

International Society as a Historical Subject

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For quite some time now, historians have been venturing well beyond the spatial and methodological enclosures of nation-states that had long defined the modern discipline, writing more history that is variously described as international, transnational, transregional, global, or world history.¹ In a certain sense, the recent turn to histories that go beyond a single nation or region is actually a *return*. After all, the concern with history that transcends national enclosures goes back to the origins of the modern discipline, and Leopold von Ranke himself had written about the need to write a *weltgeschichte* that would go beyond national boundaries.² Still, the historical profession, to an unusual extent among the disciplines that study human societies, has long been divided into geographically defined subfields structured around national or regional enclosures. There are compelling methodological reasons for this, not least the emphasis that historians place on the acquisition of language skills and other forms of knowledge specific to a single society or region. But structuring the discipline around national or regional

¹ A recent examination of this trend is Kenneth Pomeranz, “Histories for a Less National Age,” *American Historical Review* 119, No. 1 (2014), 1-22. For earlier explorations of this theme see Akira Iriye, “The Internationalization of History,” *American Historical Review* 94, No. 1 (1988), 1-10; Ian Tyrrell, “American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History,” *American Historical Review* 96 (1991); David Thelen, “The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History,” *Journal of American History* 86 (1999); and Eric Foner, “American Freedom in a Global Age,” *American Historical Review* 106 (2001).

² Ranke, Introduction to *Weltgeschichte*, vol. I, reprinted in Roger Wines (ed. and trans.), *Leopold von Ranke, The Secret of World History: Selected Writings on the Art and Science of History* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981), 249. Indeed, as Walter LaFeber has noted, worries that historians were growing too focused on national frames in contravention of “the unity of history” were already expressed in the very first issue of the *American Historical Review*, in 1895. Walter LaFeber, “The World and the United States,” *American Historical Review* 100, No. 4 (1995), 1015-1033.

categories—until recently, it was rare to see an academic history position advertised that did not have such a geographic descriptor attached to it, and even now it remains uncommon—has meant that most historians are still trained to focus on a particular nation or region, and often continue to do so for the remainder of their professional careers.

In an age preoccupied with globalization, global interconnectedness, and global threats, it is easy to see understand the discomfort with the traditional structures of the discipline and its fields.³ But if agreement on the importance of going beyond national and regional enclosures is now widely shared within the historical profession, the question of *how* historians should go about doing it has not been easy to answer. The broad agreement on the need for historians to transcend nation and region, on the one hand, and the confusion about how to frame and what to call such histories, on the other, are both evident in the recent proliferation of publications, discussions, journals, and job ads that include or represent efforts to do international, transnational, global, and world history. Thus, when the *American Historical Review* hosted a conversation on “transnational history” in the December 2006 issue, one of the participants noted at the very outset that he had no idea what the term “transnational history” actually meant and how it related to world, global, and international histories. The ensuing exchange among six leading historians from various precincts of the profession was spirited and illuminating, but at its conclusion the participants appeared no closer to a shared understanding of what exactly “transnational history” was or how and why historians

³ Indeed, this move among historians has been part of a large “‘global’ revolution” in the social sciences more generally. See Julian Go and George Lawson, “Introduction: For a Global Historical Sociology,” in Go and Lawson, eds., *Global Historical Sociology* (New York, 2017).

should pursue it.⁴ As recently as 2016 Akira Iriye, a pioneering advocate and longstanding practitioner of post-national history, could still ask exasperatedly: “[W]hat is the distinction between ‘international’ and ‘transnational’? If these words mean more or less the same thing, why do we not stick to just one?”⁵

At the same time, ongoing discussions about the “transnational turn” in historiography have been coupled with the appearance of new journals focused on global history and books whose cover blurbs declare that they represent the “new international history,” among other manifestation of the post-national trend.⁶ In the field of U.S. history, for example, the ongoing project to “globalize American history” has produced an outpouring of publications, including several efforts the recast the entire narrative of U.S. history within a transnational and comparative—and therefore less exceptionalist—frame.⁷ No less significantly, this shift in the U.S. history field has been coupled with a proliferation of job searches advertised under the relatively novel category of “United States in the world” (or sometime “United States *and* the world”), a field designation of

⁴ C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *American Historical Review* 111:5 (December 2006), 1441-1464.

⁵ Akira Iriye, review of *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, by Davide Rodogno, Bernherd Struck, and Jakob Vogel, eds. *American Historical Review* 121 (February 2016), 208-209. Iriye also complained there that “[t]here is no sustained discussion anywhere in the book of a possible distinction between ‘transnational history’ and ‘global history,’ reflective of the overall situation in the academic world and in scholarship today, in which these two terms are often used interchangeably.” Iriye had expressed similar sentiments in his *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Basingstoke, 2013), 11.

⁶ The term “transnational turn” was popularized in Robert A. Gross, “The Transnational Turn: Rediscovering American Studies in a Wider World,” *Journal of American Studies* 34 (December 2000), 373-93, but the phenomenon of transnationalization has not been limited to American studies.

⁷ Thomas Bender, *A Nation among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York, 2006); Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789* (New York, 2007). Bender's influential edited volume, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2001), had collected a diverse set of perspectives on a transformation in the field of U.S. history that already then well underway. See also Marcus Gräser, “World History in a Nation-State: The Transnational Disposition in Historical Writing in the United States,” *Journal of American History* 95, No. 4 (Mar. 2009), 1038-1052.

growing importance to the shape of history departments and the careers of young historians that has nevertheless yet to be delineated with any precision.⁸

Some definitions are therefore in order. Since historiographical genres that go beyond national enclosures have been variously described as transnational history, international history, global history, and sometimes world history, it is sometimes assumed that these terms are essentially synonymous. The premise of this essay, however, is that these terms properly connote related but distinct projects, and that it is important for historians interested in this work to identify these distinctions.

Transnational history, then, is history that remains centered on the territorial space of a particular nation-state, but that proceeds from the assumption of the historicity, permeability, and contingent nature of the boundaries of that state rather than viewing these boundaries as timeless, or at least inevitable. In fact, it is often precisely the permeability of national boundaries and the flow and encounters of people/ideas/commodities across them that are central themes and concern of transnational history.⁹ Global history, on the other hand, is focused on processes and connections operating in a globalized space, if not necessarily on a global scale; states, while they may figure in its narrative sweep, are neither central actors nor defining arenas

⁸ While both the phrases “U.S. *in* the world” and “U.S. *and* the world” often appear to be used interchangeably, I prefer the former. As Kristin Hoganson has noted, talking about the history of the United States *and* the world “may re-center the United States a bit too confidently,” while thinking of the history of the United States *in* the world “strikes a better balance between the national and the global.” Kristin Hoganson, “Hop off the Bandwagon! It’s a Mass Movement, Not a Parade,” *Journal of American History* 95, No. 4 (Mar. 2009), 1087-1091.

⁹ Borderlands history falls into this category, as do certain types of histories of migration, labor, and capitalism. The term “transnational history” is sometimes used much more broadly to describe any history that seeks to go beyond national enclosures, but my usage here is more limited. For a broad discussion of the term and its meanings see Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke, 2013). For another perspective on the term see Matthew Pratt Guterl, “Comment: The Futures of Transnational History,” *American Historical Review* 118 (2013), No. 1, 130-139.

for its unfolding. Global history, like the earlier *Annales* school that has served as one of its genealogical fountainheads, is often (though not always) concerned with the *longue durée* and with structural forces, rather than with human agents.¹⁰ Finally, international history is concerned primarily with the relations between different states and societies. It has its origins in the history of interstate wars and international diplomacy but has recently expanded to include regions, actors, and themes not traditionally associated with the history of international relations narrowly conceived.

