This collection of essays by senior and emerging scholars does something unique: in unpacking the historical and cross-cultural meanings of terms such as “society” and “economy” in a variety of non-Western contexts it brings together global history and conceptual history in a way that has never been tried before.

I see the volume as opening a new path of historical investigation.

Dipesh Chakrabarty

The book *Concepts in Global History* is the outcome of a unique research initiative within the field of global history and historical semantics, which brought together area studies experts, postcolonial scholars and conceptual historians to tackle a common project. Over the course of three years and four international workshop meetings, a team of twelve authors met to discuss their contributions to the volume and to give each other feedback, thus providing the necessary connection between each contribution and fine-tuning the methods and approaches of each paper; making this book a multi-authored monograph rather than an edited volume. The group made sure that the project was also about an equally valid understanding of Asian and European academic approaches, a point that is also reflected in the team of editors as well.

The project initiators, the editors and a team of external experts participated at all four meetings and functioned both as co-ordinators of the project and as a constant peer review group. Among our experts were internationally established scholars and experts of conceptual history such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, Bo Stråth (who also acted as the main driving force behind the whole project), Margrit Pernau, Jan Ifversen, and Lars Magnusson.

The research agenda of the project tackles three equally important innovative aspects in the field of global history. 1) it introduces the perspective of conceptual history as a method for doing global history; 2) it takes Asian actors and Asian mobilizations and performances of key concepts as a starting point and not the European ones; 3) it combines the social and the economic in order to show that the economic is always related to the social and never just ‘out there’, and to thus provide a more realistic historical interpretation of entangled Euro-Asian and inner-Asian relations than the established globalization narrative, which is based on structural integrations and economic webs of trade.

The project’s meetings were carried out between 2008 and 2010. At four meetings, each author provided a new version of his/her chapter and received feedback from the editor and the group of international peers as well as from the fellow authors. The project coordinator and the editor did not prescribe a historical period of analysis. The periodization of semantic shifts and conceptual changes in Asian discourses emerged from the data handled by the authors. The chapters were finalized during the second part of 2010 and the first half of 2011. The findings of the project show a successful application of the new method of global conceptual history as a tool to dig out the roots of global transfers and translations and the very groundwork of today’s global integration.

Furthermore, this project crucially not only claims, but shows empirically, that models of diffusion of Western knowledge in Asia need to be revised. The stories of conceptual appropriation show how versatile Asian intellectuals and politicians were in introducing and using European key concepts and in blending them with existing local semantics.
The cases reveal that over the course of some decades from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Asian conceptualizations of the social and the economic had altered their meanings almost completely. The introduction of Western concepts of society and economy – through Asian agency, and not only through Western agency – brought notions of nation, nationalism, race, public sphere, civilization, and spatial delineations in its wake. The new concepts of the social and the economic were mobilized against colonial oppression on the one hand and against local regimes of authority on the other hand. The fact that all cases in this volume show how a semantic change of conceptualizations of society and economy occurred in different Asian settings, leads to the conclusion that the period from the 1860s to the 1940s was one of fundamental socio-economic change. The investigations illustrate that these fundamental changes in the semantics of what society and economy mean have not lead to a convergence of Asian societies with each other or even with any Western model. They have all consciously embraced notions coined in Western experiences and have made these concepts their own in their own way, showing how one of the key features of the historical emergence of globalization is the combination of entanglements, similarities and diversifications rather than a push towards global convergence through free market integration.


The introduction outlines the history and nature of the project and the book by explaining the methodological and theoretical choices made and by relating these to the state of the art. It will furthermore be a chapter in which the main findings of the project are summarized and categorized. Asian actors, mainly urban intellectuals, actively engaged in political, social and economic debates and appropriated conceptualizations of the social and the economic. These two overlapping concepts are frames by a semantic field including concepts such as nation, class, race, the public sphere, equality, democracy, development, modernity, and civilization. The project shows that conceptual shifts in Asian settings happen in similar but crucially different ways, leading to different modes of appropriations of key concepts and to different shifts in how key concepts are defined locally. The introduction holds a crucial place in the volume by integrating the approach with the findings and by showing historically the differences of Asian appropriations and Asian agency. Thus, while all societies undergo a fundamental shift in their semantics of society and economy, the specificities of each shift need to be highlighted in order to show that global integration does not imply global sameness.

