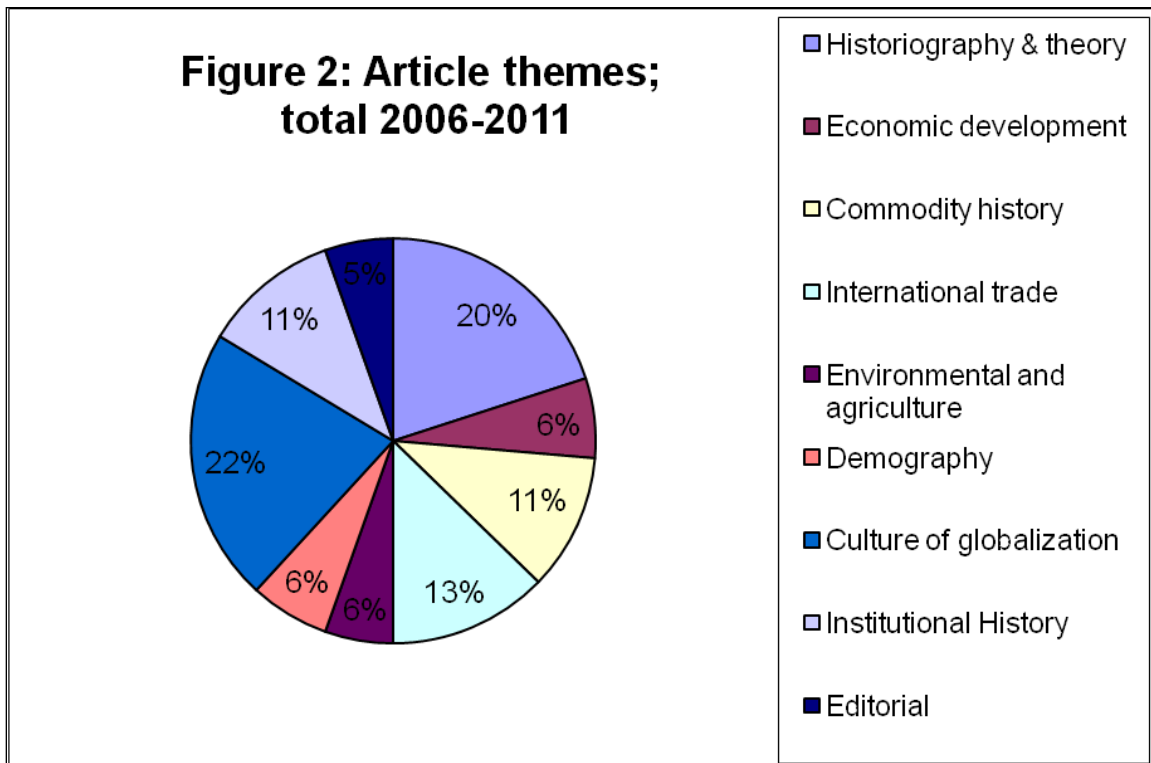
A bit less economic are the following groups on agricultural/environmental history and demography. Both themes are more rooted into the natural sciences, although demography in this journal is most of the time focused on migration patterns and its social impact. These articles only make up 12% of the total, albeit this group primarily encompasses the ambition of the journal in being an 'interdisciplinary forum' for 'big

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<sup>18</sup> David Moon, 'In the Russians' footsteps: the introduction of Russian wheat on the Great Plains of the United States of America' in: *Journal of Global History* 3, is. 2 (2008) 203-225.

history.’ But the majority of the articles is still devoted to social-economic themes, as the last two groups will show us: ‘*Culture of globalization*’ and ‘*Institutional History*.’

Since Social History is such a large discipline, it is hard to subdivide it into just two theme labels. Institutional history deals with the articles on (trans)national institutions like the World Bank or the International Sanitary Conferences of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Within this label are also all articles that have the slightest to do with labour unions and labour cultures grouped. The last category, Culture of globalization, is a quite broad label that consists of articles as diverse as ‘globalizing the Harlem Renaissance of Alain Locke’ to global reactions on the Indian Uprising of 1857. Not surprisingly, this group is the largest of all individual groups (21,8%) and together with the articles on Institutional History, forming the Social History division, slightly larger than the Economic History groups: 32,7%.