These definitions are of course debatable but they are not intended to be prescriptive, a delineation of ideal types. Rather, they are proffered here as descriptive attempts to distill the ways in which these terms have been used in recent years in both formal writings and in informal conversations among historians. There is, moreover, clearly some overlap in the historiographical spaces that they outline, and even working with definitions that attempt to highlight the distinction between these fields one can easily think of historical works that would be hard to pin down as belonging to one of these categories but not to another, or that would fall into more than one of them.¹¹ Still,

¹⁰ One way to get a sense of the scope of the scholarship that falls under the term “global history” is to peruse the pages of the *Journal of Global History*, published since 2006. Despite some efforts, notably by Bruce Mazlish, to distinguish global history (or the “new global history”) from the older term “world history,” their usage in most cases appears to be synonymous or at least substantially overlapping. The debates on the shape and scope of global/world history and its relationships to ideas and processes related to globalization are outside the purview of this essay, but interested readers can find guidance in the works of Jerry Bentley, A. G. Hopkins, Patrick Manning, Bruce Mazlish, Peter Stearns, and others. See A. G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in World History* (New York, 2002); Jerry H. Bentley, *Shapes of World History in Twentieth-Century Scholarship* (Washington, D.C., 2003); Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: A Guide for Researchers and Teachers* (New York, 2003); Bruce Mazlish, *The New Global History* (New York, 2006); and Peter N. Stearns, *Globalization in World History* (New York, 2010); Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Peterson, *Globalization: A Short History*, trans. Dona Geyer (Princeton, 2005). See also Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, “World History in a Global Age,” *American History Review* 100, No. 4 (1995), 1034-1060 and Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, “Global history and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization,” *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), No. 1, 149-170.

¹¹ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World* (Malden, Mass., 2004) and Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 2014) come immediately to mind as an example of work that ranges across these boundaries, but there are others.

these definitions are useful inasmuch as *most* works of history that seek to go beyond national (or sub-national) frames can be, without too much difficulty, categorized as operating primarily within one or another of these modes of inquiry.¹² They are also, perhaps no less importantly, necessary in order to define what this essay attempts to do, and what it does not.

This essay sets out to examine one specific aspect of the turn away from methodological nationalism—the assumption that the nation-state is the natural frame for the study of history—an aspect that has often been described as the emergence of a “new international history.”¹³ The term “international history” has itself had a rather complicated history in the American historical profession, where it has been rather uncommon and, when used, carried meanings that were unstable and imprecise.¹⁴ More common have been terms that seemed to carry meanings that were better specified: diplomatic history, the history of foreign relations, or occasionally, the history of international relations.¹⁵ The genealogy of the “new international history” is rooted in these historiographical traditions, but it has gone beyond them in some important ways.

¹² The recent debate over Big History is also outside the scope of this essay, but see Andrew Shryock and Daniel Lord Smail, *Deep history: The Architecture of Past and Present* (Berkeley, 2011).

¹³ The term “methodological nationalism,” referring to the tendency to naturalize the nation-state and its boundaries in social or historical analysis, is borrowed from recent important debates in sociology. See, e.g., A. Wimmer and N. Glick Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology,” *International Migration Review* 37, No. 3 (2003), 576–610.

¹⁴ This is in contrast to the British context, where the term “international history” has a more straightforward usage essentially to mean “the history of international relations,” as in the Department of International History at the London School of Economics. See Patrick Finney, ed., *Palgrave Advances in International History* (Basingstoke, 2005), especially “Introduction: What is International History?” and Gordon Martel, ed., *A Companion to International History* (Oxford, 2007). In Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (Princeton, 2006) the term “international history” is used more-or-less interchangeably with “the history of international politics”.

¹⁵ The latter term was in more common use among historians in an earlier era. See, e.g., Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Introduction to the History of International Relations*, trans. Mary Ilford (New York, 1967).

The essay, therefore, begins by tracing this genealogy and surveying the longstanding debates over crisis and renewal in the field of diplomatic/international history, and then traces the various strands of the new international history as it has been emerging in the fifteen years or so. In its second part, it outlines a proposal for redefining and refocusing the practice of international history as the history of “international society,” with that term understood to describe not simply an arena for interactions among state actors but rather a historical subject in its own right, one that comprises an diverse array of actors and institutions, both state and non-state. The essay concludes with a discussion of the advantages, possible pitfalls, and methodological challenges that are involved in writing the history of international society.¹⁶

Let me be clear at the outset: This essay is not an argument for marginalizing states in the writing of international history, much less for ignoring the power of states in international affairs. Rather, it assumes that historians need to think about states—or rather governments—and what they do in the world within the broader contexts and environments in which they operate and, in these contexts, to understand the workings of power in international society as inhering not only in the realms of diplomacy, military conflict, or economic competition but also in cultural diffusion, legal and social norms, and global issues such as health, food, population, and the environment, and—most importantly—to treat all these realms as intimately interconnected. Moreover, it assumes that the place of national enclosures and the role of state power are open questions for

¹⁶ Though references to a “new international history” have been making the rounds among historians for a while now, as best I can tell no one has yet attempted to define this term *in toto*. But see Odd Arne Westad, “The New International History of the Cold War: Three Possible Paradigms,” *Diplomatic History* 24, No. 4 (Fall 2000), 551-565; Liz Borgwardt, “A ‘New International History’ of the 1960s,” *Reviews in American History*, 32, No. 2 (June 2004), 256-261; and Peter Mandler, “The New Internationalism,” *History Today* 62, No. 3 (2012).

historians to interrogate rather than the premises from which historical investigation begins. I will not attempt to lay out the argument for doing those things since it seems, as noted at the outset, that the debate over the need to transcend methodological nationalism in historical writing has been largely settled. Many historians, most of them trained in nationally-defined fields, have for some time now been venturing beyond national enclosures in their work, and few, it seems, are seriously challenging the importance or legitimacy of such moves even if they themselves are not engaged in them. The question, then, is not “What?” but “How?” If international historians must, as Matthew Connelly has argued, “see beyond the state,” what precisely do they look at and how do they go about doing it?¹⁷

The history of relations between states is hardly a new field of historical investigation, and in its original guise, as the history of diplomacy, it goes back to the nineteenth century origins of the modern discipline. But if the field itself has a long history, so does the notion that it is in decline. Indeed, more than four decades ago, Ernest R. May already lamented the “decline of diplomatic history.”¹⁸ The field, he wrote in 1971, had been central to historical work from its earliest days, from its ancient roots in Herodotus and Thucydides to its modern establishment in the era of von Ranke. In the middle of the twentieth century, some of the most prominent figures in the field in the West—Samuel Flagg Bemis, Dexter Perkins, William Langer, Bernadotte Schmitt, Pierre Renouvin, H. W. Temperley—were widely recognized as leaders of the profession as a

¹⁷ The phrase comes from Matthew Connelly, “Seeing beyond the State: The Population Control Movement and the Problem of Sovereignty,” *Past & Present* 193 (2006):197-233, which in turn echoed James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven, 1999).

¹⁸ Ernest R. May, “The Decline of Diplomatic History,” in George Billias and Gerald Grob, eds., *American History: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York, 1971), 399-430.

whole. And the field had not stood still. If, in the interwar period, most diplomatic historians were engaged in the close reconstruction of negotiations between the European courts based on diplomatic archives, after the Second World War leading practitioners began to doubt that diplomatic documents could tell the whole story. Renouvin wanted to look at “les forces profondes” operating behind the scenes, and A. J. P. Taylor called for going beyond diplomatic exchanges, which recorded no more than “what one clerk said to another.”¹⁹

These critiques invigorated the field, May argued, giving rise to new approaches to the study of foreign policy and international relations that went beyond foreign ministries and diplomatic exchanges to focus on the role of executive branches, on social forces, on perceptions and attitudes, on bureaucracies, on public opinion, and on the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy. In the United States, the 1950s saw critiques of the foreign policy “idealism” while the 1960s saw a surge of studies, inspired by William Appleman Williams’ concept of “open door imperialism,” on the economic factors and capitalist influences that drove American foreign policy.²⁰ But despite these developments, May’s conclusion in 1971 was that the field of diplomatic history, recently eclipsed as it was by the rising popularity of social history, had entered a decline and might be approaching its demise unless it could transform itself into the study

¹⁹ May, “The Decline of Diplomatic History,” 411-12; A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918* (Oxford, 1954).

