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## HOW DID THE WORLD BECOME GLOBAL?: TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY, BEYOND CONNECTION

Paul A. Kramer

**Isaac A. Kamola**, *Making the World Global: U. S. Universities and the Production of the Global Imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019. xviii + 282 pp. Notes, references, and index. \$27.95.

It was at some point in the late 1980s and early 1990s that policymakers, journalists, and academics in the United States and elsewhere decided—roughly 490 years after the advent of the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans, and 425 years since the opening of the Manila galleon trade that linked Chinese and European trade circuits—that the world was suddenly, finally, becoming “global.” For many of these commentators, signs of an epochal shift were soon apparent everywhere: streamlined, seemingly instant, financial transactions; accelerating barrages of email; growing fleets of container ships, stacked with Day-Glo metal crates of minerals, cars, and plastic toys, plying the world’s oceans.<sup>1</sup> Observers at the time might have invoked the “annihilation of time and space” to capture this bold new world, had the phrase, coined in the 1840s in captivated response to the telegraph, not exhausted itself over the century that followed, chasing steamboats, the railroad, the underwater cable, then the airplane.<sup>2</sup>

There were very good reasons that observers found themselves searching for, embracing and inventing new cartographies and timelines. New technologies were indeed speeding and cheapening long-distance communications, for example, even if they did so incrementally, rather than abruptly, and in patchwork fashion: “networks” were stretching and thickening, even as they were cut through with vast, equally defining (if never as talked-about) gaps and fissures. Perhaps most significantly, for over four decades, the idea of a rigidly divided world organized by a Manichean opposition of “free” capitalist and “unfree” communist domains—with problematic fence-sitters—had been foundational to the worldviews of many U.S. policymakers, experts and ordinary citizens, and a key structuring principle of American politics, society and culture more broadly. This imaginary had been anchored by material and metaphorical walls and barricades at the militarized frontiers between “West” and “East”; where these fell, permitting the mobility of capital, goods,

policies, ideas, and migrants (or some of them), it seemed to call for a radical rethinking of historical processes and the spaces within which they unfolded.

It was in this crucible that what might have been plausibly taken to be discrete, potentially contradictory phenomena with their own distinct histories were melted into the mega-narrative of "globalization." Out of a dangerous, dichotomized world, it was said, a new, unified, promising, "global" world was being born. Deeper, broader and faster transits of capital, goods, and information, unprecedented in scope, were eroding and supplanting the regulatory power of territorially bounded national polities. Rising in power were supranational formations like the European Union, global trade regimes like the World Trade Organization and, at least aspirationally, human rights norms and institutions. The result was a progressively homogenized global consciousness, webbed together by transnational civil society organizations, diffusing consumer habits and mass-mediated reference points which, depending on your angle of vision, heralded the end of potentially conflictual and destructive difference, or a tragic collapse of human diversity, or both. It was not always clear to those who invoked a newly global present how far things had proceeded. Was globalization complete, or a work in progress? Was globalization a condition, a process, or something else? But this did not mean they saw it as reversible or escapable.<sup>3</sup>

Within the university-based social sciences and humanities, "globalization" (and "transnationalism," the non-identical term with which it was often used interchangeably) launched a thousand agendas that varied in their understanding of what "global" analysis could do and why it was important or necessary. They diverged on the question of why the previous interpretive regime, with its taken-for-granted framing of social analysis within nationalized units—"methodological nationalism"—was a problem. And they differed implicitly or explicitly in their normative approaches to the question of how national and global spaces ought to interrelate.

But works that found inspiration or analytic potential in the "global" or "transnational" often shared key features. In search of a rough, broad descriptor, one might encapsulate their approaches as "connectionist." Connectionist works foregrounded questions about global linkage: the ways actors, processes, and institutions bridged across or even "transcended" long distances and nationalized borders. They posed, as antagonists, national borders and mobile "flows" of goods, cultures and people that moved around and across them. They often tended—with key variations and exceptions—to approach global dynamics through lenses of culture and identity, focusing on globalization's ramifications for belonging, loyalty, religious practice, and social differentiation, often advancing narratives of homogenization and revanchist backlash. They defined human freedom and flourishing in terms of physical mobility, and valorized "connection" as expressive of, or the means towards, a cosmo-

politan world of cultural coexistence. And they narrated their interpretive innovations as reflexive responses to an unequivocal, actually existing, novel, "global" condition, one that required entirely new forms of social knowledge to make sense of it and, to the degree that it was possible, to steer and manage it. These new forms of social inquiry had, in other words, been summoned into existence—and were justified for budgetary and other institutional purposes—by the character of world-historical events themselves.

Embarking from the idea that the world was becoming—or had recently become—"globalized," connectionist scholarship set out to inquire into, chart, and understand connections, their dynamics and implications, in the past and present. In such work, connection and the terms used to register and describe it (flows, linkages, interactions and exchanges, especially) tended to play three interlocking roles. They were the means of scholarship: the subjects being reconstructed, described, and interpreted. They were also the ends of scholarship, the main reasons questions were being posed. (What was connected, and to what degree? When and how were things first connected? How and why did connections change? Were things connected as thoroughly as presumed?) And, in many works, connection played a powerful if backgrounded normative role, implicitly or explicitly affirming a cosmopolitan world of mobility and complex, plural identities that either subverted or transcended hard, exclusionist, socio-political boundaries.

