



Introduction: The Implementation of the New Global History in China

Global History with Chinese Characteristics is the result of reflection and observation upon the meaning of global history in China during the last decade, where historians have made big efforts in redefining old and new narratives. The implicit intellectual exercise to link the theoretical framework with empirical work, however, stands out as a major challenge to implementing and putting global history into practice. Although global historians should take their own experience and consider the research landscape as a point of departure to reflect on global history, the use of new historical sources and case studies is unfortunately missing. Recent works have constantly focused on theories and interpretations rather than refining and applying global history to case studies based on new historical evidence (Olstein 2015; Conrad 2016; Belich et al. 2016; Drayton and Motadel 2018; Beckert and Sachsenmaier 2018). Seeking new approaches to reinvigorate the field thus transforms history itself from an archaic discipline to an extremely lively one. That is certainly the case with China from imperial times until the present day.

Inevitably the past, present, and future affairs of China and the West intertwine when the historian attempts to study the development of the Asian giant through a global lens. International relations, foreign languages, theory and methods in history, sinology, among other fields, all represent the main composition of the interdisciplinary focus when global history is applied to China. Accordingly, it is relevant to pay attention to

the key role played by rising economies in global affairs and socio-political transformations and economic growth, with special emphasis on the East Asian region. Within this context, China currently attempts to exert a political and economic supremacy in global affairs. The historian progressively realizes that the use and abuse of history in China by intellectual and political oligarchies becomes a powerful weapon to legitimize and redefine the new political situation of China.

From the past until the present day, the acknowledgement of a long-lasting and unique civilization serves to legitimize the political direction and the nation's aims. Neo-Confucian policies, implemented by the government, attempt to reorganize all aspects of life and society. In a very pragmatic way, individual and social directions are put in order and reoriented. The conjugation of domestic and international affairs in a still very interventionist, autocratic, and bureaucratic political system, on one side, and a compulsive market economy, on the other side, has given shape to a socio-economic, cultural, and political structure with special features. This type of polymorphic, non-linear system that governs a very diverse and vast country and geography tends to engage internationally without losing its real patriotic and national face.

The directions of the new global era and how to accommodate global challenges with domestic affairs constitute the real challenge in China. This has permeated throughout scholarly debates on how global history should be written, interpreted, and empirically implemented. Rather than decentralizing the world through its polymorphic nodes and polycentric spaces (Frank 1998; Duchesne 2001; Perez-Garcia 2018), there is a constant revival of Eurocentric (Anglocentric) exceptionalism and a turn to a Sinocentric history (Yu 2006; Wu 2009; Darwin 2013; Perez-Garcia 2014). That is why in recent years global history has emerged as both popular and as an outstanding political tool within Chinese academia. The analysis of modern economic growth, the great divergence debate, and the use of macro-economic aggregates such as gross domestic product (GDP) are the main factors that have fuelled the interest for global history among Chinese academic circles.

Within this big polychromic canvas, mixing history, politics, economics, and the socio-cultural diversity inherent in China, there appears to be what might be called global history with “Chinese characteristics” [*zhōngguó tèsè* 中国特色]. In this sense, the main question that emerges is: Can global history be really implemented and institutionalized within such neo-national and patriotic policies which certainly involves

academic ecosystems and the university environment? Such a rigid bureaucratic and administrative system diverges sharply from a meritocratic system based on the modernization of academic life that includes three pillars to implement internationalization: mobility, diversity, and scientific excellence. The result is an accommodation within a new national rhetoric in which the uniqueness of China's history, civilization, and culture represents the consolidation of a new political system and history based on these characteristics. These are presented as unique features of the country. The following chapter explores the origins and development of "Chinese characteristics" in detail.

China's strategic policy named "The New Silk Road" [*zhōngguó xīn sīchóu zhī lù* 中国新丝绸之路] or "One Belt, One Road" [*yīdài yīlù* 一带一路] has political, social, economic, historical, and cultural implications (Wang 2010; Li 2010; Liu 2010; Antony and Schottenhammer 2017). Within Chinese academic circles, this policy demonstrates the exceptionality and long-lasting values of Chinese civilization. History in China has strong political connotations, and one of the objectives of the "Silk Road" policy is to renew the cultural exchanges and encounters between the West and China.

The early origins of such encounters took place after trade routes were established during the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) when trading posts emerged from Xi'an to the eastern Mediterranean by crossing the Middle East regions. However, Ferdinand von Richthofen, a German geographer, traveller, and scientist, was the one who coined the concept of "Silk Road" or "Silk Route(s)" [*Seidenstraße* and *Seidenstraßen*] (von Richthofen 1877). This term is, therefore, a modern concept, a product of the nineteenth century; a period of reconstruction of historical myths that aimed to build and develop the modern nation-states. Contemporaries of the Han dynasty and subsequent dynasties never used the term "Silk Road," it was just simply a modern invention (Chin 2013). As Craig Benjamin has documented for the early period he studies from 100 BCE-250 CE in empires of ancient Eurasia, as well as in my own case as I have never found any evidence in Ming or Qing dynasty historical sources, "the Silk Roads have no basis in historical reality or records" (Benjamin 2018: 6).