²⁰ William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, rev. ed. (1972; c. 1959); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (1963); Thomas McCormick, *China Market: America’s Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (1967); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (Madison, 1964). Williams, in turned, had based the concept of “open door imperialism” partly on the notion of Britain’s nineteenth-century “informal empire” associated in with the Cambridge historians John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson. See John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *The Economic History Review*, Second series, 6, No. 1 (1953); Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961).

“international history,” which would venture beyond diplomacy to explore perceptions, ideas, culture, economics, and institutions. If it could do so it promised, May concluded, “to be one of the rich areas of future historical scholarship.”²¹

The sense of crisis in the field, however, did not recede in the course of the 1970s. If anything, it got worse, a perception perhaps most famously articulated in Charles S. Maier’s much-debated 1980 essay “Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations.” The tone of the essay was ominous from the outset. “The history of international relations,” Maier began, “cannot, alas, be counted among the pioneering fields of the discipline during the 1970s.”²² The “hot” fields among American historians, he noted, included social history, slavery, labor, and colonial America. Their work was premised on the importance of “bottom up” history and reflected, not least, the suspicion and distaste toward the study of power and the powerful that had spread in the post-Vietnam profession and had seemed to marginalize the history of diplomacy as a field too focused on elite white men.²³

The field, Maier acknowledged, had not stood still: Michael J. Hogan and others had developed the corporatist approach to the diplomatic history of interwar years, John Lewis Gaddis had launched the post-revisionist approach to the history of the Cold War, and there were multilingual, multi-archival works on Asian diplomacy by Michael Hunt and Akira Iriye.²⁴ Despite these contributions, however, diplomatic history as a whole

²¹ May, “The Decline of Diplomatic History,” 429-30.

²² Charles S. Maier, “Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations,” in Michael Kammen, ed., *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1980), 355-387.

²³ Maier, “Marking Time,” 356.

²⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, “The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 7 (1983), 171-190; Thomas J. McCormick, “Drift or Mastery? A Corporatist Synthesis for American Diplomatic History,” *Reviews in American History* 10 (1982), 318-330; Akira Iriye, “Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 3 (1979), 115-128; Iriye,

had remained peripheral in the historical profession. Still, Maier saw reasons for optimism. Lamenting the fact that U.S. diplomatic history, in particular, still remained a branch of U.S. history rather than moving in a more international direction, he was nevertheless buoyed by the growing interest in global history reflected in recent work on world systems theory, and recommended that historians pay more heed to the ideas of historical sociologists on the independent roles of states.²⁵ Like May, Maier also called for collapsing sharp distinctions between domestic and international politics. If historians of international relations did this, he concluded, their field “might profitably develop ... into ‘international history’ that would analyze political structures, cultural systems, and economic arrangements within the persisting framework of a world of competing territories.”²⁶ But for Maier, as for May almost a decade earlier, “international history” remained an ideal that diplomatic historians should aspire to rather than a practice that they were already engaged in.

The publication of Maier’s essay caused a stir of a size and duration not usually associated with contributions to scholarly anthologies. The ensuing debate—recently dubbed “the Charlie Maier Scare” by one historian—played out over several decades.²⁷ Much of this discussion took place on the pages of *Diplomatic History*, the journal of

ed., *Mutual Images: Essays in American-Japanese Relations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975); Michael H. Hunt, *Frontier Defense and the Open Door: Manchuria in Chinese-American Relations, 1895-1911* (New Haven, 1973).

²⁵ Maier cited the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, Perry Anderson, Theda Skocpol, and Charles Tilly as examples. Maier, “Marking Time,” 384.

²⁶ Maier, “Marking Time,” 387. Among other things, one sees here the concern with territoriality that is later developed in Maier’s influential essay, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era,” *American Historical Review* 105:3 (2000), 807-831 and, more extensively, in Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016).

²⁷ Mark Philip Bradley, “The Charlie Maier Scare and the Historiography of American Foreign Relations, 1959-1980,” in Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan, eds., *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 9-29.

record of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), where a succession of scholars tried to assess what if anything was wrong with the field and what could be done about it. Michael H. Hunt, provisionally summing up the debate in 1991, noted that “international history has been much with us of late,” so much so that it “has become over the last decade increasingly difficult to open a journal or hear a luncheon address without being treated to the academic equivalent of a ritual rain dance summoning the spirit of a more international approach.”²⁸ Hunt then proceeded to partake in the ritual himself, recommending a series of steps to promote just such an approach: more multi-archival research, more focus on non-state actors, a better integration of social and economic factors, and more attention to comparative dimensions and to the world outside the United States. His conclusion looked forward to a day when “diplomatic history, once derided as the most narrow and insular of the historical fields,” emerged “in its new guise as one of the broadest and most interpretive” fields in the profession.²⁹

Over the course of the 1990s, however, Hunt’s proposals, though much admired and echoed, were seldom implemented. A proliferation of manifestoes, noted more than one observer, was met with a paucity of monographs. And so another decade later Akira Iriye could still issue an urgent call to “internationalize” international history. Too many works in the field, he said, remained uni- rather than multi-archival and too many historians focused on understanding the sources of policy decisions, whose study, despite a broadening array of analytical tools—gender, culture, perceptions—remained centered

²⁸ Michael H. Hunt, “Internationalizing U.S. Diplomatic History: A Practical Agenda,” *Diplomatic History* 15:1 (1991), 1-11.

²⁹ Hunt, “Internationalizing U.S. Diplomatic History,” 11. See also Michael H. Hunt, “The Long Crisis in U.S. Diplomatic History: Coming to Closure” *Diplomatic History* 16:1 (1992), 115-140.

squarely on the United States.³⁰ Iriye called for broadening the lens not just beyond the United States but beyond the national framework itself and beginning, among other things, to look at other collective identities that might shape transnational interactions based on gender, religion, culture, or ideology.³¹ Moreover, he wanted historians to go even beyond the transnational framework to study global issues that were not defined by national boundaries. He noted that international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, dealt with such crucial issues as nuclear disarmament, refugee relief, economic development, cultural contacts, human rights, and the environment. But while they had long been a subject of study for sociologists, anthropologists, and scholars of international relations and law, they remained largely neglected among historians.³² Having apparently given up on the hope that such actors and issues would gain the attention of diplomatic historians, Iriye concluded with a proposal for studying the two realms, interstate relations and “world community,” separately.³³ But after three decades of imagining a new, inclusive international history just over the horizon, this separatist approach seemed an admission of failure. Was not international history supposed to be all about connections?

³⁰ Akira Iriye, “Internationalizing International History,” in Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley, 2002).

³¹ Two years later Michael J. Hogan’s SHAFR presidential address echoed Iriye’s sentiments, calling on the organization change its name and mission to include fully historians of international relations whose work did not focus on the United States. Michael J. Hogan, “The ‘Next Big Thing’: The Future of Diplomatic History in a Global Age,” *Diplomatic History* 28, No. 1 (Jan. 2004), 1-22. The phrase “next big thing” came from an essay by then-AHA president Lynn Hunt, who had wondered two years earlier if the “next big thing” would be “some kind of revival or refashioning of diplomatic” history. Lynn Hunt, “Where Have All the Theories Gone?” *Perspectives* 40 (March 2002), 7.

³² In IR see, e.g., Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford, 2007); in international law, Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order* (Princeton, 2004); in sociology, John Boli and George M. Thomas, eds., *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations since 1875* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

³³ Iriye followed this with a book tracing the outlines of this new project. Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, 2002).