Global Conceptual History: Theoretical Reflections on a New Research Area, Hagen Schulz-Forberg

In this chapter, a theoretical and methodological reflection is provided that goes further than the introduction and the historical cases debated and integrated in the introduction. Global conceptual history and theories of global modernity are discussed and critical entangled history is proposed as a tool to operationalise global conceptual history between, within and across spaces. An extra chapter is given to this important part of the project in order to give enough space to the innovative historiographical and theoretical aspects of the whole enterprise. Since this project is one of a string of possible projects, this chapter also serves as a programmatic piece for the new field.

Sabhā-Samāj-Society: Some Linguistic Considerations of the Social and the Economic in Asian languages, Klaus Karttunen

This chapter is concerned with linguistic origins of the concepts of the social and the economic in Asian languages. While an idea of society as a semantic concept was largely missing in traditional South Asian society, the situation is rather different when inquiring about the economic. While the classical handbook of political theory, the Arthaśāstra, opens with a discussion of the sciences that are useful to the king and includes religious tradition, logics and politics in a narrow sense, the fourth science is vārttā, usually trans-
lated as ‘economy’. Both terms have a long linguistic history, however, and this chapter connects the roots of many Asian terms used to express the semantics of the social and the economic when they were introduced or translated from the, mostly English-speaking, West.

**A Vernacular Modernity: The Use of the Social and the Economic in Hindi Discourse from 1870 to 1920, Mohinder Singh**

The chapter analyses the development of the conceptualizations of the social and the economic in colonial North India as it is found in modern Hindi vernacular discourse inaugurated by the literary figures of North-West Provinces that were centred on the Banaras-Allahabad region. This intellectual world was acutely aware of the backwardness of the region in terms of social and economic questions. The introduction of the new concepts of the social and the economic led to a struggle over established meanings of *samaj* (society) in its wake and challenged the religious foundations of the Indian concept that was used to translate society. *Samaj*, however, is never used to refer to nation. The concept of the economic is only introduced in the early twentieth century as it is appropriated from Western and Eastern India, where it has a long history. Interestingly, it was argued among intellectuals that the overlapping worlds of the social and economic should be treated according to different ethics; while the social should be protected from external influence, the economic should be managed with the knowledge and techniques acquired wholly from the West.

**Between ‘bhakti’ and Equality: Some Thoughts on Society and Economy in Colonial Bengal, Rochona Majumdar**

The social in its particular valence could not be imagined in Bengal without at the same time invoking ideas of colonialism, civilization, and nationalism. The semantic field of the social was made up of such categories as improvement, civilization, labour, peasant, caste, family, genealogy, religion, and leadership. Each of these ideas received different elaboration in the hands of different authors. Despite these differences, however, it became a distinct feature of Indian discourse about society that this society was a category that was apart from the state and was primarily conceived of as being opposed to the political, rather than a part of it.

**From Cyclical to Linear: Trajectories of the Social, Civilization and Political Economy in Arabic Thought from the 1860s-1910s, Ilham Makdisi**

This paper investigates how the social, and concepts that were at various times attached to it or competed with it (civilization, political economy, progress, reform, revolution, socialism) were conceptualized in the writings of Arab intellectuals between 1860 and 1914 as they appeared in dictionaries and encyclopaedias, as well as in major periodicals and opinion-makers published in Cairo and Beirut, two of the major cities of the Ottoman Arab world during the period under investigation.