#### 4. Background of authors

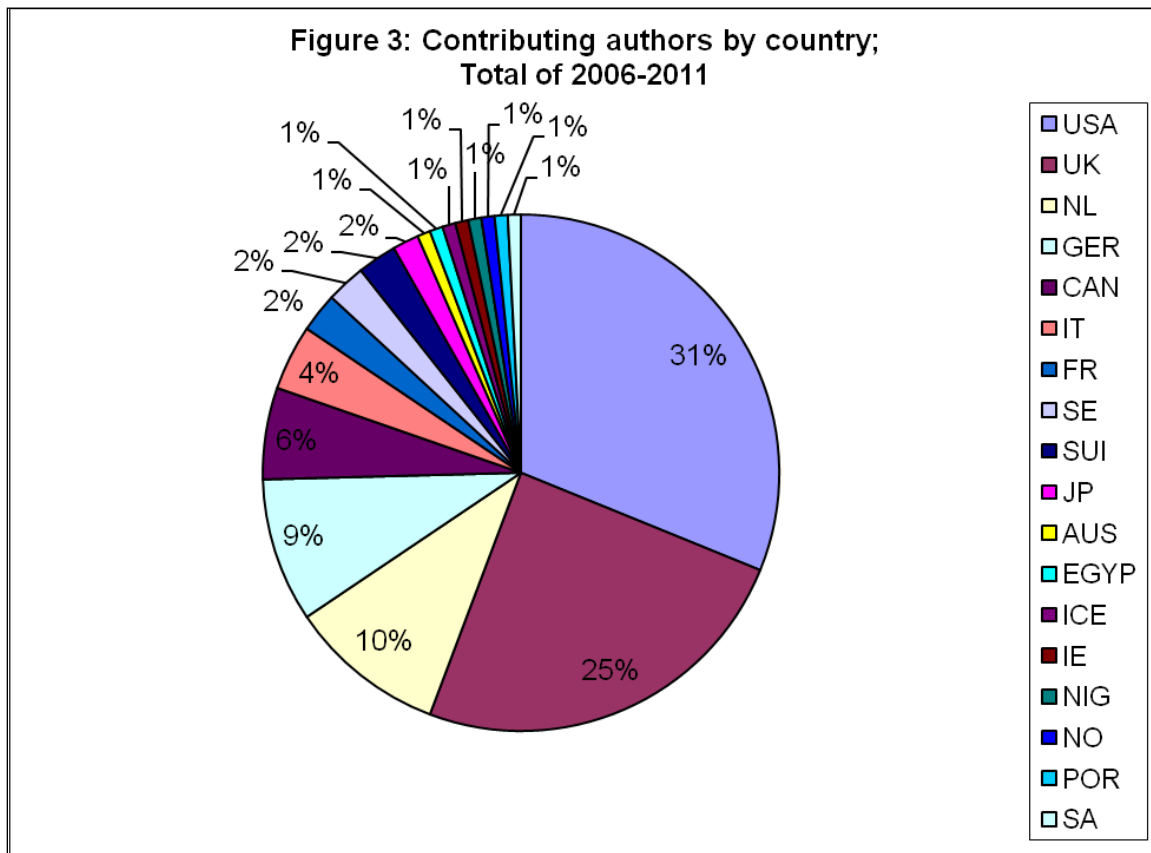
Since the emergence of World History in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the discipline has been dominated by male scholars. The same goes-up for the discipline of Social-Economic