The so-called "Chinese characteristics," a term to distinguish the political system of the country with the rest of the world, aims to present a different type of socialism opposed to Western countries. This term was coined by Mao Zedong, later by Deng Xiaoping, and today reused by Xi

Jinping. By knowing the importance of the new landscape in global affairs and international relations, Xi Jinping launched “The New Silk Road” policy in 2013. It is an international-orientated strategy, but with a strong national emphasis. The aim is to keep the vast geography and provinces of China unified, to strengthen regional socio-economic and political power, as well as promoting cultural supremacy.

Today in China the role of global history is to develop a new national narrative to foster the unification of the country through a shared common past of more than fifty ethnic minorities. Thus, this book intends to deconstruct such new nationalism and global history with “Chinese characteristics” by introducing new comparisons across the diverse geography of China, as well as making some comparisons and engagements with western regions during the Qing period.

In this sense, it is pertinent to explore the academic ecosystems of faculty life in which we really can see the implementation of global history. Global history should be considered as an approach to analysing socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics of change over centuries, as well as potential similarities and disparities between the West and the East. Global history in its nature implies institutional frames of internationalization and scholarly diversity. The implementation and institutionalization of such frames is the responsibility of departments, faculties, and universities. Certainly, in this sense, a very relevant question is how successful are other countries, outside of China, in implementing global history into the humanities and social sciences?

Likely we might find the same answer as in China, but with a different context. It is important to mention the implementation of global history in Latin American countries, other Asian regions (i.e. the case of the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, among others), Latin Europe and Northern Europe, or even core countries of Europe such as Germany or France. It can be observed in those cases, mainly in countries with a profound colonial past, and in those recently founded as independent nations, that global history confronts and goes against the new national rhetoric and narratives which serve to culturally present a unique national history based on past civilization. We might probably find similarities with the case of China that is presented in this book. In this sense, global history undermines and even places patriotic narratives and national history(ies) under deep criticism.

Ethno-nationalism (Adelman 2017) that represents the rise of patriotism, populism, and anti-global movements is very present in neo-national

narratives of countries that currently rewrite their history with the aim of projecting a new identity and image of the country. Xi Jinping at the beginning of his mandate coined the term “Chinese dream” [*zhōngguó mèng* 中国梦], which is an obvious reference to the so-called American dream, claiming for the unification and glory of the nation. In such rhetorical discourse, the history of China and the construction of new narratives play an essential role. Thus, global narratives challenge national history(ies), and the history of nation-states that were constructed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collapse of the Soviet Union represented the creation of a new global order. Supra-national trade agreements such as the European Economic Area (EEA) that was established in 1992, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that came into force in 1994, the World Trade Organization (WTO), officially inaugurated in 1994, the South American trade bloc (MERCOSUR) established between 1991 and 1994, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), among others, foster the free movement of people and economic capital. Such supra-national institutions created worldwide and across continents attempted to meld political and national interests of the region in which they were created within a global economic agenda.

China joined the WTO in 2001 and launched policies to engage with the new global order. Within this political context, globalization rose with great energy and global history started to play an essential role in the new narratives, re-definition, and identity of nations. Books on global history, mainly by the California School authors, started to be translated into Chinese and soon bestsellers become very popular with the Chinese public. We can first discern this trend by looking at the monumental multi-volume work of Joseph Needham’s *Science and Civilisation* (Needham 2004).

Needham was especially considered as a “friend by [the] Chinese audience” (Mackerras 2018). This is mainly explained by his encyclopaedic presentation of the scientific discoveries in China and the technological development of Chinese civilization which reached its peak in the Song dynasty. This was very well received by the Chinese public as a unique contribution, making him something of an exception since in academic and non-academic circles a Westerner is not seen as legitimate to do, write, and interpret China’s history.

Following other bestsellers, we should obviously include Kenneth Pomeranz's *The Great Divergence* (2000) and Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014). The interpretations, and most importantly the translations from English to Chinese, largely mislead the original concept, topic, and context in which these books were written. We should note that today in China not many academics can read English, and also that Western books and translations go through censorship screening of what is considered to be politically correct.

These three translated books reinforced the uniqueness and value of Chinese history, modern development, and economic growth to the Chinese public. Scientific discoveries since Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties (gunpowder, compass, nautical devices, etc.) presented by Needham's work; the levels of standard of living of some Chinese regions such as the Jiangnan area or lower Yangtze Delta that were equal or higher than other European regions (i.e. Great Britain or Netherlands) in Pomeranz's *Great Divergence* argument; and Piketty's *Capital* presenting the growth of China's GDP as an indicator for the hegemonic role of the Middle Kingdom in the new world order, all presented a set of variables to understand China's economic development.

Scientific developments, uniqueness of history and culture, standards of living, economic growth, as well as the global hegemonic role are the fundamental features for the cohesion of China's historical and cultural identity in the twenty-first century. This new national history and revision of Chinese history is fundamental to the patriotic eyes of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and how this history and identity is portrayed in the society.