If connectionist scholarship could be recognized by critiques of methodological nationalism and topical attention to cross-border phenomena, it was often—if never uniformly—characterized by a certain mode of feeling, what might be called a transnational affect. It was far from alone as a scholarly approach that accrued and came to be defined and identifiable by certain affective traits or feeling rules. In the case of much connectionist scholarship, this affect conveyed unconstraint through the exercise of agency, exploration, and self-remaking in both the authors and their subjects. Scholars' subjects, it was often said, had broken free of territorial strictures and gone "beyond borders." So, too, it could seem, had the scholars who tracked them down, interpreted them, and published work about them.

This particular affective mode, with its exuberant, even dizzy, sense of freedom from limits, echoed globalization discourse's dominant structures of feeling. These, in turn, had much to do with Western and particularly U.S. representations of the collapse of the Soviet regime. Talk of a new, "global" reality was forged amid and profoundly colored by the surrounding exhilaration and self-vindication of geopolitical victory, defined especially in terms of freedom: unleashed capital mobility, political freedom, emancipation from history and its burdens, mingling jubilantly. The consequences of this transnational affect—what might be called transnationalism's informal feeling rules—were far from trivial. Especially early on, scholars could tend

to transnationalize the study of actors they liked or identified with, the better to enjoy their transnationalism. They could also figure the world beyond national borders as an open space of promise and opportunity rather than a complex domain of power with its own distinctive hierarchies and constraints. It was possible that such affective, rhetorical, and interpretive tendencies ran strongest in settler-colonial polities with deep histories of equating freedom with outward movement in violation of unrecognized borders. But at least in the case of the U.S. academy, these framings—whatever their particular and provincial origins—had far-reaching effects.

While connectionist scholarship shared much, the meanings assigned to connection differed. In university contexts, the “global” was introduced into disciplinary trajectories of inquiry that varied widely, and its meanings inevitably took on the imprint of these conversations and the questions, debates, and methods that structured them, for better and worse. While the “global” condition was often depicted as an objective reality that academic disciplines merely responded to and reflected on, the “global” and “transnational” were, to the contrary, sculpted as they were taken up and enlisted by academic partisans in their ongoing battles with opponents over institutional power, funding, hiring, and prestige. Sometimes these concepts sparked genuinely novel conversations, and sometimes they merely retreaded or rescaled old ones. This made the “global” scholarship ubiquitous across the social and human sciences, and in many cases incommensurable.

Among migration scholars, for example, the global and transnational arrived in the wake of debates about the degrees to which migrants “assimilated” to national cultures; the facts of long-distance connection aided those who claimed migrants retained their cultures, coming to connote loyalty to kin and homeland, the will to fight assimilation, and a resilient sense of collective selfhood. By contrast, for some historians interested in “transfer,” connection signified not historical actors’ determination to hold onto their cultures across distance and geography, but a willingness to borrow and adapt “outside” influences and, at least in part, to qualify or abandon nationalist pretenses and hostilities towards the “foreign.” In yet another field, U.S. foreign relations historians employed the term the “transnational” in the context of debates over the degree to which “non-state” actors played significant roles in the making of U.S. foreign policy, and over the appropriateness of cultural-historical methods; “transnational” came to denote a loose amalgam of “non-traditional” approaches, including a focus on non-policymakers and culturalist approaches.<sup>4</sup>

In nearly every context, connection meant agency, and vice versa. Especially where informed by poststructuralist emphases on plural, fractured, and indeterminate meanings and identities, it connoted self-activity, resourcefulness, adaptability, and dynamic self-making. For some scholars, connecting one’s subjects to what might seem surprising locations, across startling distances,

especially through their use of their eras' innovative technologies, demonstrated their "modernity" (which was not always well-defined). Where historical subjects had been stigmatized as backward or parochial by virtue of presumed geographic stasis and isolation—in effect, denied the status of co-evals of their own historical moment—establishing their "modernity," through, for example, mobility, intercultural contact, and individual or collective self-reinvention vindicated them, incidentally and by design.

Perhaps predictably, historians chose, as one of their unique contributions to an interdisciplinary inquiry, to debunk the conventional (and facile) idea of globalization's conventional late 20th century origins, and to show instead how world regions had become significantly entangled far earlier.<sup>5</sup> The skeptical claim that there was "nothing new" in globalization was soon commonplace. Some historians inquiring about connection focused less on just how far back in time it stretched than on connection's limits, valuably demonstrating how gapped, friction-filled, and impossible past efforts at long-distance connection had often been, and challenging and complicating pasts that too-neatly mirrored, anticipated or led teleologically to many scholars' presumptively linked-up present.<sup>6</sup> Others pointed out the ways that connective processes often understood to be uniformizing and universalizing were enlisted and remade by entrenched, resilient local and national forces, giving rise not to homogeneous social formations, but newly plural ones.<sup>7</sup>

The idea that "global" or "transnational" scholarship and the university structures built to support it had, in effect, been called to life by a bold, new, extant "global" condition evidently served versatile academic-political purposes. But what if, in fact, causal arrows between "globalization" and the academic world pointed the other way, too? What if, instead of universities tailoring themselves to the emerging lineaments of real-world globalization, the very invention of globalization as a concept had been a creation of university-based and university-adjacent knowledge production, especially in the United States? And what if the particular character of its global imaginaries—visions which permeate contemporary civil society and deeply shape policy outcomes—reflected the peculiar and shifting academic-institutional structures within which they had been built, perhaps even more than the globalizing world that they purported to chart and render legible?