History, from which department a lot of World historians originally emerged. So, not surprisingly, the gender balance of the contributing authors is not even. Of the 122 authors, a proximally 80,3% is male and 19,7 % female.<sup>19</sup> But more important for a journal on global history are the regions of origin of the authors. Names like Paolo Malanima, Ulrike Strasser, Akinobu Kuroda and Örjan Appelqvist are giving the assumption that it is quite a global group. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find out the exact region of origin for every author. That is why in this analysis the choice has been made to group the authors by place of residence, most of the time the university where they are working at. As a result, the authors of JGH are residing in 18 different countries. Almost a third of them are working in the United States of America, followed by the United Kingdom (24,6%) and The Netherlands (9,8%). These are the same countries of origin as the editorial board that founded the journal back in 2005. The list follows with other Western-based authors, ranging from Germany to Switzerland. Of these countries, it is always interesting to look to the participation level of the French and Italians, since they are not renowned for publishing in English journals. With five Italians and three Frenchman, they constitute a nice 6,6% of the total. There are only a few non-western countries represented: Japan (2 authors), Nigeria (1), Egypt (1) and South Africa (1).

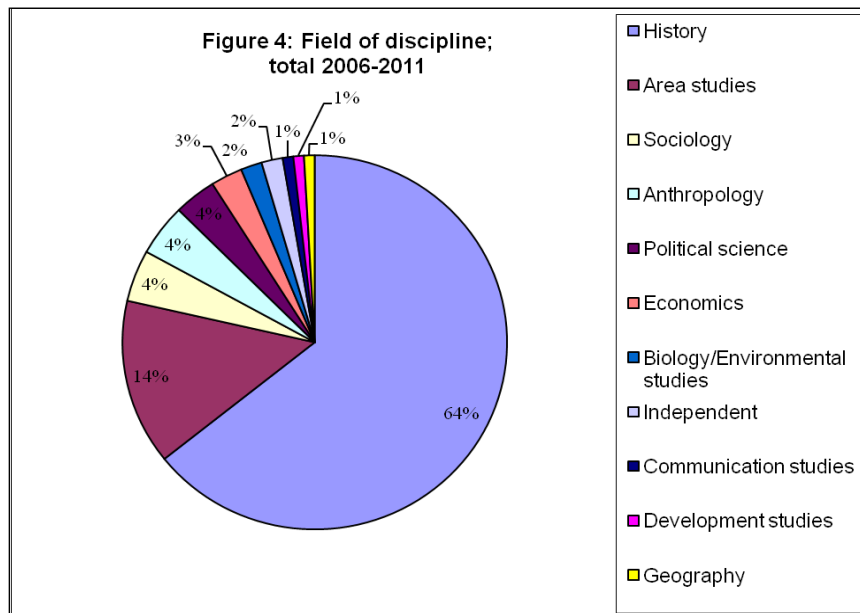
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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix C.



If we look at the disciplinary background of the authors, it is not really startling to see that most of them are coming from History (64,3%). Still, this figure is probably quite low compared to other historic journals. In second place are the Area Studies scholars with 14,3%, followed by the sociologists and anthropologists (both 4,5%). The group of Area Studies scholars are primarily coming from Asian and European Studies Centres, and even sometimes from more specific institutes as Indian and Tibetan Studies (Leiden University) and Caribbean Studies (London Metropolitan University). As said previously, scientists in the natural sciences are lagging behind; of all the authors, only two are coming from Biology/Environmental Studies and just one from Geography. The group of historians has been split down into a few subgroups, in order to create an overview of how many social-economic historians have contributed to the journal. Surprisingly, this figure is quite low; only 11 out of 72. This figure should probably be a bit higher, since it is not composed out of their actual research interests, but is derived from an overview of departments where they are working at.