Here is when such national narratives attempt to hush the voices of new histories, global and transnational history(ies), which challenge the official and patriotic version of history created by the establishment. The history of the global starts by reducing the geographic scales of comparisons in national and regional units (Subrahmanyam 1997; Gruzinski 2001). The meta-narrative is coherently developed when applying such *jeux d'échelles* [playing with scales] (Revel 1996; Levi 1991) going from a micro to macro perspective (Brewer 2010; de Vries 2019) and cross-referencing historical sources of diverse nature and origin. The aim, therefore, is to create a better approach to understanding the complexity of socio-economic and political structures in the formation and modernization of nation-states.

The composite of transnationality generates resistances in legitimizing national and patriotic histories. This is very present in the development of modern nation-states and the multi-ethnic value of communities, residents, aboriginals, language, and consumer goods. Such process was initiated in the early years of the nineteenth century (Osterhammel 2014), as well as in present times with the new wave of rejuvenation of national history. The ambiguity of political discourses, as well as the identities of inhabitants such as those of the different provinces of China, or of European and American regions, etc., makes that current neo-national (populist) programmes fail in presenting a coherent social frame of unification, in which the identity and solidarity of the people marches under one flag.

For the case of China this has resulted in anxieties, resistances, and a discourse of victimization through the concept of “Chinese,” the meaning of being “Chinese,” and who is legitimized to deal with Chinese history. Since the second half of the twentieth century, and more precisely during the Cultural Revolution, Mainland China’s scholars are presented as only those responsible to write and rewrite Chinese history and its long-lasting civilization.

Theories, methods, and narratives outside the realm of this orthodoxy and school are portrayed as Western contamination. The aim is to keep the core of Asian values through neo-Confucian policies in which society should respect the political order, the social hierarchy, and the willingness of the community, through the motto of letting the other do and rule, to respect the actions of one’s superiors.¹ This is directly expressed in the hierarchical Confucian system of society respecting superiors (Tu 1998: 128; Chan 2004) from “king to subject, father to son, husband to wife” [*jūn wéi chén gāng, fù wéi zǐ gāng, fū wéi qī gāng* 君为臣纲, 父为子纲, 夫为妻纲]. This illuminates East Asian values through Confucian authoritarianism embedded in the autocratic state and governing forms of the emperor and officials across dynasties.

In a recent essay about what constitutes global history, Jeremy Adelman precisely mentions the domination by national narratives when practising and implementing global history: “until very recently, the

¹ See also Benedict Anderson’s (2001: 1283) comment on the importance and power of the language, cultural values, and identities of what is the meaning of “Chinese,” mainlander, and East Asian identities.

practice of modern history centred on, and was dominated by, the nation-state. Most history was the history of the nation.” (2017) This conclusion goes hand-in-hand with what Benedict Anderson has told us about the construction of “imagined communities” and build-up of fictional history with the aim to glorify the past, legitimize the present, and imagine the future of modern nation-states. Adelman’s statement that “every nation cherishes its national history, and every country has a cadre of flame-keepers” (2017) seems a pertinent quote to support the argument that fictional histories are deeply kept in the public psyche.

Adelman’s observation might help us to understand the concept of global history with Chinese characteristics. He points out that “After years of falling enrolments, declining majors and a dispiriting job market, many saw ‘global history’ as an elixir” (Adelman 2017). In other words, some turned to global history as a means of producing a national narrative that could rejuvenate the history of the nation (Bell 2014). This can be applied not only to China, but to any nation that uses its “imagined” history to legitimize its political project and create a discourse of “victimization” against invading nations or searching for “invisible” enemies to validate national narratives. Latin American nations provide an example of this as they have constantly used the myth of the “black legend” (Keen 1969; Kamen 2003; Paquette 2019, 2020) about the Spanish empire as the main cause of their past, present, and even future problems.

However, the “Columbian exchange” (Crosby 1972), and the causes of disparity, was more complex due to biological socio-economic and cultural factors. Political speeches by the president of Venezuela, Maduro, or of Mexico, Lopez Obrador, who have claimed for an official statement to the king of Spain and the Spanish government asking for forgiveness to the Mexican and Venezuelan people for the “atrocities caused by the Spanish empire and conquistadores,” is an example of the constant creation of national and “imagined” histories (BBC News Mundo 2019). Likewise the pernicious and resentful “Ley de Memoria Historica” [Historical Memory Law] issued in 2007 by the Government of Spain puts itself forward an “official” history and purports to be taken as representing a mainstream consensus. Presumably, this effort seeks to shape collective memory and even control the limits of what can be thought, written, and believed about the past. In 2019 stories appeared in the media arguing that teaching the history of Hernán Cortés or even attempting to analyse the period of Cortés’ arrival is an insult according to some Latin American circles. The writing and interpretation of history, or

more precisely the official history, seems to change at the will of presidents and governments. Historians are coerced to follow the mainstream and rarely global history in regions of Latin America, Asia, and even Europe, step outside the official canons.

Although the real institutionalization of global history, curricula development, and research centres under such political frameworks appears utopian, in China the funding of research centres under the “New Silk Road” (or “One Belt, One Road”) aims to showcase the uniqueness of Chinese history and civilization and its connections with the West. Presenting this “new China global history” with strong national characteristics, also applicable in the case of Latin American nations or nation-X in Adelman’s words (2006, 2017), as I have already mentioned, is a contradiction in terms.