This is the thesis of political scientist Isaac Kamola's generative recent book *Making the World Global: U.S. Universities and the Production of the Global Imaginary*. Bringing together a rich secondary scholarship into a new frame alongside close readings of canonical and noncanonical primary texts, the book persuasively argues for the importance of tracking the emergence of the "global" as a keyword and semantic field within U.S. intellectual life; for the late 20th century as a critical inflection point in this history; and for university

settings in the United States as a key origin-point of a self-consciously “global” knowledge, the implications of which would spill over campus walls and U.S. borders. Overall, Kamola makes a case that the very terms, language, and concepts used to make sense of the contemporary world were structured by particular sets of interests which invented a “global” world at least partly in their image. These authors of “globalization,” to the extent that they succeeded in naturalizing their invention, obscured their extensive investments in it and the self-interested projects it served. Kamola seeks to denaturalize this given, unquestioned globalism by reconstructing key moments in its intellectual construction. “What was the massive expansion of global-speak a symptom of?” he asks (p. xv). In posing this question, Kamola hopes to reopen conceptual space for different global imaginaries and, in turn, the possibility of worlds structured and organized differently.

The book’s immediate intellectual setting consists of historical and historically minded works by political scientists and international relations (IR) scholars that seek to provide alternative (and more accurate) genealogies of IR scholarship and, simultaneously, critical, deconstructive accounts of the field’s own self-serving myths as to its origins. Such counter-histories have revealed international relations’ inseparability—in institutional and intellectual terms—from both the politics of racialized empire and racially segregated university systems and state institutions. They have also demonstrated that these increasingly inconvenient entanglements were hidden away in the discipline’s official histories and evolving canons. Importantly, this scholarship also registers the existence of rich, alternative, anti-imperial and anti-racist ways of knowing the world, especially among scholars on the left and scholars of color, and explores the ways they were institutionally marginalized by the field’s power centers.<sup>8</sup> The decision not to grant African American universities Title VI area studies funding for the building of African studies centers is illustrative in a context where these institutions had the U.S.’s best-developed African studies capacities before World War II.

Kamola begins with a detailed account of the largely national and regional (rather than “global”) framings of post-World War II U.S. social-scientific research, organized under the rubric of “area studies.” But a critical turn towards the “global” began in the 1980s. In a highly influential 1983 article, “The Globalization of Markets,” Harvard Business School professor Theodore Levitt—often if incorrectly hailed as the coiner of the term “globalization”—called upon business executives to shift their imagination of the world from one of discrete national markets that needed to be studied, adapted to, and produced for, to a single, unified, “global” market within which relatively homogenized goods could be successfully sold with sufficiently energized marketing. To minimize the risks of this hoped-for worldwide commerce, Levitt flattened cultural differences and emphasized the universal psychological traits



all consumers shared. "In suggesting that firms imagine the world as global—and therefore act as if it were global," Kamola writes, "Levitt helped produce the possibilities for making it so" (p. 85). (Interestingly, in making this case, Levitt made clear that such a world did not yet exist, but that demand for it had to be generated in advance by marketing it in classrooms and academic journals to rising cohorts of executives.)

Kamola's identifies a second main source for this intellectual turn to the "global" in the World Bank's Alden Clausen. Clausen's vision had initially been shaped by his career at Bank of America, which he had managed to reorient internationally, buying up foreign financial institutions and gaining greater access to markets abroad. Once at the World Bank, he turned the institution from an earlier emphasis on lending for national development to the streamlining and protection of an ever-more-integrated world-wide financial market that crossed previously formidable geographic distances and political boundaries; Clausen described it as "a whole complicated ganglion of interdependent relationships and a very dynamic environment in which they are all interacting" (pp. 123–24).

This new, "global" economy was understood to possess complex, technical, virtually unknowable realities which only a narrow group of financial experts could fully apprehend and master, and fixed, unchanging rules, to which development-oriented, borrowing states needed to rigidly conform. Hallmarks of this new vision included the diffusion and institutionalization of ideologies of "human capital," the application of "rate-of-return" calculations on social spending, and the subordination and sacrifice of domestic social priorities to international debt service under the neutralizing, technocratic label of "structural adjustment."