**How Concepts Met With History: The Impact of the New Concepts of Economy and Society on Korea’s Complex Modernization Process, Myoung-Kyu Park**

The adoption of the concepts of *kyungje* (economy) and *sahoe* (society) in Korea cannot be understood without consideration of the socio-cultural changes that took place during the period from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. It was an aspect of Korea’s modernization that had been influenced by Japan, which had accepted Western modernity in East Asia successfully. Since the beginning of the 1900s, both concepts were applied more widely, earning strong discursive power in defining the situation and making communication. Both concepts helped not only to criticize the worn-out Confucian knowledge system, but also to support improving individual freedom and the voluntary activities of the new social groups in their efforts at enhancing Korea’s national power.
Eclipsing European Enlightenment: Japanese Notions of the Social and the Economic in the 1880s, Mikako Iwatake

This chapter outlines society and the social as they were discussed in the journal Nation’s Friend, one of the most important outlets of intellectual debate in late-nineteenth century Japan, from 1887 to 1899 in the middle of the Meiji period that saw a major semantic shift in Japanese thinking about society and economy. The ideal vision for a society based on equality, liberty and human rights was ardent embraced by Meiji intellectuals. Yet a number of the contributions to the journal were troubled by the fact that there was a discrepancy between exactly what constitutes society and the nation-state. There remained, furthermore, the realization that the concept of society belonged to the horizon of expectation of the West, as it was conceived by the Japanese. In the face of growing militarism and the Sino-Japanese War, the concept of society was contested and brought new reflections on the role of socialism as well as on the role of gender to the forefront.

Different Translations and Contested Meanings: Debate and Contention as the Driving Force of the 1911 Revolution in China, Hailong Tian

This paper looks at the different ways in which Western concepts have been mobilized in Chinese discourse by Sun Yet-san on the one hand and by Liang Qichao on the other hand. Introducing the concept of society or the social into Chinese political discourse led to two radically different versions of the very meaning of the concept as it was mobilized in an ideological struggle between a revolutionary (Sun Yet-san) and a reformist (Liang Qichao) camp in the time preceding the revolution of 1911. It shows how important the semantics of concepts are when they are applied to struggles of political legitimacy. By conceptualizing the social as mínshēng, Sun Yet-san used the term as a support for a revolution, while Liang Qichao used the term mínzú to describe the social and ignored social tensions evoked by the term employed by Sun Yet-san in order to find semantics for a common reform effort of all Chinese rather than a revolutionary situation between two parts of society. The import of Western concepts and their Chinese appropriations and mobilizations inform this struggle of political legitimacy.

Urban Networks and Transnational Entanglements: Conceptualizing the Social in Early Twentieth Century China, Dominic Sachsenmaier

It is not possible to understand Chinese visions of society without paying due attention to the glocal environments within which they were situated. In many ways, levels of global consciousness and their concomitant visions of world order were far more foundational to the Chinese debates about society than to the European ones. In China, it was impossible for opinion leaders to discuss visions for a future society and economy without critically engaging themselves with Europe as a political experience and conceptual world. This paper examines intellectual debates of the early twentieth century through an analysis of urban intellectuals and their journals.

From ‘kerajaan’ to ‘sosial’ and ‘ekonomi’: Malayan Appropriations and Claims to Nationhood from 1920 to 1940, Paula Pannu

In this chapter, the emergence of the concepts of the social and the economic in colonial Malaya is scrutinized. These concepts were not present during pre-colonial rule when the Peninsula was dominated by the kerajaan (kingship) system. The concepts of the social and the economic were introduced by the Malay educated elite alongside British administrative and commercial activities. At the same time, these educated Malays were also exposed to modern developments that occurred in Islamic countries like Egypt and Turkey. This can be seen by the fact that the concepts of the social and the economic were sometimes reflected both in English and Arabic. These concepts were not just a direct transmission between British colonizers and the Malays, but travelled through global waves of knowledge. The role of educated Malays as middle-
men that communicated these new concepts to the Malay public and the power struggles connected to this effort are reflected here.

Opposing Empire and Building the Nation: the Role of the Social and the Economic in Indonesian Nationalist Movement in the 1920s, Leena Avonius

The Dutch East Indies was an important region in the process of developing the concepts of the social and the economic in the early 20th century Southeast Asia. This chapter will examine how young Indonesian nationalists, *kaum muda*, actively attained influences from European modernism and from the Islamic Middle East, yet also from Chinese Communists. Combining various influences turned out to be impossible and in the 1930s the divided nationalist movement was all but crushed by the Dutch colonial state. The print media and speeches of *kaum muda* leaders illustrate the vivid dynamics of the 1920s East Indies politics and nation-building that provided space for new understandings of economy and the society to emerge and develop.