Global history is an approach that looks for connections through comparisons (O’Brien 2006) from macro to micro scales presenting divergences and/or convergences across spaces. In the following chapters I will develop this idea on how to implement global history through comparisons and reduction of scale through local case studies. As Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Haupt and Kocka 2009) have stated, the implementation of global history is a very demanding task both methodologically and empirically. Without institutional support at the university, faculty, and department levels, then such a task requires constant training of students in foreign languages, history, methods, and theory to deal with a diverse array of sources in several languages, with the likelihood that any attempt to empirically implement global history will fail. Within a strong interdisciplinary package in which the historian can command several languages and apply a toolset of diverse fields such as history, economics, social sciences, digital humanities, among others, it is possible however to minimize the bias in any attempt to implement global history.

There is a very selective process in any historical narrative; what is included and excluded is based on random choices by the historian (Adelman 2017). Such segregation and bias are constantly repeated when historians research the origins of globalization (O’Rourke and Williamson 2004; de Zwart and van Zanden 2019), mass consumer societies, or modern economic growth. The focus on the British empire and England’s economic boom during the first industrial revolution has further blurred the global (historical) analysis through Eurocentric (Anglocentric) perspectives (McKendrick 1982; Brewer 2004; Berg 2005; Humphries 2016). The so-called great divide (Toynbee 1934; McNeill

1963, 1990; Huntington 1996) continued this trend by only approaching global history within the study of the British world, the so-called British exceptionalism (Duchesne 2011; Vries 2015; Berg 2019), and its colonies. The same interpretative model can be seen with other European empires. Therefore, the difficulty in implementing global history is not only caused by institutional constraints in research institutions and universities, but also within the historians' provincialism "who continue to look inwards instead of acknowledging the importance of global history" (Adelman 2017).

The inherent components for institutional reforms that accompanied academic internationalization, which are more than necessary for really implementing core research and teaching global history, are defined by non-linear models of scientific innovation. Such models are characterized by the interdisciplinary scope by which clusters and networks for advancing new education policies are connected to open science and innovation itself. This intrinsic toolset for the implementation of global history can present scientific results in a coherent, transparent, and accessible form for academic audiences and the public in general.

This model of open science to the world certainly might contribute to solving current socio-economic and cultural problems derived from the financial crisis of 2008 and the political aftershock in Western democracies. Nevertheless, it would be a bit naïve from my side to believe that such model is in real terms taking place in academic life. What can be defined as "academic ecosystems" in research institutions and universities, mainly for the case study of this book, global history in China or in nation-X, are deeply rooted in the above-mentioned provincialism and local teleological scope of the historian. Undoubtedly, it is a very valid model, and we should pursue its implementation, but there is still a long way to go due to resistance not only in China, but in Western areas as well.

Global History with Chinese Characteristics analyses global history in China, as well as in connected histories with other spaces (the Americas and Europe), by separating politics and ideological bias from academic work. By doing so I present a brief literature review on how global history is being implemented and perceived in China, and how it has been conceived theoretically and methodologically in academic circles. With the limitations in global history research outlined, I next introduce the theoretical and methodological framework behind a new case study that compares in a specific region/locality of south China (the economic axis

Macao-Canton) and Europe (the economic axis Marseille-Seville), trade networks and transformations in consumer behaviour mainly during the eighteenth century.² Within such a micro-scale, new insights and clues on the micro-foundations of the great divergence by cross-referencing new empirical evidence from Chinese and European historical archives might be found.

Macao and Marseille serve as units of comparisons and linchpins of both Mediterranean and south China markets to understand how social actors (mainly traders) interfered with mercantilist rules and stiff economic interventionism of autocratic rulers such as eighteenth-century Spanish monarchs and Qing dynasty emperors. The correlation of Marseille and Macanese merchants as agents and mediators in local economies and trade affairs in south China (by extension in the Pacific area) and the western Mediterranean contributed to define a new economic scenario in which the languishing Spanish and Qing empires did not have a predominant position. And more intriguingly, this poses the question how were these spaces connected to the so-called imaginary Silk Road?

Through such comparison, mainly in the exercise of political power and state capacity of the two empires, we might find, as Pomeranz said, but through a different angle, “surprising resemblances” and intriguing “global conjunctures” (Pomeranz 2000: 4). Using and cross-referencing both Western and Eastern sources, or at least asking questions of the sources within a different approach, might help to unveil such “global conjunctures” which took place in local socio-economic and cultural interactions. The agency of traders, artisans, missionaries, intellectuals, and travellers fostered such contacts creating a network of transnational alliances, in many cases through unofficial institutions and various forms of trade and partnerships, with native and foreign communities.

Macao and Marseille, as main hubs for the circulation of goods, capital, and people from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, were closely connected with the Spanish and Qing empires. After the Succession War and the triumph of the French Bourbon dynasty, a massive number of migrants who worked as artisans and merchants (retailers, peddlers, and

² For a better understanding of socio-economic and cultural processes of trans-localism and global history connected to micro-historical phenomena from the perspective of social agents, family groups, and goods, see Trivellato (2011) and de Vito and Gerritsen (2017).

wholesalers), from southern regions of France, mainly Marseille, established their economic activities along the Spanish Mediterranean coast in Alicante, Cartagena, Cadiz, and Seville as main port cities.