Here, then, is the crux of Kamola's argument: that while theorists and advocates of "globalization" declared it an objective, world-historic fact—no one's social construction—the concept arrived firmly imprinted with conceptions derived from the worlds of business, marketing, and finance, some of them associated then and later with "neoliberalism." Out of these projects, particular concepts of the "global"—forged in pecuniary mission and the technocratic pursuit of profit across wider geographic scales—came to inform and structure a host of intellectual agendas across fields, at the expense of others. But importantly, there was nothing foreordained about the emergence of these new imaginaries for Kamola, who rightly emphasizes the ways global approaches had to contend with other, entrenched modes of world-making, especially earlier ones structured by nation and region.

Among the book's themes—if one that could have been highlighted in a more sustained way—is how deeply taken-for-granted the nation was as unit of analysis within U.S. social-scientific imaginaries across most of the 20th century. From the birth of the social sciences, the modern societies that



economists, political scientists, sociologists, and historians studied were presumed national. As scholars framed these national objects of inquiry, they also participated in naturalizing and legitimating them, an outcome that was, in many cases, also an explicit and unapologetic objective.<sup>9</sup> The roots of what scholars would later dub “methodological nationalism” were complex, tied to the rise of statist systems of data collection and statistical management, nationalized welfare regimes, systems of border control, the militarized knowledge requirements of states at war or preparing for war and—especially in the field of history—the mass production of national identification and loyalty among potentially or actually refractory populations.<sup>10</sup> At the mid-20th-century mark, the idea of the world as a jigsaw of nations was also tied both to the membership rules and operating parameters of new multilateral organizations, and to “liberal internationalist” ideologies that rationalized U.S. global dominance in a world-in-the-making ostensibly built of old and new nation-states. Supporting and informing these dynamics were conceptualizations of academic knowledge-production, and public and private university worlds, as state-serving enterprises that did or ought to function in the state’s interests, even if there remained space—sometimes considerable space—between what officials wanted and what scholars produced.<sup>11</sup>

While foundations and nonprofits play key roles in Kamola’s story, universities figure most prominently in his account of U.S. intellectual world-making. Although they might have been parsed more explicitly for readers, there are at least four distinguishable roles that universities play in his account. First, a handful of prestigious, private universities in the Northeast appear as laboratories and launchpads where influential, macro-level theories of development were founded and projected. They accomplished this through new sources of funding from the U.S. government and private philanthropies. The most prominent of these theories, of course, was modernization, pioneered and developed by Walt Rostow at MIT, which had much to commend it when it came to the search for an epistemologically confident, U.S.-entered imperial globalism. Among its appealing components were universality in scope; diffusionist mechanisms, with special applicability to the decolonizing world; the embrace of technocratic-managerial modes of authority; a familiar, stage-by-stage, evolutionary sequence capable of closing any threatening teleology gap with Soviet counterparts; a self-affirming, normative centering on the powerful states of the Global North, and especially the United States; and the non-requirement of deep, textured social, cultural, political or historical knowledge of non-U.S. spaces.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Kamola argues for the importance of Harvard Business School (HBS) in particular as a hub from which visions of a global market radiated outward. Here Levitt’s influential thesis on the globalization of markets, he claims, would not have gained traction had it not been for a growing business

school infrastructure with its own theories, methods, and approaches to training and expertise—including a gathering cult of management and marketing “gurus”—from which a rising number of corporate executives gained their credentials and took their cues. In particular, HBS’s widely adopted system of case studies, which were diffused across other schools and business, required students to imagine themselves solving large-scale problems as the heads of multinational corporations even before many such entities existed.

Second, American universities figure prominently as the institutional homes for what Kamola calls a “standing reserve” of area and regional expertise available for policy consultation across the broadening, increasingly worldwide landscapes of post-1945 U.S. interventionism, particularly with respect to the colonized and formerly colonized world. National-security-oriented government funding poured in, resulting in a new, massive complex of areas studies and international relations centers, programs, journals, and professional organizations. These new institutions channeled U.S. social-scientific attention further out into the world than ever before, but pulled it into a world pre-packaged into discrete nations and regions empirically knowable through their distinct societies, politics, cultures, and economies.

In theory and practice, area studies experts would be well-suited to advise U.S. policymakers on other societies’ complex, otherwise illegible political situations, and their cultural contexts and historical arcs. Such knowledge, it was hoped, would allow the U.S. to expand its influence, tailor its “hearts and minds” appeals, deflect Soviet advances, and counter anti-colonial insurgencies. Area studies would provide the empirical evidence, legible through modernization theory, which might help policymakers make sense of the tensions and turmoil of decolonizing societies, pressing them onto the progressive paths that awaited them. But Kamola points out, as have others, that the invention of “area studies” also brought unintended consequences, including the cultivation of culturally fluent, authoritative, sometimes first-hand witnesses to the destructive results of U.S. imperial involvement, figures who were often inclined to become vocal critics.<sup>13</sup>

Third, universities appear in Kamola’s account as key instruments of post-colonial development. Anti-colonial and post-colonial leaders had myriad reasons to develop their nations’ systems of higher education: they would train and employ local experts, contribute to locally and regionally oriented economic development, cultivate and credential potential leaders, and initiate and carry out research programs in support of self-determined social agendas that might strengthen new states’ international positions. They would also break the former colonies’ educational, material and symbolic dependence on imperial metropolises’ academic systems. As Kamola relates, this agenda overlapped, up to a point, with World Bank priorities under Robert McNamara in the late 1970s. Heavily informed by modernization theory, Bank policy during

these years emphasized the financing of university systems in the decolonizing world as part of broader investments in infrastructure, education, public health, and birth control which might, at least prospectively, enhance what was understood to be stabilizing economic growth.