## 5. Debates and journals rankings

As in most journals, there is not a clear and distinct debate in the *Journal of Global History*. I did not come across any follow-ups on previous articles by new authors. The most distinct debate was in the special issue in 2010 (volume 5, issue 2) on the geographical region of Zomia in South East Asia. The entire journal was dedicated to a thought provoking work of the anthropologist James C. Scott on this region, called *The art of not being governed: an anarchist history of the upland Southeast Asia*.<sup>20</sup> And, of course, to the region itself as a nice example of a region that transcends the traditional borders, as described in the mission statement. Another part of that same statement also came to the foreground: the interdisciplinary dialogue between, in this case, on the one hand historians and on the other anthropologists and a geographer. The editors are hoping that this example will set the tone for more research in a Braudelian tradition around zones of interaction, other than oceans or seas, as propagated in Braudels *The Mediterranean*, but more like mountains, forests, tundra and deserts.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> James C. Scott, *The art of not being governed: an anarchist history of the upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven 2009).

<sup>21</sup> William G. Clarence-Smith, 'Editorial note – Zomia and beyond' in: *The Journal of Global History* 5, is.2 (2010) 185-186.

The three other special issues did not stir real debates within the journal, but were more centered around some trending topics, according to the editorials. These topics were ‘Islamic history as global history’ (volume 2, issue 2), probably proposed by Clarence-Smith, ‘Commodities, empires and global history’ (volume 4, issue 1), dealing with on the trending themes from the mission statement, and ‘Global inequality and development after 1945’, the most prominent moral narrative of twentieth century’s history, according to Charles S. Maier.<sup>22</sup> Some other topics that keep emerging during the analysis were the questions on how to explain economic growth and where and when it started, and of course the topic set in the spotlight by Pomeranz himself: ‘the Great Divergence.’

At the JGH website are the statistics found on the top ten of most cited documents and a top ten of most downloaded documents. Only two articles are represented in both lists; Patrick O’Brien’s take on the historiographical traditions and restoration of global history and Matthew Connelly’s study on the world population.<sup>23</sup> Within the list of most cited documents, only articles of the first volume (2006) are listed, with topics ranging from Indian Ocean Studies to social capital and trust in the networks of Armenian Julfan trade. The top ten of most downloaded documents is more diverse and constitutes of articles from the first, fourth and fifth volume, including the two editorials on the Zomia special issue (volume 5, issue 2).<sup>24</sup>

### *Rankings*

On of the most difficult parts of this research was to look-up the journal rankings of JGH. The main reason why it is so difficult is the fact that JGH is a very young journal, since it was founded in 2006. JGH is for example not included in the rankings of journal-ranking.com, because they stop at 2005. The famous Thomsom Reuters index of Web of Knowledge has published its last Citation Report in 2009, the same year when JGH was

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<sup>22</sup> Charles S. Maier, ‘Consigning the twentieth century to history: alternative narratives for the modern era’ in: *American Historical Review* 105, is. 3 (2000) 807-831.

<sup>23</sup> Patrick O’Brien, ‘The historiographical traditions and modern imperatives for the restoration of global history’ in: *The Journal of Global History* 1, is.1 (2006) 3-39.

Matthew Connelly, ‘To inherit the Earth. Imagining world population from the yellow peril to the population bomb’ in: *The Journal of Global History* 1, is. 3 (2006) 299-319.

<sup>24</sup> Complete lists can be found at <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=JGH&tab=mostdownloaded#tabn> for most for most cited and downloaded documents; accessed on 11 April 2011.

added to their database but not included in their report. In the European Reference Index For the Humanities (ERIH), the JGH is mentioned within the A-category, what means that the journal must have quite a scientific impact, but real figures on the impact factor are lacking. The same goes for the report of the Australian Research Council on journals in the historical studies.