The progressive global demand of overseas goods from Asia, such as silks, porcelains, tea, or household furniture from China, or cottons (calicoes and mousselines) from India, made the Spanish economy extremely dependent upon foreign trade. French merchants were the key social agents in fostering such demand creating a new market in Spanish localities and villages, and ultimately changing consumers' choices. The attempts of Spanish monarchs throughout the eighteenth century to ban the introduction of goods from China and find "import-substitutes" clearly failed. Marseille was the business place, the new economic dominion in the Mediterranean market during the eighteenth century, interfering in the economic development of Spain.

Macao exerted the same role in the economic affairs of the Qing administration, similar to what the Spanish empire did (though it was a colony of the Portuguese Crown), by bypassing the regulations and supervision of Qing officials, by becoming the central place for the drain of American silver, and by corrupting local government in areas of the Guangdong and Fujian provinces. Such illegal systems and smuggling activities had branches and extensions in the Philippines. The Manila galleons, officially under control of the Spanish empire, was in fact the main channel of unofficial institutions, families, and trade networks from diverse origins, mainly French, Armenian, Macanese, Cantonese, Fujianese, and southeast Asia communities, and other European social actors.

These transnational networks and trade agents were the de facto rulers of the galleons and the decision makers of trade governance in the South China Sea. The analysis of the diffused community of the *sangleyes*, Chinese traders from south China regions who were allowed to trade with the Spanish empire in Manila, is paramount to understanding the unregulated trade and informal rules in the South China Sea.³ This of

³ The study of the *sangleyes* has been partially undertaken by scholars, only referring to the episodes of the daily life of this community in the *parian* (neighbourhood where they lived) of Manila, the massacre of *sangleyes* and their integration with local communities, and limited studies on their trade activities (Ng 1990; Blussé 1991; Ollé 2005; Ruiz-Stovel 2009). Other chronicles of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century should also be mentioned. See: Biblioteca Nacional de España (hereafter BNE), de Morga, A., *Sucesos de las islas Filipinas*, México: Casa de Geronymo Balli 1609.

course had in the long term a strong negative effect on the Spanish empire's economy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as most economic resources reverted into the hands of individuals, groups, and companies acting in the Pacific region. The Spanish empire failed to create efficient institutions to manage such a long-distance trade, to implement policies, and to manage economic resources in the Philippines in order to control the trade from south China.

The concept of the purity of blood is also important to understanding such transnational alliances among traders settled in Macao and how they developed business partnerships in Canton and Manila. Many of these traders arrived in Macao during the period of the Union of Crowns in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. They had Jewish origins and were escaping from prosecution by the Inquisition (de Sousa 2015, 2018). Hiding their identities through conversion to Catholicism and changing their surnames by marrying people of the same social status or above were their main strategies.

This issue is very important when comprehending how the long-distance trade of the Spanish empire in the Pacific area and its connections in Manila and Macao functioned (Souza 1986). The social agents, families, and partnerships were articulating business and alliances through blood, even though the crowns of Portugal and Spain were separated. The state capacity of the Iberian empires and the performance of institutions cannot be understood without the role, origin, and socio-cultural features of the main agents: traders who had mixed backgrounds of Jewish and Catholic origins.

Thus, Macao and Marseille could be defined as peripheral areas in southern China and Europe whose main feature was to relocate, and divert, economic resources of the Qing and Spanish empires. The statement "There is nothing we don't have that we need from you" made by Qianlong emperor to the Macartney Embassy, can be challenged through the case of Macao which shows that there were many things that the Qing empire (mainly officials, the gentry and business elites from Fujian and Guangdong provinces) needed from foreign powers and European empires. Those items were American silver and the progressive demand for Western goods. Goods of American origins (i.e. chili, potato, sweet potato, corn), and goods of European origins (i.e. mirrors, clocks, crystal glasses, liquors or wines, among others) were among those items that created a new market and demand in China.

Macao and Marseille stand out as a clear example of eighteenth-century economic polycentric areas which were beyond the dominion and centrality of mercantilist and autocratic states of Qing China and Bourbon Spain, connecting trade and routes ruled by trade networks and long-distance partnerships (Perez-Garcia 2018). The vicarious consumption theory, which I developed in previous works and I apply to Qing China in this study, places emphasis on the role of traders creating a new market where initially the demand for foreign goods was scarce or null (Perez-Garcia 2013). The introduction of silver and the above-mentioned Western goods is an example of items that progressively changed consumers' choices in China, ultimately creating new local habits and fashions. This shows the transcultural dimension of the economic circuits and the international trade hub of Macao integrating Western and Eastern markets through trans-Pacific and Indian routes of commerce.

Within the historical context presented above, a concrete definition of space and chronology and referring to scales of comparisons, it is essential to observe how the local socio-economic and cultural changes were influenced by global processes of integration. The delimitation of cross-chronological and geographical sections in temporal sequences of historical facts or events, which took place in the regions to be compared (Werner and Zimmermann 2002, 2006; Douki and Minard 2007), are the main coordinates to implement this case study.