In the African context—Kamola's regional specialty—as in other parts of the developing world, the result was the rapid growth of higher education, as expanding universities fostered intellectual ferment, and academics moved dynamically between scholarly, journalistic, activist, and policy domains and careers. African universities in particular became laboratories for heterodox approaches to economic development that critically thematized structural global inequalities with their roots in colonial and neo-colonial capitalism. They remapped the world as already profoundly integrated and unequal precisely due to the character of its integration; and sought to chart new, forward-looking paths towards more autonomous, self-directed national and regional development in which universities and their broader, critical intellectual milieus were understood to play a key role.

Finally, Kamola describes universities as subject to the pressures of privatization and commodification, processes tied closely to the forces the term "globalization" was meant to capture and naturalize. As academic institutions found themselves more and more subject to profit-oriented mandates, they absorbed the ideologies that underwrote capitalist integration; produced academic and social-scientific knowledge derived from or resonant with these ideologies; became important hubs for the training, credentialing and networking of a newly self-aware global elite; and were enlisted as metonymic symbols of what a genuinely "global" cosmopolis looked like in institutionalized form.

To tell this part of his story, Kamola emphasizes major, late-20th-century turning points. Some affected U.S. universities most: the end of the Cold War and with it, the implosion of geopolitical rationales for robust area studies funding; fiscal retrenchment from private foundations; and deepening university reliance on tuition-paying international students for revenue. Some factors pertained to university systems in the developing world: in the context of the Third-World debt crisis, institutions like the World Bank increasingly conceived of higher education in the formerly colonized world not as instruments of national-welfarist development and societal modernization, but as engines for producing individualized "human capital" and, to the extent that they failed to do so by governing metrics, costly luxuries that must be pared back or eliminated in the interests of fiscal responsibility and a disciplined debt-repayment regime. As Kamola recounts, the imposition of these new priorities took a heavy toll on African universities.

It is from this concatenation of political-institutional developments that Kamola sees the birth of the "global" as a full-blown, university-based knowledge project. "Global" studies provided an intellectualized rationale for cutbacks

to expensive, in-depth training and research in particular places, especially in the formerly colonized world. And it allowed universities to market the expertise they were selling as universally—"globally"—applicable, especially to business-oriented students and an increasingly transnational student-clientele. Part and parcel of this withdrawal from on-the-ground, culturally specific knowledge was a shift in power towards social-scientific theorists interested in the developing world merely as a proving ground for Western and especially U.S.-based theories of social change. Hypotheses forged largely within the United States to answer U.S.-centered questions would be tested for their "universality" inexpensively, over short periods of research, in select, non-U.S. locations. Area studies, he writes, became "conceptualized as the receiver of social scientific knowledge" (p. 155). As Kenneth Prewitt of the SSRC put it, while area studies had made "valid and valuable contributions" by supplying "basic data from a rich variety of cultural contexts," efforts must be made "to transcend the limits of particular cultures and to formulate and synthesize these expanded and enriched data in cross-cultural and comparative terms" (p. 157). This shift intensified long-standing imperial divisions of intellectual labor that reserved theory, conceptualization, and agenda-formation as metropolitan prerogatives, while peripheries were restricted to supplying "empirical" raw materials destined for ostensibly higher-order interpretive processing elsewhere.

Even as powerful political-economic forces shaping universities were conditioning the rise of the "global" as concept and organizational frame within academia, its advocates emphasized that this radically new way to structure social inquiry was, to the contrary, a more or less automatic, natural response to the radically new way that human beings everywhere were experiencing their lives. "Area studies traditionally had a fairly clear grasp of what was meant by 'here' and what was meant by 'there,'" Prewitt wrote in 1996. "But when areas, from remote villages to entire continents are caught up in processes which link them to events that, though geographically distant, are culturally, economically, politically, strategically, and ecologically quite near, the distinction between 'here' and 'there' breaks down." What he called the "global-local notion was not a "methodological metaphor invented by social theorists." It was "the lived experience of billions of people in ways unanticipated even a decade ago" (p. 158)

Using the case of New York University at the turn of the 21st century, Kamola closes with an account of international university branch campuses as instantiating a kind of university-shaped capitalist globalism: setting up shop in rapidly-growing regions possessing youthful elites eager for "global" knowledge bearing a U.S. imprimatur; structuring the transnational mobility and networking of students, alumni and faculty; and legitimated by self-representations of a utopian cosmopolis inherited from Enlightenment

dreams, but injected with an up-to-date, post-nationalist, multicultural ethos. Such campuses, Kamola rightly emphasizes—similar to many campuses in the U.S.—were and are sustained in many cases by an equally globalized if far less heralded proletariat of intensely vulnerable migrant workers whose lack of civic status, rights, and protections proved to be a structural feature of “global university” operations. It was too easy and all too common to resolve these relationships into contradictions, paradoxes, or ironies—globalization’s separable “upsides” and “downsides”—instead of mutually implicated forms of domination and hierarchy.