This article inquires into concepts of the ‘economic’ and the ‘social’ and their semantic fields in early twentieth century Siam. Not only did new urban literati translate western concepts from English into vernacular terms. The growing public sphere, e.g., print media, novels, and other forms of political communications also became the arena for contentious dialogues on Siam’s economy and society between the ruling elites and literati in urban areas and among the literati themselves. The urban literati articulated new interpretations of economic conditions and perspectives for their development, which in turn gave rise to contentious concepts and visions of Siamese society.

Contributors

The Editors

Morakot Jewachinda Meyer is lecturer in European and Thai Studies at Pridi Banomyong International College, Thammasat University, in Bangkok. After completing her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Thai and Asian history at Bangkok’s Thammasat and Chulalongkorn Universities respectively, she earned a doctorate in the history of European integration from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. She is the author of *Images of Pridi Banomyong and Thai Politics, 1932-1983* (2000, in Thai) as well as English and Thai articles on European and Southeast Asian integration, identity, and Thai intellectual history. She is also an active participant in Thailand’s intellectual and political discourse. Most recently she has been focusing on the implications of the Thai-Cambodian border conflicts for the ASEAN project, giving public talks, writing newspaper articles, and commenting on TV on this issue. In this context, she has also published an essay on “Belgium, France, and the Netherlands: Boundaries and Trans-Boundary Cooperation in the European Union” (2011, in Thai).

Hagen Schulz-Forberg is Associate Professor for Global and European History at Aarhus University and Co-ordinator of the MA in International Studies. He graduated from St. Antony’s College, Oxford, and the European University Institute, Florence, where he also was Research Fellow from 2004 to 2007. He was Guest of the Director at the International Research Centre ‘Re:Work – Work and Human Lifecycles in Global History’ at Humboldt University Berlin. Beside the project on Conceptual History and Global Translations he works in a second international research project entitled Zero Hours: Global Moments of New

**The Authors**

**Leena Avonius** is Senior Researcher at the Asia-Pacific Studies of the Renvall Institute, University of Helsinki. She received her PhD in anthropology at Leiden University in the Netherlands in 2004. In her PhD thesis she examined radical local responses to the political changes after the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998. In 2005-2006 she worked as an EU-monitor of the Aceh peace process, and has written several articles on post-conflict processes in Aceh. Since 2008 she is the international director of the International Center for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS). She has recently edited *Human Rights in Asia. A Reassessment of the Asian Values Debate* together with Damian Kingsbury for Palgrave (2008).

**Mikako Iwatake** was educated at the University of Pennsylvania joined the University of Helsinki in 2004 where she holds an Associate Professorship in Japanese Studies today. She is a specialist of Japanese social theory and history with a special focus on the role of gender both in society and in the academic world. Beside her participation in large research projects such as *Tokyo as a Contested Terrain; Modernity, World City and Civic Community*. She published Post-colonial Critique and the Politics of Writing Women’s History with the journal *Redescriptions* (2008) and recently edited *Gender, mobility and citizenship in Asia* with Helsinki University Press (2010).

**Klaus Karttunen** studied at the University of Helsinki and passed his PhD in 1989. He was Lecturer of Indology and Classical Ethnography at the same university since 1990 and worked in different research positions (in 1991–92 and 1993–94 as Alexander von Humboldt Scholar at the University of Freiburg in Germany). Since 2006 he is Professor of South Asian and Indo-European Studies at the University of Helsinki. His publications include two monographs - *India in Early Greek Literature*, Studia Orientalia 65, Helsinki (1989) and *India and the Hellenistic World*, Studia Orientalia 83, Helsinki (1997) – and a great number of articles and translations. His main research interests are the ancient history of South Asia, especially relations with the West, the history of Asian studies, and the position of traditions in modern South Asia.