The chronology range from 1680 to 1796 is well-known as the “High Qing” period [*shèng qīng* 盛清], in which the scholarship has given credit to the three emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong for the development of an efficient state, economy, and trade system. Roy Bin Wong, among other scholars, has presented the Qing state and its institutions and bureaucracy as well-organized and effective in developing “an infrastructural capacity to mobilize and disburse revenues beyond imagination” (Wong 1997: 132, 2015; Deng 2015). But corruption increased among officials when, in the late Ming dynasty, the tax system changed from *corvée* to silver. And this growing corruption was not corrected by the Qing state. On the contrary it was accentuated through low salaries paid to officials, and autarky promoted mainly by the Qianlong emperor when he implemented the Canton System of trade (1757–1842) [*yīkǒu tōngshāng* 一口通商] (Liang 1999) to control foreign trade in China within one single port.

This created a dense and uncontrollable network of Qing officials, Hong merchants, Western trade companies, and the Manila *sangleyes* as

mediators between Western contractors and Chinese buyers. Economic policies were orientated toward merchant initiatives and unofficial institutions. However, the incapacity of the Qing state to control and regulate this system in the southern provinces is well-known. Also the mercantilist policies of the Spanish empire that created the *Real Compañía de Filipinas*, 1785–1834 [Royal Company of the Philippines] (Díaz-Trechuelo 1965; Martínez-Shaw 2007) at the same time as the Canton System were both directed to tackle (unsuccessfully) smuggling (Ho 1959; Huang 1974). Both in the mid and long run, these actions had negative consequences for the Qing and Spanish empires being such dense bureaucratic systems. In both, an endemic inefficiency of officials drove their economies to chaos and collapse.

This proves that when advocating for a micro-level approach it is vital to compare specific geographical units, such as port cities, defined as strategic geopolitical sites and how the state policies implemented by Qing China and Bourbon Spain effected trade, the state economy, and international relations between China and European regions. Macao and Marseille were the “interlopers,” the “unexpected guests,” as trade zones interfering in the affairs of the Spanish and Qing empires. The study of merchant networks that operated in both Pacific and Mediterranean markets is crucial to observing the correlation of state policies in trade and economic affairs. Macao and Marseille were the nodes of such complex socio-economic and unregulated systems in western Europe and the South China Sea. Thus, for an accurate definition of the temporality it is essential to observe through cross-chronological sections, as benchmarks, global socio-economic transformations and its impact on the local economies of these areas.

Such a case study might enrich the debate of the great divergence from a local basis by analysing differences and/or convergences between East Asia and Europe within a specific geographical and chronological delimitation. Southern China and western Mediterranean Europe were regions defined as transnational and transcultural due to the foreign communities that were established. For the case study I present, Macao and Marseille are also geo-strategical sites in the South China Sea and Mediterranean Sea, respectively, as their privileged location allowed them to create trade links with other nearby ports and external areas for international trade and distribution of commodities. Marseille was the transnational entrepôt that connected Europe with Asia through Levantine routes (Panzac 2004), mainly through the trade activities of Aleppo and Armenian merchants

from New Julfa (Aslanian 2011). Whereas Macao was connected to the West via the commerce with India and through the Manila-Acapulco galleons (Boxer 1969; Flynn and Giraldez 1996, 2010). Macao was bounded to the West through the trans-Pacific area and both maritime and land silk trade routes of China.

Global history approaches have been emphasized in order to visualize the progress, form, and method which historians have undertaken when carrying out ambitious research projects analysing and comparing diverse geographical and cultural areas of Asia and Europe. In dealing with comparisons and cross-cultural studies in Europe and Asia, some scholarly work remains vague when defining geographical units as well as the chronology. The result of this research has an application to the present day for a better understanding of perceptions, discourses, and encounters between China and Europe by analysing strategic geopolitical sites as dynamic areas of trade, consumption, and socio-economic networks between China and Europe through specific localities and regions.

How did foreign trade networks and transnational communities of Macao and Marseille operate during the eighteenth century and contribute to somehow transfer respectively European and Chinese socio-cultural habits and forms into the local population? What was the extent of these trade networks and where were the channels of redistribution of European goods in China and Chinese goods in Europe? These are relevant questions when exploring Sino-European trade relations and how the transnational dimension of overseas commodities changed tastes by creating a new type of global consumerism. Such concrete comparison can help to narrow the gap that some researchers have created when widely analysing differences between Asia and Europe without a specific geographical and chronological delineation. This book's originality is based on the use of Chinese and European sources to compare the trade system in both areas and changes in consumer behaviour, as well as establishing connections between the Qing and Spanish empires.

The major peril in such big comparative and cross-cultural studies is that some ambiguities and vagueness might appear when using vast geographical units and a *longue durée* chronology (Sawyer 2015). In some cases, it is not quite clear if we are talking about Europe, northwestern Europe, Great Britain, or the Netherlands, for the West (European) side, and for the East Asian (Chinese), if we are referring to China, the Yangtze region, or its prefecture areas, when we analyse the economic differences between both areas during the period of the industrial revolution and

mid-Qing dynasty. Such large generalities might lead to vague and weak results as Pomeranz mentioned in his work (Pomeranz 2000).