*Making the World Global* merits high praise for accomplishing something that only some intellectual histories of the U.S. in the world succeed at: tying ideas, their makers, and their institutional homes to their lived consequences for the world’s peoples. When Kamola writes about the global vision of the architects of structural adjustment, for example, the implications for the aspirations of formerly colonized societies—particularly, in this case, for robust, autonomous higher education—are neither abstract nor bounded by the walls of U.S. academia. Rather, U.S. policymakers and academics’ thinking about the operations of finance capitalism, about the centrality of rigid debt repayment regimes to legitimate statehood, and about the relevance or irrelevance of histories of slavery, colonialism, exploitation, and post-colonial domination have profound—if never unmediated—impacts on the very practical question of whether African universities will be able to pay their staffs, maintain their infrastructure, and remain open.

Also valuable is the book’s emphasis on the significant yet often unremarked effects of academic-institutional arrangements on knowledge production, particularly as a corrective to accounts of postwar intellectual life that over-stress individual academics’ autonomy and agency. But Kamola’s reliance (especially in his introduction and conclusion) on a strong sense of structural determinism, indebted in part to Louis Althusser, fits awkwardly with the book’s own, more supple and varied method, which combines synoptic institutional histories, intellectual biographies of prominent individuals, and close readings of their most representative or influential texts. Less tethered to an overarching structuralist frame, the book would have been well-positioned to explore when precisely in late-20th-century U.S. history specific thinkers or modes of thinking represented primary, decisive factors in world-making with respect to broader intellectual, institutional, and geopolitical forces. When did the history here pivot on well-positioned actors, or institutional nodes, or clusters of ideas, or specific keywords? To what extent did academics set or shape larger agendas, and where did they provide rationales, legitimacy or rhetorical gloss for agendas over which they had very little say, their illusions of power and influence notwithstanding?

The book provides a nuanced account of key instances of global thought, but one place where it could have used much finer-grained analysis is in its articulation of the national and global. *Making the World Global* draws a sharp contrast between national and global imaginaries, in part through a loosely periodized but unmistakable before/after sequence. As Kamola tells it, national imaginaries embedded in and structuring of modernization theory and area studies in the postwar decades gave way to global imaginaries that displaced their precursors. But the relationships between national and global imaginaries were always more complex, contrapuntal, interdependent, and mutually constitutive. While anchored to nationalized understandings of economy, society, and culture, for example, modernization theory and the practical enterprises it helped organize always assumed a wider world: “modern” societies that diffused their advanced ways to “backward” ones; foreign aid and loans and technical expertise as levers of progressive uplift; export development as a defining metric of economic progress; possibilities for cross-border political destabilization that growth would forestall; and technocratic, long-distance, counterinsurgent violence that would crush whatever discontents growth had not extinguished. Modernization theory’s defining pretensions of universalism presumed and required a global space over which the theory must apply.

Similarly, national imaginaries were never absent from global ones. Somewhat abstract accounts of nation-states played a critical role as globalization’s foil. They were right there, after all, in narratives of a “decline of the nation-state”; if it was not always clear what globalization was, it was clear enough what it came after. (Somewhat ironically, Kamola’s description of a decline of national imaginaries mirrors the narratives of a decline of the nation-state that he seeks to problematize.) And globalization narratives often relied on nationalized cartographies, particularly when it came to accounts of cultural collision. While there were heated debates on the matter, for example, the “globalization” of world culture was for many onlookers synonymous with its “Americanization,” a concept that nationalized culture in the very act of describing and analyzing transnational and global processes. The question may be less how the national was replaced by the global than the ways that particular actors in particular settings joined one with the other, with what political intents, tensions, and consequences.

The book usefully introduces new actors into the story of U.S. world-making, particularly from the domains of business and marketing. But the principles guiding its coverage are not always clear, and some of the Kamola’s choices can seem arbitrary or reproduce conventional, and problematic, timelines. The decision to emphasize the post-World War II period, for example, with selective flashbacks to prior eras is especially striking given what scholars have revealed when it comes to the deeper genealogies of hegemonic U.S. global thinking within and proximate to the U.S. academy, dating back at least as far



as the late 19th century: the rise of an imperial geopolitical expertise among U.S. naval officers and scholars; the invention of colonizing sciences tasked with making “native” societies and resources legible in newly conquered territories; transits of public health knowledge, ideology, and practice between far-flung “tropics” under U.S. sovereignty; the birth of international relations as an applied science oriented towards the maintenance and management of Euro-American colonialism and white racial domination; the birth of U.S. international law as a means of extending and legitimating the power of U.S.-based corporations; transatlantic exchanges over the racial structuring of capitalist labor regimes; and the early-to-mid-20th-century origins of “development” practices that included technocratic governance, statist planning, infrastructure building, and industrial, agrarian, and environmental reform; and World War II-era strategic thinking about the prospects of Anglo-American military and commercial hegemony over a “Grand Area” including, at the least, the Western Hemisphere, Western Europe, and European colonies and in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.<sup>14</sup> The 1940s were without doubt a watershed, in other words, in a deeper, ongoing story. That much of the post-World War II thinking the book foregrounds has roots that trace back to these prewar sources, roots that internationalist social scientists sometimes worked diligently to scrub in the years after 1945 in promoting their modernity, rationality, objectivity, and dedication to “freedom,” makes their relative absence here more notable.<sup>15</sup>