But even as Iriye still saw much to be done, the field had already begun to shift. By the dawn of the new millennium, the work on the domestic determinants of foreign policy, which had initially focused on institutions, politics, and economics, was branching into new social and cultural themes. The cultural turn taking place in the profession at large since the 1980s led to increasing attention to the significance of race relations and of racial categories in the history of foreign relations.³⁴ Gender, and to a lesser extent class, were also becoming significant categories of analysis for understanding the history of foreign relations.³⁵ The role of religious faith in shaping foreign relations, too, has more recently begun to attract sustained attention lately after decades of puzzling near-invisibility in the historiography.³⁶ There has been important new work on cultural diplomacy and more broadly on the role of culture, including

³⁴ This rich literature includes work on the role of race in the U.S. empire, e.g. Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, 2001) and Paul A. Kramer *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, 2006). Another important strand is work on the relationship between foreign relations and domestic race relations, e.g., Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, 2000); Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (New York, 2003); and Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Harvard, 2001). Other notable works include Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U. S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill, 1996); Marc S. Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with China and Japan: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945* (Chapel Hill, 2000).

³⁵ Frank Costigliola, “‘Unceasing Pressure for Penetration’: Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan’s Formation of the Cold War,” *Journal of American History*, 83, No. 4 (Mar., 1997), 1309-1339; Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, 1998); Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst, 2001). Elizabeth McKillen, “Ethnicity, Class, and Wilsonian Internationalism Reconsidered: The Mexican- and Irish-American Immigrant Left and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1914-1922,” *Diplomatic History* 25 (Fall 2001), 553-87, uses on both ethnicity and class.

³⁶ Andrew Preston, “Bridging the Gap Between the Sacred and the Secular in the History of American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 30, No. 5 (November, 2006), 783-812 and idem, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York, 2012); William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: the Soul of Containment* (Cambridge, & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Seth Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia, 1950-1957* (Duke University Press, 2004) deals with both race and religion.

consumer culture, in shaping relations between states and societies.³⁷ And while historians of international relations have long been interested in the role of ideology,³⁸ some of the most vibrant bodies of recent scholarship have focused on new areas, such as the discourses and practices of modernization and development,³⁹ of humanitarian intervention and human rights,⁴⁰ and of global governance.⁴¹

Another one of the signal characteristics of the new international history has been a growing interest in non-Western regions of the world not simply as arenas of great power competition but as places containing important international agents in their own right, both of the state and non-state variety. This has given rise to a number of related approaches. One approach has focused on the nature and consequences of the Cold War

³⁷ Emily Rosenberg has been a pioneer in incorporating culture, and particularly the culture of capitalism, into the history of foreign relations. See Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York, 1982) and idem, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930* (Durham, 2003). Other examples are Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004) and Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005).

³⁸ Two classics are Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, 1970) and Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, 1987).

³⁹ See, *inter alia*, Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, eds., *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley, 1997); Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill, 2000); David Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003); Nil Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, 2003); and Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, Mass., 2015).

⁴⁰ On the former see, e.g., Gary Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York, 2008). On the latter, prominent examples include Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York, 2007); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010) and Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde, and William I. Hitchcock, *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York, 2012), as well as work by Mark Philip Bradley, Barbara Keys, and others. One indication of how fast the historiography of human rights has evolved in recent years is Kenneth Cmiel's excellent historiographical survey, published in 2004, reads as if hailing from another era. Cmiel, "The Recent History of Human Rights," *American Historical Review* 109:1 (2004).

⁴¹ See, e.g., Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York, 2012).

in the “Third World.”⁴² Another has emphasized the agency of developing nations such as Cuba or national liberation groups such as the Algerian FLN or the PLO in postwar international history.⁴³ Yet a third approach endeavors to “take off the Cold War lens” entirely and focus on themes such as health, migration, demography, and on the shifting dynamics of international institutions in looking at the role of the nations and peoples of the global south in international affairs.⁴⁴ There is burgeoning interest in non-state actors, admittedly an inelegant term that covers everything from international NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and Human Rights Watch, to private philanthropies such as the Rockefeller and Ford foundations, to missionaries, global corporations, and terrorist organizations.⁴⁵ There is also now a growing literature on the histories of various international organizations and activities associated with the United Nations and its predecessor, the League of Nations, which until recently were largely a historiographical *terra incognita*.⁴⁶

⁴² Perhaps the most prominent recent example is Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, 2005). But see also Robert J. MacMahon, *The Cold War in the Third World* (New York, 2013).

⁴³ See, e.g., Tony Smith, “New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 24, No. 4 (Fall 2000), 567-591; Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill, 2002); Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: The Algerian Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War World* (New York, 2002); Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (Oxford, 2012); and Mark Philip Bradley, “Decolonization, the Global South, and the Cold War, 1919–1962,” in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 2010), vol. I, 464-484.

⁴⁴ The phrase is taken from Matthew Connelly, “Taking Off the Cold War Lens,” *American Historical Review* 105 (2000). For a survey see Matthew Connelly, “The Cold War in the Longue Durée: Global Migration, Public Health, and Population Control,” in Leffler and Westad, eds., *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. III.

⁴⁵ For useful recent surveys of this literature see Jeremi Suri, “Non-Governmental Organizations and Non-State Actors,” in Finney, *Palgrave Advances in International History*, 223-46; Brad Simpson, “Bringing the Non-State Back In: Human Rights and Terrorism since 1945” in Costigliola and Hogan, eds., *America in the World*, 260-283.

⁴⁶ On the UN see Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, “New Histories of the United Nations,” *Journal of World History* 19:3 (2008) and the other essays in that special issue. Also Mazower, *Governing the World*; Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (New York, 2006); and Amy L. S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food And Agriculture*

Historians can now see up-close the emerging contours of the international history that May and Maier hoped for in the 1970s and 1980s, and that Hunt, Iriye, and others have spied on the horizon since the 1990s. The new international history has absorbed the insights of the “cultural turn” that swept the profession in the 1980s and 1990s, and it forms a part—indeed, arguably a cutting edge—of the transnational turn that has shaped the discipline more recently.⁴⁷ It retains the field’s longstanding interests in diplomacy, war, and the domestic determinants of foreign policy but it takes a greater interest hitherto neglected actors and explores a broader array of themes than international historians have attended to in the past.⁴⁸ When Brenda Gayle Plummer surveyed in 2005 the “changing face of diplomatic history,” she found a field that had “become more inclusive,” and whose “vitality” and “exciting new scholarship ... will provide intellectual sustenance for many years to come.”⁴⁹

Still, even as the atmosphere of crisis has lifted and international history has expanded in new directions, new anxieties and confusions have arisen. The broad thematic expansion of the field and the concurrent blurring of the boundaries between the

Organization, And World Health Organization Have Changed the World 1945-1965 (Kent State, 2006). On the league see, most prominently, Susan Pedersen, “Back to the League of Nations,” *American Historical Review* 112:4 (Oct. 2007) and Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015).

⁴⁷ On the cultural turn see Frank A. Ninkovich and Liping Bu, eds., *The Cultural Turn: Essay in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations* (Chicago, 2001). On the transnational turn and its connection to diplomatic history see Tom Zeiler, “The Diplomatic Bandwagon: The State of the Field.” *Journal of American History* 95 (Mar. 2009), 1053-73. A recent assessment of the impact of the cultural and transnational turns on the history of U.S. foreign relations is found in Erez Manela, “The United States in the World,” in Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., *American History Now* (Philadelphia, 2011), 201-220.

⁴⁸ As an example of this more expansive approach, the three-volume *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad and published in 2010, includes two chapters on the Cold War in the global south and additional chapters focusing on science and technology, transnational organizations, the biosphere, human rights, consumer capitalism, and global migration, public health, and population control.