Probably some works on this topic have exceeded the debate of the great divergence grounding their arguments on the interpretation of sources, especially on the Chinese side, mainly guided by sloppy assumptions since some data are considered questionable (Prak and van Zanden 2013; O'Brien and Deng 2017; Broadberry et al. 2017; Maddison 2007). This has misled the analysis about global (economic) differences between the West and Asian territories, mentioning that the big differences between both continents appeared after 1800 (O'Rourke and Williamson 2004) as before this date regions of China and India had stronger levels of economic growth than Europe.

There is still a need for more concrete case studies that can apply such theoretical frameworks by using specific empirical data in order to observe the real framework and micro-foundations of the divergence (Zan and Deng 2017) between the West and East and/or the channels of socio-economic and cultural transfers through the circulation of people, goods, and technology. The analysis of such transfers and new cultural forms might enable us to better understand the early connections and meetings between the West and China in the period of early globalization.

In *Global History with Chinese Characteristics*, the main method presented is to cross-reference and analyse Chinese and European sources such as trade records, probate-inventories, local gazetteers of China [*zhōngguó dìfāng zhì* 中国地方志], imperial edits of the First Historical Archives of China, and manuscripts by Jesuits settled in China, among others. This analysis has been carried out through a multi-relational database and social network analysis (Perez-Garcia 2019). Such method allows quantification of the quantifiable beyond the doubtful GDP data for early modern East Asian economies. This will give us a better understanding of the socio-economic transformation of China, the impact of Chinese goods in European markets, as well as transnational trade networks.

Richard Drayton and David Motadel are correct when they state that “the enterprise of the global will depend on collaboration... more training in languages, particularly non-western ones... this must be matched by an acceleration of the digitization of sources” (2018). I would add to the equation of languages and digitized sources the indispensable need for new multi-relational databases (beyond the rigidity of Excel tables or metadata) as a method for cross-referencing sources of diverse nature

and languages (Perez-Garcia 2019). The equation to implement the new global history should consider the following variables:

- New Global History = collaboration (academic networks)
- + training in languages (non - western ones)
 - + digitized sources (western and eastern archives)
 - + digital methods (multi - relational databases)
 - + cross - referencing primary sources

One of the misunderstandings I wish to clarify concerns the implementation of global history in European and Chinese academia through a new case study and use of new historical evidence to re-examine the great divergence debate from a local basis. In recent years a shift from a Eurocentric to a new Sinocentric approach has emerged in global economic history. The California School has contributed to move the analysis from Eurocentric perspectives to ones that look at global conjunctures. Other Western scholars have also recognized such errors (Brewer 2005; Batchelor 2008) by assuming that the pivotal axis of analysis for the study of global movements, connections, exchange, meetings, and encounters between the West and the East should not be uniquely focused on the European powers and their colonies.

However, this has led in turn to a very Sinocentric focus, first fostered by Chinese scholarship whose particularities on global history are primarily linked with political issues in a neo-Confucianist attempt to glorify Chinese history and civilization (Yu 2004; Cheng 2005; Li 2011). The aim of this perspective is to analyse the economic performance of Qing China by making backwards projections of GDP, from year 1 CE to the present day, an economic indicator which does not work well for early modern China and its diverse provinces and regions.

This will be clarified in *Global History with Chinese Characteristics* by providing new empirical evidence from Guangdong (the commercial axis Macao-Canton) and Fujian provinces, as primary places in China orientated towards international trade. The same will be done for the western Mediterranean region of Europe through the trade connected areas of Marseille and Seville-Cadiz. Western Mediterranean trade zones were integrated with the Pacific and Atlantic market via the Manila galleons through the route from Manila-Acapulco to Veracruz-Cadiz-Seville-Marseille, as well as other South American routes. These

interconnected port cities and trade networks fostered the circulation of Chinese goods in the Americas and Europe, as well as the circulation of American and European goods in China.

Within this polycentric and world network system of trade and circulation of goods, it is important to consider social actors, institutions, and business practices in south China and Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is particularly relevant to pay close attention to business families' alliances, the *commenda* contracts as the main financial form, as well as the strategies, shrines, and places of religious worship the traders founded in south China and Europe to hide their socio-economic status and professional identities. The case of Huizhou traders is paradigmatic when they founded the ancestral halls, or that of the *neo-conversos*, Portuguese/Spanish Jews who hid their religious past by founding Catholic institutions such as *capellánias* [chapels, churches] to escape from the Inquisition in Iberian territories and colonies, especially when they settled down in Macao. Arranged marriages, trade networks strategies, trust and institutional arrangements through the mediation of family, lineages, religious and trade organizations, the land tenure system, and the entailed-states in Spain and Portugal were all a way to secure economic life, profit, and on occasions extend the social promotion of the family.

The context of the Union of Crowns [the dynastic union between the Kingdom of Portugal and the Crown of Spain from 1580 to 1640 under the Habsburgs] and the post-Union period played a very important role in the trade between China and Western powers, as the British, French, and Dutch took advantage of the separation and weakness of Spain and Portugal in order to take over the lucrative Portuguese oceanic trade of Chinese goods and slaves.