There are also many significant approaches to thinking about the world as global, including but not limited to the academy, that unfolded at the same late-20th-century moment the book covers, but which go curiously unexplored. There was the “revolution in military affairs,” with its emphasis on sophisticated technologies of targeting, surveillance, navigation and communications; smaller, more mobile units capable of rapid deployment; and remapping of the world as single, integrated battle space.<sup>16</sup> There were domains of human rights law and scholarship, with its ambitions to establish globally extensive norms, jurisprudence and legal institutions.<sup>17</sup> Relatedly, there were older discourses of “humanitarianism,” with their hierarchical, long-distance, anti-political politics of sympathetic affect and material relief. In the late 20th century, these were updated, globalized and sometimes militarized, with interventions carried out in the name of stopping or punishing regimes abusive of civilians, protecting the vulnerable, or preventing or ending “genocide”; these proved lethally versatile when it came to the making of a “war on terror.”<sup>18</sup>

The second half of the 1990s also saw a surge of interest in “cosmopolitanism” within the academic humanities and social sciences, and debates about “tolerance” and “coexistence” across cultural difference and the prospects for “global community.”<sup>19</sup> Some scholars embraced forms of imperial, capitalist cosmopolitanism that represented the United States’ own “multiculturalism” as an instrument for extending and legitimating U.S. power and profiting U.S.



corporations in an irreducibly “diverse” world; the nation’s “diversity,” and what was narrated as its actual or imminent transcendence of a racist past in the wake of the civil rights era, was understood to be a source of its greatness and geopolitical dominance. At roughly the same time, academic political science and popular journalistic discourse witnessed a resurgence of democratic peace theory. Some of these thinkers conflated markets and democracy in symptomatic ways, as in Thomas Friedman’s glib, catchy “Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention,” the assertion that no two countries possessing McDonald’s franchises would go to war.<sup>20</sup>

If Kamola’s late-20<sup>th</sup>-century hegemonic globalizers represent only some among many, the book also pays comparatively little attention to dissenting, anti-imperial globalisms. Kamola is forthright that his book’s overall subject is the making and transformation of hegemonic global ideologies and modes of social-scientific inquiry, with occasional treatments of egalitarian, anti-imperial approaches; at one point, he imagines a parallel book that would explore in depth such counter-traditions of the global.<sup>21</sup> This is fair; as it stands, the book covers a great deal effectively. But its focus does make it difficult to ask the crucial question of how exactly emerging forms of imperial, capitalist globalism related to their alternatives. Did they arrive on the scene first, prompting critical rejoinders? Or did visions of a more equal world come first, leading to top-down efforts to contain, absorb, and displace them? If the latter is the case, it potentially recasts late-20<sup>th</sup>-century “global” talk (against its self-mythologies as a *sui generis* response to events “themselves”) as a counter-revolutionary discourse seeking to defeat, neutralize and incorporate challenging elements of past and present-day egalitarian globalisms seeking to imagine the world differently. More fully registering the presence and pressure of these dissenting alternatives more—even while still focusing on hegemonic projects—would have allowed the book to better track and interpret striking shifts in the political valences of “global” discourse, from the strong early-to-mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century association of “internationalism” with a host of progressive and left movements to globalization’s late-20<sup>th</sup>-century and early-21<sup>st</sup>-century associations with technocratic capitalist politics.

Along these lines, it is worth exploring one line of inquiry that Kamola does not consider. The question of whether long-distance connectivity actually reached epochally new intensities in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has been heavily contested, but by convincing metrics, the bulk of the world’s economic activity during these years (admittedly, only one possible measure of a “global” condition) remained national or regional, with important variations. To the extent that this was the case, it gives Kamola’s central question—what was global-speak a symptom of?—additional bite, because this way of speaking did not accurately reflect what was actually happening in the material world. Why, then, has globalization had such conceptual traction and staying power down to our own time?

One possibility is that “globalization” discourse resonated with and propelled efforts to wrench apart the domains of “economics” and “politics,” and to enhance the relative power of capital within states structured by social-democratic politics.<sup>22</sup> Narratives of the “decline of the nation-state” across the world could be brought to bear against any particular national-welfarist regime with great force. If, in this brave new world, cross-border flows of goods and capital could somehow no longer be captured and harnessed by putatively weakening states, it said something powerful about whether capital could or should be regulated at all, within nations or between them. Indeed, one way to read globalization discourse is as a kind of allegorical drama in which “politics” (played by national states, understood territorially) was both separable from “economics” (played by cross-border flows), and no longer capable of governing it. That this allegory played out across the globe, named a process said to envelop humanity as a whole, and defined both a present epoch and unbounded future greatly enhanced its capacity to erode or liquidate the domain of “politics” within national polities, as well as between them, and to render this withering of the space of collective decision-making inherent to the inexorable drive of history itself.