The only ranking material that elaborates a bit on the JGH is coming from the SCImago journal rankings (SJR) of Elsevier. Within the category of History, the journal is also A-ranked for the period 2006-2010. But more important is the following table of figures (for the complete table, see Appendix D):

**Table 2: SJR on *The Journal of Global History***

Indicators	2006	2007	2008	2009
SJR	0	0,044	0,028	0,034
Total Documents	18	19	17	19
Total Docs. (3years)	0	18	37	54
Total Cites (3years)	0	11	16	39
Self Cites (3years)	0	2	2	9
Cites / Doc. (3years)	0	0,65	0,47	0,76
Cites / Doc. (2years)	0	0,65	0,47	0,56
Cited Docs.	0	9	10	19
Uncited Docs.	0	9	27	35
% International Collaboration	16,67	26,32	47,06	0

Source: <http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=16100154770&tip=sid&clean=0>



What we see is that over three years, articles from the journal have been cited 39 times. Of all the articles, there were 19 unique cites and 35 articles remained uncited. This leads to a mean of 0,76 cites per article. If you would get rid of all self-citations (citations within the journal) then this figure would drop to 0,56 cites per article. The weighted citation index, which gives citations in leading journals a higher weight, or scientific impact of SJR drops from 0,044 in 2007 to 0,034 in 2009. But on the level of international collaboration, JGH is doing exceptionally well with a figure rising from 16,7% to 47% in 2008.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, the Journal of Global History was analyzed in order to understand the motives behind the founding of the journal in 2006. Although the mission statement in the first issue explained the fear of the founders about the continuous fragmentation of the discipline of history, they are not helping to ‘overcome’ it by producing a new niche of global history, compared to the existing discipline of world history. It is certainly important to have more research on the processes of globalization, but this could probably also be done under the umbrella of world history. A more satisfactory argument for the foundation of a new journal on the subject of global/world history lies in the fact that such a journal is in demand in Europe. The World History Association and its journal are primarily based in the United States, leaving a gap in the European market that JGH could fill. Another incentive for the foundation of the journal were probably the positive acceptance in the academic world of Kenneth Pomeranz’ work on the ‘Great Divergence’ and his claim that a lot of social-economic history on the world should be rewritten. But my own appreciation for this journal stems from its approach to the so-called ‘life-cycles’ of commodities. This is a field of study you do not see as frequent in other historical journals, as in the JGH. Commodities also are prime examples of McNeill’s ideas about the impact from ideas and techniques/commodities from one region in the world to another.

In this respect, the journal is quite living-up to the expectations they give to the readers of the mission statement. A great deal of the articles is devoted to commodities,



the economic, social and cultural processes of globalization. Only the writings on ‘big history’ are lagging behind, due to the fact that the journal is not the interdisciplinary forum for scientists in the more ‘natural’ fields. In that respect is it even quite shocking to see that there are none archaeologists involved in the JGH. Still, the editors are doing a better job on the interdisciplinary side of the humanities and social sciences, although some more scholars from African and Latin American Studies will give the journal a bit more of a geographical balance in its themes. The danger lies in becoming to focused on the idea of the ‘Great Divergence’ and devoting all space on papers with topics on Asia and Europe. But concluding on a positive remark: the editorial board is particularly succeeding in giving academics from all over the world a stage for their research. In that respect, the journal is not only justly multiple times A-ranked, but also a journal that deserves the term ‘global’ in its name.



## Appendix A

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## Appendix B



United Nations Geoscheme of the Statistics Division, map retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Un\\_geoscheme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Un_geoscheme) on 12 April 2011.

### Americas

North America  
Central America  
Caribbean  
South America

### Asia

Central Asia  
Eastern Asia  
Southern Asia  
South-Eastern Asia  
Western Asia

### Europe

Northern Europe  
Western Europe  
Eastern Europe  
Southern Europe

### Oceania

Australia and New Zealand  
Melanesia  
Micronesia  
Polynesia

### Africa

Northern Africa  
Western Africa  
Eastern Africa  
Middle Africa  
Southern Africa