⁴⁹ Brenda Gayle Plummer, “The Changing Face of Diplomatic History: A Literature Review,” *The History Teacher* 38:3 (May 2005). Zeiler, “The Diplomatic Bandwagon” and Manela, “The United States in the World” are similarly upbeat.

domestic and the foreign, states and non-states, hard and soft power, has left some wondering whether the field of diplomatic history, in its push for renewal, has lost its coherence. In the case of United States history, one conspicuous sign of both the change and the confusion it has entailed has been the move to replace faculty lines in U.S. diplomatic or foreign relations history with positions advertised as “U.S. in/and the world,” a term intended to connote a sense of thematic inclusiveness and innovation whose vagueness often has both departments and candidates puzzling over its precise scope and character. Does the “United States in the world” refer to the history of relations between the United States and other states and societies, however expansively defined in terms of regions, actors, and themes? Or does it encompass the much larger universe of historians who follow Thomas Bender, Ian Tyrrell, and others in embedding U.S. history within the context of a wider world? In other words, is it an expanded version of the old U.S. diplomatic history or a new way to think about U.S. history *in toto*?⁵⁰

Moreover, when we venture beyond the focus on U.S. relations with the world to look at international history more broadly—a move that was, after all, a central component of the agenda that was laid out long ago by May, Maier, Hunt, Iriye, et al.—the sense of definitional instability and contestation grows all the more acute. Indeed, if we survey the numerous discussions and debates over the state of the field over the last decade or so, it is easy to get the sense that the term “international history” has morphed into a designation whose boundaries are vague and whose distinction from related projects such as global, transnational, and/or world history is ill defined.⁵¹ As the field

⁵⁰ Thomas Bender, *A Nation among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York, 2006); Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789* (New York, 2007).

⁵¹ In recent years, SHAFR meetings and publications have witnessed a number of tense debates between those who called on the society to move away from a U.S. focus and toward international history—

has expanded it may have found itself, as the optimists have claimed, at the cutting edge of the historical profession. At the same time, it is increasingly difficult for those engaged in it to see themselves as part of a coherent intellectual project. Pitching a “big tent” under which historians dealing with a diverse array of regions, topics, and methodologies can all shelter in mutual tolerance is important but not sufficient. The challenge before us is to reframe the field of international history in a manner that would not only encompass the various approaches described above, both those of older vintage and those of more recent provenance, but that at the same time would also make clear the common historical subject which these approaches are all help to illuminate.⁵²

In fact, the diverse strands of historical study that are found broadly under the umbrella of international history acquire a substantial measure of coherence if we think of all of them as concerned with the history of *international society*. The term international society is not now common among historians, even those concerned with the history of international interactions.⁵³ And though it has long been used within the so-called English School of International Relations, English School theorists have typically

including changing the name of the organization and its journal—and those who argued for retaining the focus on the United States. See, e.g., the sharp exchanges in Matthew Connelly, Robert J. McMahon, Katherine A.S. Sibley, Thomas Borstelmann, Nathan Citino, and Kristin Hoganson, “SHAFR in the World,” *Passport: The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Review* 42, No. 2 (Sept. 2011), 4-16. The argument for “bucking the historiographical trend toward international history” and instead “concentrating on the foreign policy of one nation,” namely the United States, is made *inter alia* in Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009). Quotes are from p. 4.

⁵² To be clear, my view is that the new approaches and interests enrich rather than replace longstanding ones. After all, few who are interested in world affairs would argue that we no longer need to understand the history of war, diplomacy, and military power, or that a historical perspective on the thinking of decision-makers in major capitals and the environments in which they operate is no longer important.

⁵³ One recent exception is Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge, 2012). As the book’s title suggests, Gorman uses the term in a more limited sense than its meaning in the present essay. For a very different but equally interesting perspective on interwar internationalism see Barbara J. Keys, *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006).

defined the term narrowly to mean “a society of states,” whose history they have traced from European origins to global scope.⁵⁴ But as already noted, for students of international history some of the most interesting questions in recent years have been focused where the state and non-state domains interpenetrate, that is where states intersect and interact with a variety of other actors. After all, most of the issues that international historians are concerned with, from war, imperialism, and diplomacy to development and cultural exchange, involve an array of state and non-state actors, often in ways that make it hard to distinguish between the domains.

Such connections, intersections, and imbrications have been at the center of some of the best recent work in the field of international history. And if we think of them, taken together, as converging around the history of international society as a distinct historical subject that is more than simply the sum of its parts (akin, in this sense, to historiographical categories such as “the United States”) it becomes apparent that its history can and should be studied using the full complement of thematic approaches and methodologies that historians have long used to study any national or regional history. Thus, international society has a political history and an economic history, broad

⁵⁴ The literature here is very large, but see in particular Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, 1984); Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London, 1992); Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (London, 1998); Cornelia Navari, ed., *Theorising International Society: English School Methods* (Basingstoke, 2009). More recently, some IR theorists, most notably Barry Buzan, have sought to expand the framework of the discussion through the introduction of the term “world society,” which Buzan defined as the combination of interstate society, transnational society, composed of nonstate actors, and “interhuman society,” made up of interactions between individuals in the global space. Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society: English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge, 2004). The term “world society” is also used, somewhat differently, by sociologists interested in global interactions. See John Boli, John W. Meyer, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez, “World Society and the Nation-State,” *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1): 144-81. The phrase “Global society” also crops up on occasion, though mostly as shorthand for the term “global civil society,” which was coined to serve in contradistinction to “international society” as a society of states. See John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge 2003).

categories that encompass many (though by no means all) of the longstanding concerns of diplomatic history, though recent years have seen new, sophisticated approaches to the connection between politics and economics as well as a move toward a greater focus on the agency of non-Western actors in international politics and in the global economy.⁵⁵ But international society also has intellectual histories, which include the recent outpouring of work on transnational circulations of ideas, norms, and discourses such as those of self-determination and of human rights, and indeed the on the rise of the very idea of the existence of an “international” sphere itself.⁵⁶ It has a legal history, which traces the genealogy of international law and its attendant institutions.⁵⁷ International society has a cultural history, which is worked out in detail in numerous studies on the myriad ways in which culture has shaped relations between and across nations.⁵⁸ It has a social history, which considers, among other things, the nature and impact of social

⁵⁵ For the former see, e.g., Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War, America and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916-1931* (New York, 2014). For the latter, e.g., Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia UP, 2007); Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2007); and, on the economic side, Nils Gilman, “The New International Economic Order: A Reintroduction” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 6, No. 1 (2015), 1-16 and the other essays in that special issue.

⁵⁶ On human rights see works already cited above, including Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights* and Moyn, *The Last Utopia*. On self-determination see Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*; on both, Eric D. Weitz, “Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right,” *American Historical Review* 120, No. 2 (2015), 462-496. On the origins of the idea of the “international” see David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge, UK, 2013).

⁵⁷ In the history of international law, too, recent work has paid more attention to the agency of non-Western actors. Compare Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870-1960* (Cambridge, UK, 2002), Anthony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge, UK, 2007), and Arnulf Becker Lorca, *Mestizo International Law: A Global Intellectual History, 1842-1933* (Cambridge, UK, 2014). For an earlier but very perceptive account of how the discourse of “civilization” shaped international relations, see Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of “Civilization” in International Society* (New York, 1984).

⁵⁸ E.g., Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany* (Baton Rouge, 1999); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York, 1997), and much else.

movements that cross national boundaries.⁵⁹ It has, too, an environmental history.⁶⁰ All these categories—the political, economic, intellectual, cultural, social and other histories of international society intersect and interpenetrate in myriad ways, just as they do in nationally or regionally-defined historical fields. Most if not all work in the field of international history encompasses more than one of them.

Thinking of international society as a distinct historical subject highlights connections between, and conversations among, burgeoning fields of historical inquiry that might otherwise appear to follow separate trajectories. It brings out more clearly the connections between historians concerned with domestic determinants of foreign policy and those who work on global issues; between historians focused on relations between states and those who study transnational interactions and non-state actors; between those concerned with national security and diplomacy and others who are more interested in questions of food, population, disease, international law, human rights, and the environment. Used in this way, the term “international society” conjures a typologically diverse and hybrid subject in which states (or rather, governments) play important roles but in which they also operate alongside a host of other actors, with the relative significance of actors of different types varying from case to case. In this context, too, the term “society” (rather than “community,” as in the common phrase “international

⁵⁹ Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Harvard, 2005); Lawrence S. Wittner, *Toward Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present* (Stanford, 2003); Aviva Chomsky, *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Colombia, and the Making of a Global Working Class* (2008); Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, 1997).