**Ilham Khuri-Makdisi** is Associate Professor for Middle Eastern and World History at Northeastern University, Boston, USA. Her particular interest lies in Mediterranean cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the movements of people and ideas. Her current research focuses on the articulation and dissemination of radical ideas such as socialism and anarchism, in eastern Mediterranean cities. Specifically, she analyses the establishment of migrant networks of intellectuals, dramatists and workers, and their roles in the spread of radical ideas in and between Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria. She argues that the presence and activities of such radical networks were central to the making of a globalized world and to the formulation of alternative visions of radicalism. She has recently published the monograph entitled *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* with University of California Press, Berkeley (2010).

**Rochona Majumdar** is Associate Professor in History at the University of Chicago. She is a historian of nineteenth and twentieth century India with a special focus on gender and marriage and the role of married life in Indian modernity. She is furthermore an expert in postcolonial theory and historiography as well as in the history of Indian cinema. Her work on marriage in India pays attention to the shifts in the institution of arranged marriage and the marriage market in Bengal, India. She has recently published two monographs, *Marriage and Modernity: Family Values in Colonial Bengal, 1870-1956* with Duke University Press (2009), and *Writing Postcolonial History* with Bloomsbury Academic (2011).

**Paula Pannu** is a PhD student at Aarhus University. Originally from Singapore, she is a specialist on colonial history with a special focus on Malaya. In her PhD, she analyses forms of British Colonial rule and the
agency of Malayan intellectuals and politicians in the field of knowledge production. Through local agency not a form of opposition to colonial rule emerged, but also an overhaul of traditional Malayan rule in the wake of resistance to and appropriation of British rule. She has recently published ‘The Production and Transmission of Knowledge in Colonial Malaya’ with the Asian Journal of Social Science (2009). The title of her project is The Circulation and Consumption of Knowledge in Colonial Malaya.

Myoun-Kyu Park is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology at Seoul National University, South Korea. He is furthermore the director of the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies (IPUS). He is an expert in the social history of Korea and in the concept of society in Korean history. He has widely published on questions of society in Korea and in international publications. He has published in the field of conceptual history before and is an established expert in the history of the concepts of the social and the economic in Korea.

Dominic Sachsenmaier is Assistant Professor in History at Duke University, USA. His main current research interests are Chinese and Western approaches to global history as well as the impact of World War I on political and intellectual cultures in China and other parts of the world. Furthermore he has published in fields such as 17th-century Sino-Western cultural relations, overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, and multiple modernities. He has held the Mercator Distinguished Professorship at Humboldt University in 2009 and was fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Constance, Germany. His recent publications include the volume Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880-1935, which he co-edited with Sebastian Conrad for Palgrave (2007), and his new monograph entitled Global Perspectives on Global History. Approaches in China, Germany and the United States, published by Cambridge University Press (2011).

Mohinder Singh is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Delhi, New Delhi, India. For many years, his special interest lay on the study of concepts and his special focus remains on Indian Political Thought and the history of ideas and concepts in India with a focus on both their local roots and their global connections. He has recently published Ideas of society and community in the writings of Bhartendu Harishchandra and Bhartendu Mandal writers (2011), Crisis and Critique: Representation of Time in the Works of Hindi Intellectuals: 1870-1908 (2011), and Cosmopolitanism in Indian Political Thought (2011).

Hailong Tian received his PhD from Nankai University, and is Professor at and Dean of the School of Foreign Languages at Tianjin University of Commerce, China. He was a visiting scholar in the School of Language, Linguistics and Translation Studies at the University of East Anglia, and joined the Linguistics Department of Lancaster University in 2006 as network facilitator and investigator of the Leverhulme Trust funded international research project “New Discourses in Contemporary China (NDCC)”. He completed two research projects in China: “Critical Studies of Chinese Discourse” funded by the Chinese National Social Sciences Grant, and “Discourse, Tourism and Globalization” funded by the Tianjin Social Sciences Grant. He published in various key academic journals both in China and internationally, for example in the Journal of Language and Politics and in Language in Society. He recently published a monograph entitled Discourse Studies: Categories, Perspectives and Methodologies (Shanghai Foreign Languages Education Press, 2009).