**Table 1: Geographical regions of articles in totals and percentages**

<b>Table 1: regions</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Americas</b>	0	0,0
North America	5	4,5
Central America	0	0,0
Caribbean	2	1,8
South America	2	1,8
<b>Europe</b>	7	6,4
Northern Europe	11	10,0
Western Europe	3	2,7
Eastern Europe	1	0,9
Southern Europe	4	3,6
<b>Africa</b>	2	1,8
Northern Africa	3	2,7
Western Africa	1	0,9
Eastern Africa	3	2,7
Middle Africa	0	0,0
Southern Africa	0	0,0
<b>Asia</b>	1	0,9
Central Asia	1	0,9
Eastern Asia	5	4,5
Southern Asia	11	10,0
South-Eastern Asia	9	8,2
Western Asia	4	3,6
<b>Oceania</b>	1	0,9
Australia and New Zealand	0	0,0
Melanesia	0	0,0
Micronesia	0	0,0
Polynesia	0	0,0
<b>World</b>	21	19,1
<b>Other (edit. &amp; hist. Deb.)</b>	13	11,8



## Appendix C

Table 1: on number of articles (incl. editorials and review articles) and total amount of authors divided by gender.

	Articles*	Male	Female	Total
<b>Vol. 1</b>				
is.1	7	9	0	9
is.2	6	4	3	7
is.3	6	6	0	6
<b>Vol. 2</b>				
is.1	5	4	1	5
is.2	7	5	2	7
is.3	7	7	0	7
<b>Vol. 3</b>				
is.1	5	3	2	5
is.2	6	4	2	6
is.3	9	9	0	9
<b>Vol. 4</b>				
is.1	9	9	1	10
is.2	6	4	3	7
is.3	6	5	2	7
<b>Vol. 5</b>				
is.1	8	8	3	11
is.2	8	6	2	8
is.3	7	6	1	7
<b>Vol. 6</b>				
is.1	8	9	2	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Percentages</b>		<b>80,3</b>	<b>19,7</b>	



**Figure 1: Gender balance authors;  
total 2006-2011**

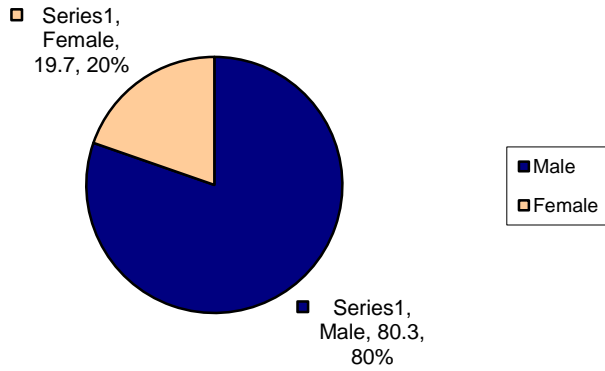




Table 2: on subdivision of authors in the discipline of History

	<b>Econ.Soc. Historian</b>	<b>Historian</b>	<b>Medicine historian</b>	<b>Art historian</b>
<b>Vol. 1</b>				
is.1	1	2		
is.2		4	1	
is.3		2		
<b>Vol. 2</b>				
is.1		3		
is.2		4		
is.3		5		
<b>Vol. 3</b>				
is.1	1	3		
is.2	1	4		
is.3	2	4		
<b>Vol. 4</b>				
is.1		3		
is.2	1	2		1
is.3	1	5		
<b>Vol. 5</b>				
is.1		8		
is.2		2		
is.3	2	4		
<b>Vol. 6</b>				
is.1	2	4		
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

## Appendix D

 Table of SCImago Journal Ranking on *The Journal of Global History*

Indicators	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
SJR	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,044	0,028	0,034
Total Documents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	19	17	19
Total Docs. (3years)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	37	54
Total References	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.192	2.312	2.610	2.410
Total Cites (3years)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	16	39
Self Cites (3years)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	9
Citable Docs. (3years)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	34	51
Cites / Doc. (4years)	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,65	0,47	0,76
Cites / Doc. (3years)	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,65	0,47	0,76
Cites / Doc. (2years)	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,65	0,47	0,56
References / Doc.	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	121,78	121,68	153,53	126,84
Cited Docs.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	10	19
Uncited Docs.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	27	35
% International Collaboration	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	16,67	26,32	47,06	0,00

(<http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=16100154770&tip=sid&clean=0>)