⁶⁰ E.g., J. R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (New York, 2000), and Stephen Macekura, *Of Limits and Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2015).

community” or in Iriye’s “global community”) underlines the diverse, contested, often hierarchical structure of the subject.

Two currently lively areas of scholarship that demonstrate these points are the history of international development and the history of transnational humanitarian groups and movements. Both topics have attracted significant attention among historians relatively recently, and yet both have already seen the growth of burgeoning literatures, with dozens of articles and monographs now published and, no less importantly, a great many promising studies in various stages of preparation. The question of economic modernization and development has, of course, been of great interest to social scientists for most of the postwar period if not before, but it was not until the year 2000 that Nick Cullather noted that prodigious fascination and called on historians to “grapple with this immense literature and the ideas behind it.”⁶¹ Cullather’s call marked the beginning of an outpouring of scholarship on the history of international development that has shown no signs of letting up since. That same year, Michael Latham traced the ideological contours of modernization theory within the U.S. social science community, tied it to earlier ideas of development that had their genesis, *inter alia*, in Washington’s imperial projects in the Philippines, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, and placed its evolution in the postwar period in the context of the Cold War battle against communism for “hearts and minds” of postcolonial peoples. He then followed modernization theory from the realm of ideology

⁶¹ Nick Cullather, “Development? It’s History,” *Diplomatic History* 24:4 (Fall 2000), 641-653. Quotes are from p. 641. Cullather’s call built on the pioneering essays in Cooper and Packard, eds., *International Development and the Social Sciences* and on the vast literature that had grown on the subject of development among political scientists, anthropologists, and others. Within this literature, two of the most influential works for historians of development have been James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998) and James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge, 1990).

and social science to the precincts of policy, examining in particular its role in the Kennedy administration's Alliance for Progress, the Peace Corps, and "nation-building" efforts in South Vietnam in the early 1960s.⁶² David Engerman, David Ekbladh and others traced U.S. development thinking back in time to earlier ideologies of civilization, progress, and economic growth, exploring connections to European colonial projects, American missionaries and philanthropists working in East Asia and Latin America in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and left-wing intellectuals who marveled at the Soviet Union's modernization programs in the interwar years.⁶³ By 2011, Latham could draw on the rich literature that had emerged over the preceding decade to author a survey of the role of modernization and development in U.S. foreign policy from its early origins in "imperial ideals" to the neoliberal turn of the 1980s and beyond to Washington's disastrous nation-building projects in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶⁴

Within a few years, moreover, work on the history of development and modernization was branching out well beyond its origins in the history of U.S. foreign policy to encompass the roles of other governments as well of international organizations and NGOs. Amy L. S. Staples demonstrated the influence of development thinking on the establishment and practices of United Nations agencies, focusing in particular on the World Bank, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and the World Health Organization and tracing the emergence of a network of experts who self-identified as "international civil servants" rather than representatives of any one nation, with attendant

⁶² Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*.

⁶³ Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore*; David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization & the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton, 2010).

⁶⁴ Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Chapel Hill, 2011).

discourses of scientific expertise and apolitical professionalism.⁶⁵ In 2009, David Engerman and Corinna Unger urged historians to aim for a “global history of modernization” in their introduction to a special journal issue that included essays on modernization discourses and projects in Peru, Algeria, Kenya, Indonesia, Syria, and the International Labor Organization.⁶⁶

The best work in this vein has managed to weave together seamlessly state and non-state actors to tell stories of global scale and import. For example, in Matthew Connelly’s recent history of the global campaign to control world population, the Population Division of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a part of the U.S. government, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, an NGO, operated in tandem along with numerous other state and non-state bodies and transnational expert networks to make up what Connelly calls a “population establishment” of global reach and influence. Similarly, Nick Cullather’s recent international history of the Green Revolution shows how governments in Washington, New Delhi, Manila and elsewhere, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the Rockefeller Foundation, and a transnational network of plant scientists were all indispensable and interlinked parts of the story of the transformation of global agriculture in the postwar world.⁶⁷ Such work shows that is crucial to spend substantial time with top

⁶⁵ Staples, *The Birth of Development*. On the World Health Organization in particular see also Sunil S. Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health: India and Southeast Asia, 1930-65* (Basingstoke, 2006) and Nitsan Chorev, *The World Health Organization between North and South* (Ithaca, 2012).

⁶⁶ David C. Engerman and Corinna R. Unger, “Introduction: Toward a Global History of Modernization” *Diplomatic History* 33, No. 3 (June 2009), 375-385. The recent move toward a global history of modernization is exemplified in Timothy Nunan, *Humanitarian Invasion: Development, Humanitarianism, and Global Projects in Cold War Afghanistan* (Cambridge, 2016), which examines the dynamics and stakes of competition over development programs in Afghanistan.

⁶⁷ Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008); Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010). See also in a similar vein Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History,*

decision-makers but also to embed their decisions, the contexts in which they were made, and the impacts they had, within a historical narrative that includes a host of other actors: plutocrat philanthropists, global networks of scientists and experts, transnational activists and, not least, the people on the ground who had to contend with and respond to efforts that sought, more or less simultaneously, to decrease their production of children and increase their output of grain.⁶⁸

A global history of development over the last century, then, is beginning to come into view.⁶⁹ Historians are now excavating the roots of development discourse among early twentieth century Mexican revolutionaries and, more broadly, recovering the role of Latin Americans in building the foundations of the postwar international economic order, which hitherto had been seen as an exclusively Anglo-American project.⁷⁰ Others, following Arne Westad's emphasis on the Global South as a central arena in the Cold War, have now gone beyond the competition between Washington and Moscow to

Geopolitics, and Life on Earth (New York, 2014); Erez Manela, "A Pox on Your Narrative: Writing Disease Control into Cold War History," *Diplomatic History* 34, No. 2 (April 2010), 299-323.

⁶⁸ It is perhaps unsurprising but nevertheless notable that the Rockefellers and their foundation were important protagonists in both of these stories. Given the cumulative impacts of transnational campaigns for family planning and agricultural reform in the course of the twentieth century and the Rockefeller's roles in both of these efforts across decades, as well in numerous other projects related to medicine and public health that have had global impacts, there is a plausible argument to make that the Rockefeller Foundation, even leaving aside the family's imprint, in its corporate guise, on the history of energy, was one of the most influential actors in twentieth-century international history. Yet it is a measure of the state-centered focus of international historians that no full-scale scholarly history of the foundation and its global impact has yet been written. For important but partial treatments see William H. Schneider, ed., *Rockefeller Philanthropy and Modern Biomedicine: International Initiatives from World War I to the Cold War* (Bloomington, Ind., 2002), and the work by political sociologist Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York, 2012). The closest thing to a general history of the foundation and its projects was authored more than 60 years ago by a recent president of the foundation. See Raymond B. Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York, 1952).

⁶⁹ Stephen Macekura and Erez Manela, eds., *The Development Century: A Global History* (New York, forthcoming in 2018).