Analysing this European context, in which a new political and economic order was established as the Spanish empire declined and the British empire took over, is essential when considering the chronology of the great divergence. The changes and mutations of western trade networks operating in China under this new political context seem paramount when observing alterations in trade and consumption. The new dynasty in China, the Qing, was established in 1636 and started to rule in 1644, the same period where the separation between Spain and Portugal occurred. This time frame, which brought convulsive socio-economic and political changes demands further attention, whereby

conclusions on periodicity, evaluation, and causes of the great divergence might change.

Providing new micro-level comparisons within regional cases beyond modern Eurasian polities, as well as mining new historical data in the archives instead of using macro-aggregates, the unknown or neglected history, *Global History with Chinese Characteristics* plans to go beyond Eurocentric bias through new comparisons and data from Chinese and European archives, and also from the Americas (Mexico) (O'Rourke and Williamson 2004; Allen et al. 2011; Cox 2017; Broadberry et al. 2018).

In fact, the study of Chinese economic development and its comparisons with European regions does not work well with economic indicators such as GDP and its backward projections to the early modern period. In this way, China has been merely contemplated by economic historians as a modern nation-state for the early modern period. However, we should not talk about China as a modern nation-state until after the May 4th Movement of 1919. It should be considered as a Kingdom in which the Qing dynasty drastically changed its frontiers and borders.

This consideration, which for many sinologists or specialists in China should be an obvious element, has not been quite present in historical analysis that deals with comparisons treating China as a large and homogeneous geographic unit. The Qing expansion to western provinces and the inefficient bureaucracy and institutions could be the real cause of Chinese economic decline, as well as the constant attempt by Qing emperors (mainly Qianlong), a Manchu Dynasty not Han, to legitimize themselves to govern the Middle Kingdom.

Chinese provincial elites and local trade networks created much internal instability in the long run. These elites were composed of Shanxi bankers, Huizhou traders, Hong merchants of Canton, and *sangleyes* [Chinese traders of Manila], among some preeminent social actors. The Qing government made a softer policy to them as a "concession" by not supervising their activities, reducing taxes, and enabling smuggling activities. The failure in the negotiation between the central government of Beijing and local trade elites, mainly from Fujian and Guangdong provinces, seems a crucial factor for the economic decline of China during the Qing dynasty.

Scholarship, mainly from Chinese researchers, has blamed the progressive intervention of Western powers (Great Britain, France) for such decline. However, we should further explore the disruptive political performance of Qing China, mainly from the eighteenth century onwards

through non-official institutions and alliances between south China traders with Western companies, internal shocks, uprisings, rebellions, among other relevant factors. Due to the diversity of the Qing territory the government confronted a serious domestic problem: unification vs. disintegration of the territory.

Global History with Chinese Characteristics examines Chinese historical sources, which have been scarcely used, and contrasts them with European sources, mainly those from the *Archive de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille* in Marseille, France, and the *Archivo General de Indias*, in Seville, Spain. Trade records, merchant letters, Jesuit manuscripts and accounts, private correspondence, family accounts, and probate-inventories, among others, are used in this book. This makes it possible to compare both Western and Eastern sources in order to give a solid explanation within a micro-scale perspective of the divergence between Europe and China, and disruptions in economic affairs and government institutions through Macao and Marseille as “interlopers” interfering in the Spanish and Qing empires.

To examine such divergence, it is necessary to look closer at the interactions between European (Portuguese, Spanish, French, or Dutch families of Macao) and Chinese social groups. Connections and comparisons will be made as to how European trade networks interacted with Chinese merchants connecting Macao with coastal networks of China, mainly with those of Canton, Amoy (Xiamen), and Shanghai, and inner networks through the lower Yangtze River with Nanjing being one of the main sites that connected the coast with inner regions for the export of silks to Western markets.

The empirical basis provided by using such sources will help in understanding the global process of economic development between a specific territory of China, with the case study of Macao, and its European counterpart, Marseille. Therefore, such targeted analysis is based on a *jeux d'échelles*, from a micro focus, analysing trade networks, to a macro perspective, having pivotal axis port cities as global markets for the circulation of goods.

Finally, this research and its application might contribute to the awareness of historical relations between China and Europe, as well as offering a better knowledge of the concept of Europe and the diversity of Chinese territory beyond nationalistic implications. By no coincidence, the European Delegation in Beijing, since the opening of its office in 2008

through the EURAXESS scientific network, has served as a major platform to diffuse high-quality research outside academic boundaries. This can be visualized through the current scientific programmes and cooperation between Chinese institutions, such as the Chinese Scholarship Council or the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the European Commission with the permanent launch of the European Research Council, the Marie Curie Programmes, the 2020 Horizon Programme or the recent Horizon Europe Programme.

These scientific institutions promote and develop projects in all disciplines, such as the one funding this book, for the awareness in society of the importance of Sino-European socio-cultural encounters, in the past, present, and future. In addition, the vast group of sinologists, global historians, and economic historians dealing with China and Europe are keen to use new historical sources in a very global perspective. Therefore, *Global History with Chinese Characteristics* helps to clarify a wide set of issues such as shifts from Eurocentrism to Sinocentrism in global history, the state capacity in Qing China which has resemblances to the present day, and the engagement in Sino-European trade. In addition, it aims to offer some views on how currently in China global history is marked by national and patriotic issues that constitute a major challenge for its practitioners, and the pedagogical turn and challenges that we should consider when doing global history.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