⁷⁰ Christy Thornton, "A Mexican International Economic Order? Tracing the Hidden Roots of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* (forthcoming in 2018); Eric Helleiner, *Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar Order* (Ithaca, 2014).

explore how debates over the best path toward development also shaped Sino-Soviet competition in the developing world, on the one hand, and the Sino-American rivalry there, on the other.⁷¹ In this vein, David Engerman has recently explored how competition over development aid among the two Cold War superpowers intersected with and helped to shape the complex internal dynamics of the postcolonial Indian state, and Nathan Citino showed how postcolonial leaders in the Arab world drew on and adapted a multiplicity of development ideas, looking not only to contemporary socialist and capitalist models but also to the long history of modernizing reform in the Ottoman era.⁷²

In short, histories of international development have seen a remarkably rapid growth from the initial focus on the discourses and policies of the Kennedy administration into a literature that is global in scope and that encompasses an expansive timeline, from Enlightenment ideas about progress to the civilizing missions of the Victorian era to the nation-builders of post-Cold War world. In the course of this expansion in space, time, and theme, the history of international development has increasingly come to intersect with the equally vibrant scholarship on the history of transnational humanitarian movements, whose focus has long been on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but which has recently expanded, particularly with its concern with humanitarian interventions, into the 1990s and beyond. One notable aspect of this literature has been work by Ian Tyrrell, Ussama Makdisi, and others on Christian missionaries and self-appointed agents of reform and civilization and in East Asia, the

⁷¹ Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill, 2015) and Gregg A. Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, 2017).

⁷² David C. Engerman, *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, Mass., 2018); and Nathan J. Citino, *Envisioning the Arab Future: Modernization in U.S.-Arab Relations, 1945-1967* (Cambridge, 2017).

Middle East, and elsewhere in the non-Western world.⁷³ Combining these two literatures, one can now trace the genealogies of postwar development experts and international civil servants back through the transnational reformers and philanthropists and to those civilizing missionaries, all thickly enmeshed with the histories of empire.⁷⁴ The work on transnational reform and its connections to empire, in turn, has expanded to encompass interest in internationalist ideas and international institutions, such as the League of Nations, that came into being after World War I.⁷⁵

But if international institutions such as the League and the subsequent UN system, along with many of the non-state actors connected with them, were largely reflective of what has often been called “liberal internationalism,”⁷⁶ recent scholarship has also made it clear that liberal views on the proper structure and norms of international society have long competed with a number of other internationalist visions and structures. Socialist internationalism stands out as the most obvious counterpoint to the liberal version, but a recently published bestiary of internationalisms in the twentieth century also covers

⁷³ Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2010); Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, 2008).

⁷⁴ On transnational activism and reform movements see Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, 1991); Cecelia Lynch, *Beyond Appeasement: Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics* (Ithaca, 1999); and Ann Marie Wilson, *Taking Liberties Abroad: Americans and the International Humanitarian Advocacy, 1821-1914* (forthcoming). On the complex relationship between missionaries and empire in this period see, e.g., J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (New York, 2006).

⁷⁵ Susan Pedersen, “Back to the League of Nations.” Recent works that are part of the resurgence of interest in the League that Pederson describes include Thomas W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and world order, 1914-1938* (Honolulu: 2008); Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism c. 1918-45* (Manchester, 2011); Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946* (Oxford, 2013); and Philippa Hetherington, *Circulating Subjects: The Traffic in Women and the Russian Invention of an International Crime* (forthcoming). On international law in the interwar period see, e.g., Dorothy V. Jones, *Toward a Just World: The Critical Years in the Search for International Justice* (Chicago, 2002).

⁷⁶ A rather baggy if indispensable term. A useful recent assessment is Beate Jahn, *Liberal Internationalism: Theory, History, Practice* (New York, 2013).

religious, feminist, fascist, and indigenous internationalisms, among others.⁷⁷ Another form of internationalism explored in recent scholarship is anticolonial/postcolonial internationalism in its various iterations, from early transnational interactions between anticolonial activists to postwar movements that centered on South-South connections such as Afro-Asianism, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the 1970s campaign for the New International Economic Order (NIEO).⁷⁸ Finally, recent work on the mutual influences and interactions between black radicals and Chinese communism neatly knits together both socialist and anticolonial internationalisms with transnational movements against imperialism and racism.⁷⁹

The discussion of the literature to this point should suffice to show that a proposal for a history of international society is not a call for a Whig history that would celebrate the origins, rise, and eventual triumph of internationalism, nor does it aim to exaggerate the degree of cohesion or unity that could be claimed for international society, whether past or present. But the utility of international society as a *historiographical* subject, that is to say as a useful analytical category, does not much depend on the degree of its

⁷⁷ Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds., *Internationalisms: A Twentieth Century History* (New York, 2017). On socialist internationalism, besides the relevant chapters in the volume just cited see also Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild, eds., *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World* (London, 2016) and Talbot C. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914-1960* (Oxford, 2018). Both of these books, however, focus primarily on Europe and there is much room for additional work on the subject, particularly in the Global South. On women's internationalism see also Rupp, *Worlds of Women* and Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History* (New York, 2017).

⁷⁸ For two approaches to the early part of the story see Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment* and Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York, 2015). On the postwar period: Christopher J. Lee, ed., *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Athens, Oh., 2010), Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné, Nada Boškowska, eds., *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi, Bandung, Belgrade* (New York, 2014), and Gilman, "The New International Economic Order." Also useful is Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York, 2007).

⁷⁹ Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Durham, N.C., 2015). This builds on earlier work on black internationalism by Carol Anderson, Marc Gallicchio, Gerald Horne, Penny Von Eschen, and others.

cohesion as a *historical* one, that is to say the degree to which it can be shown to have “actually” existed in the world. Instead, the advantage of thinking about diverse sorts of work in international history that have been sketched above, taken together, as writing the history of international society is that it helps to delineate more precisely the scope of the field, which in turn allows us to see more clearly the entirety of the common endeavor in which those who work on it are all engaged and to identify lacunae and potential directions of future research.

But even if one accepts that it makes good sense to see “international society” as a distinct historical subject, there remain a number of crucial questions that must be attended to if the field is to be institutionalized on a solid footing with faculty positions, graduate programs, course catalog category headings, and the other sundry accouterments of academic field-dom. First, one must consider the precise spatial and temporal scope of the subject. Second, there are some basic issues of research method and training—which languages? which archives?—that must be addressed in order to establish a solid, common foundation for international history, not least for graduate training in the field. Finally, we must attend to the question of the place of nation-states within the history of international society; or to put it another way, the question of how this field should relate to historical fields anchored in national or regional enclosures and to the increasing importance of scholarship defined as the study of “the United States (or Europe, Russia, China, etc.) in/and the world.” This is an important question given the continuing salience of studies focused on the foreign policy of a single state and the historically close connections, at least within the American historical profession, between international history and the history of U.S. foreign relations.

First, if it is useful to think of “international society” as historical subject, how far back in historical time does this framing remain useful? In other words, is it a category that pertains only to the modern era, or could it be useful to historians who work on earlier periods in history? No doubt, thinking about international society as a category of historical analysis is most clearly useful for modern historians, who work on the period during which the norms and institutions of the sovereign nation-state migrated beyond Europe to the American continent and when political contacts between Europeans and states across much of Asia intensified. This sense is underlined by the observation that most, though by no means all, of the recent scholarship that is self-consciously concerned with international history has focused on the twentieth century, much of it in fact on the post-World War II era, even if the search for the intellectual, legal, and cultural origins of international society have led back into earlier centuries and even, with certain questions, back to the ancient world.⁸⁰ But the recent focus of the new international history on the modern era need not mean that its salient themes—the emphasis on the roles of non-Western and non-state actors in international society and the significance of interactions between states that go beyond war, economics, and diplomacy—have no relevance to the history of earlier periods. There is a long tradition of writing on the history of international relations in premodern periods, going back to the ancient world; indeed, some of the most prominent ancient historians—Herodotus and Thucydides immediately come to mind—wrote in the genres of world history and international history,

⁸⁰ The focus on the recent century, and particularly on the Cold War era, has been evident to anyone who attended SHAFR conferences in recent years or follows the major journals in the field, such as *Diplomatic History*, *International History Review*, and *Diplomacy & Statecraft*. Several leading journals in the field, such as the *Journal of Cold War Studies* and *Cold War History*, are explicitly dedicated to this era.

respectively.⁸¹ In fact, applying the lens of international society to nearly any historical time and place can help to frame historical problems in a way that highlights the broader contexts in which actors, events, and interactions were embedded and helps to identify connections along thematic and spatial lines. As David Armitage's recent studies on the global contexts of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and on the evolution of international thought have shown, people in the early modern period thought of themselves as operating within an international society that encompassed an array of actors and operated according to established norms, and this insight applies to other eras and regions in history in which governments sought to establish and legitimate themselves and in which other (non-state) actors sought to resist, avoid, coopt, defeat, or otherwise interact with state power.⁸²

It may be tempting to think of the long history of international society as one of the gradual formation a number of regional societies of states, which were then gradually knitted together into one in the era of European global expansion, imperialism, and eventual decolonization. This notion is useful to a point, but it implies far too hermetic a separation between the different regions of the globe in the era before the rise of the West, an idea that few historians now accept (as well as rendering teleological a historical

⁸¹ The works of Donald Kagan are one example of international history as applied to the ancient world. On the ancient historians themselves and their foundational role see José Miguel Alonso-Nuñez, *The Idea of Universal History in Greece: From Herodotus to the Age of Augustus* (Amsterdam, 2002); Larry Pratt, "Thucydides and International History," in *Power, Personalities and Policies: Essays in Honour of Donald Cameron Watt* (London, 1992), 1-31. The writings of Thucydides, in particular, have been widely influential in the field of International Relations. See Laurie M. Johnson Bagby, "The Use and Abuse of Thucydides in International Relations," *International Organization* 48, No. 1 (1994), 31-153. In addition, there is longstanding scholarship on premodern international relations in other regions, such as East Asia. E.g., John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order; Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

⁸² David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007) and *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge, 2012).

process that was highly contingent). To put it another way, if global history has been centered on the history of globalization, focusing on the forces that have shaped and modulated the shifting connections and interactions between different parts of the globe, then the history of international society may be viewed as the history of internationalization, meaning the responses of a diverse set of historical actors, both state and non-state, to the processes of globalization. As A. G. Hopkins has argued, the processes that comprise what we now call globalization played crucial roles in history well before the modern era, as did the myriad responses to those forces across time and space.⁸³ We can thus see the two projects, that of global history and that of international history, as two fields of history that are at once distinct and mutually constitutive.⁸⁴

Second, there is the issue of research methodology and training required to study the history of international society. Questions about languages and archives come up quickly and often in any discussion of international history as a field of graduate training or monographic research, but they are not quite as difficult as they may seem at first. On the issue of language skills there is surely no one answer that fits all cases, and the array of skills required will vary significantly from one project to another. The traditional languages of diplomatic history, French and German, remain useful in many cases, as does Spanish. But recent scholarship in the field has highlighted, first, the greater salience of skills in non-European languages and second, a growing prevalence of traditionally uncommon combinations of linguistic skills (for example, Turkish and Japanese, or

⁸³ A. G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in World History* (New York, 2002), esp. Chap. 1 “Globalization—An Agenda for Historians.”

⁸⁴ An excellent recent example of this dynamic is Sven Beckert, “American Danger: United States Empire, Eurafrika, and the Territorialization of Industrial Capitalism, 1870–1950,” *American Historical Review* 122, No. 4 (2017), 1137–1170.

Russian and Chinese), combinations that can help historians frame perspectives and allow them to interrogate connections that had previously remained largely hidden from view.⁸⁵

Since the backgrounds and native language skills of students in doctoral programs in the Anglophone world have been growing more diverse, this question of language training, though still a central consideration in the design of any undergraduate or graduate program, is becoming less prohibitive. Putting a greater emphasis on collaborative work in graduate training and awarding proper recognition to it in hiring and promotion decisions is another way to expand the realm of possibility for research on the history of international society.⁸⁶

Moreover, while a breadth and diversity of language skills is crucial for a scholarly field concerned with the history of international society, a willingness to devise new questions and adopt new perspectives is even more important. Of course, such an exploration of new perspectives and questions may well require engagement with new archives and other primary sources but here, too, the obstacles may not be as great as they seem. Longstanding repositories for research on international history, such as the official archives of the American, British, French, and other major states remain centrally important even for those interested in the non-Western world or in non-state actors, but international historians have long been branching out in their research beyond these usual suspects. First, as their thematic interests have expanded they have increasingly consulted the records of government agencies that until recently were left untouched by historians

⁸⁵ The first combination facilitated Aydin's *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*, the second Westad's *Global Cold War*.

⁸⁶ Multi-authored articles and books, while not unknown, are still much rarer in history than they are in many social science disciplines. A notable recent exception is Matthew Connelly, Matt Fay, Giulia Ferrini, Micki Kaufman, Will Leonard, Harrison Monsky, Ryan Musto, Taunton Paine, Nicholas Standish, Lydia Walker, "'General, I Have Fought Just as Many Nuclear Wars as You Have': Forecasts, Future Scenarios, and the Politics of Armageddon," *American Historical Review* 117, No. 5 (2012), 1431-1460.

of international relations; in the U.S. case, this might mean consulting not only State Department or White House documents but also the records of such agencies as USAID, the United States Information Agency (USIA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or even the Department of the Interior.⁸⁷ International historians have conducted research in colonial and postcolonial records of numerous states in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. They have also increasingly tapped the records of non-government entities: international organizations, INGOs, and foundations, among others, places where, until recently, historians might have found themselves “virtually alone,”⁸⁸ but no longer do. The repositories at the League of Nations Archives at the Palais des Nations in Geneva or the Rockefeller Archive Center in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y., may not be quite as busy as the U.S. National Archives in College Park, Maryland, or the UK National Archives in Kew but they may soon, or perhaps already do, compete with mid-sized presidential libraries in attracting international historians. And while there is significant variance, archives of international organizations and NGOs often compare favorably in openness, efficiency, and organization to their governmental counterparts.⁸⁹ Finally, there is of course a vast array of personal papers as well as published sources—document collections, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, reports, autobiographies, etc.—that can shed light on new questions as they did on the old ones.

⁸⁷ See, respectively, Amanda Kay McVety, *Enlightened Aid: U.S. Development as Foreign Policy in Ethiopia* (New York, 2012), Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, Manela, “A Pox on Your Narrative,” and Megan Black, “Interior’s Exterior: The State, Mining Companies, and Resource Ideologies in the Point Four Program,” *Diplomatic History* 40, No. 1 (2016), 81-110.

⁸⁸ As Matthew Connelly did at the archives of the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and the Ford Foundation (“*AHR Conversation: On Transnational History*,” 1453). While such admissions are infrequent in published writings similar experiences can be heard in many an informal conversation in conference halls.

⁸⁹ On the history and possible uses of the U.N. archives specifically, see Emma Rothschild, “The Archives of Universal History,” *Journal of World History* 19:3 (2008).

The final challenge of a move to institutionalize the history of international society is to grapple with its relationship to historiographical fields anchored in particular nations and regions, and specifically to the rich historiography of foreign policy that is not, strictly speaking, international because it is focused the policies of a single government or on the perceptions of a single society. This is a complicated question, not least because the history of foreign policy of a particular state has often functioned as a subfield within the national historiography of that state.⁹⁰ Still, all historians *of* a particular nation-state (the United States, or France, Russia, China etc.) who study that state's policies toward, and interactions with, other parts of the world, are contributing to the historiography of international society, even if their own interests are focused on the foreign policies of a single nation. The foreign policy of any nation, after all, is imbricated with the history of international society since the creation and implementation of such policies is always shaped relationally and by historically-constructed conceptions of a larger international space. That space itself, in turn, is not merely an arena in which the agency of states or other actors plays out. Rather, it has its own history, a history that includes high politics and wars, social interactions and intellectual currents, cultural forms, scientific understandings, technologies, and legal norms, all bound together in the movements of people, ideas, commodities, germs, and a great many things besides. It is, in short, a historical subject in its own right.

⁹⁰ The passions engaged by this question among historians of U.S. foreign relations—that is, whether historians of U.S. foreign relations ought properly to see themselves as U.S. historians or as international historians—were apparent in the 2011 “SHA FR in the World” conversation cited above.