Needless to say, global-speak was far from the only political-cultural idiom in which this particular politics, associated with the term neoliberalism, was being advanced in the late 20th century.<sup>23</sup> And globalization discourse was not, strictly speaking, cooked up to achieve “neoliberal” goals, nor can this discourse’s effects be reduced to these goals. (Among other things, global concepts proved useful and compelling to many who had serious criticisms of neoliberalism.) It was more that a set of bad, easy-to-think mappings, partly created in other contexts and for other purposes (state equals territory equals politics; capital equals deterritorialization equals economic law) were available to reinforce one another, creating opportunities to legitimate new, hotly contested global orders and disorders.<sup>24</sup>

Among the subtle and unintended but consequential effects were scholars’ foregrounding of questions about “connection” and the appropriate scales of social analysis as interpretive end in and of themselves. How new exactly was “globalization”? How much connectivity did it involve? What were the limitations of nation-based scholarship? What were the proper frames of scholarly inquiry? Scholars who posed these key questions could have used them to open broader critical inquiries with implications for the politics of the global condition itself. Some did, to be sure. But in many other instances, connectionist questions became ultimate ends, rather than stepping stones. Other pressing questions about the global past and present, the criteria used to discern better worlds from worse ones, and roles that global scholarship should play in the wider world, went largely undiscussed.

In this respect, Kamola's book should be applauded for inviting scholars to think more critically about the politics and values that undergird their understandings of the "global" and "transnational" as terms used to map space, scale, and social action in present and past, and as the organizing concepts used to categorize modes of social knowledge-production. By taking up the challenging work of historicizing, contextualizing, and problematizing ways of knowing that are of relatively recent origin and that remain dominant in many circles—if never unchallenged—he implicitly calls attention to the way that scholars' reconstructions of the social, whether or not they self-consciously unfold on global or transnational scales or recognize their salience, are nonetheless involved in the making of worlds. Whatever its intended scale, any social representation's chosen centers and margins, inclusions and exclusions, spotlights and backdrops, presume, evoke and convey—for better and worse—a larger world they participate in building.

While the stakes of Kamola's book are clear enough for historians of U.S. higher education and intellectual historians of the United States' role in the wider world, what if anything does it mean for the globalizing of U.S. history? The stakes here, while subtle, are substantial. When influential U.S. historians in the late 1990s and early 2000s announced the need to bring the history of the United States "into" the world, they had any of a number of intellectual traditions available to them, including those forged in the previous half-century's anti-racist, feminist, socialist, anti-militarist, anti-imperialist, and environmental globalisms. Among other advantages, laying the foundations here (at least prospectively) would have rendered a globalized U.S. history at the outset, clearly and compellingly, as a mode of critical history seeking to denaturalize, historicize, and problematize illegitimate past and present-day power relations, including those with transnational, imperial, and global reach. It would have also aligned the field well with prevailing analytical categories of race, gender, and class, and well-established interpretive and critical practices in many national and sub-national histories.

But for reasons that Kamola's book helps illuminate, this was not the dominant path taken. Instead, the field's foundational concepts and agendas were adapted from connectionist globalism, with its borders, flows and cosmopolitan ambitions. The borders in question were the bounds of national history, which needed to be transcended. The flows were mobile, border-crossing cultures, goods, and people that enmeshed national histories in one another. Core research questions would center on the ways that historical actors had navigated between national and transnational identities in the interconnected worlds they had inhabited. Past societies would be shown to be more entangled and mutually implicated than latter-day nationalists and exceptionalists allowed, a discovery that was especially prized when it came

to social domains previously understood to be disconnected and *sui generis* (domestic spheres and “internal” regions, for example).<sup>25</sup> Such histories could, intentionally or not, provide borderless capitalist globalization something approximating a usable past.<sup>26</sup>

In seeking to provide alternatives to the United States’ late-Cold War nationalist triumphalism and the exceptionalist arrogance of its “unipolar” moment, globalizing history’s anti-exceptionalist impulses and goals were substantial and important, and continue to animate and inform vibrant, diverse research agendas down to the present. They played an indispensable role in defamiliarizing elements of U.S. history, previously anchored to national and exceptionalist frames, by revealing their transnational entanglements. And they have emerged as newly valuable in the face of some historians’ recent calls for an ostensibly “progressive” nationalist U.S. historiography that might be capable of battling effectively with the proliferating historical myths being manufactured in the service of a U.S. authoritarian nationalism.<sup>27</sup> But if this anti-exceptionalist project has been necessary, it has also been insufficient. Its limits are clearest in framings of a globalized U.S. history that identify its goal as a more cosmopolitan U.S. national identity, rescued from arrogant exceptionalism. Here the point of a writing histories “beyond the nation” was ultimately a better U.S. national history, a prioritization of nation and globe with its own distinct history, a history that was not separable from that of American exceptionalism itself.

Such framings, both in the context of a globalized U.S. history and the broader field of global history, did not go unchallenged. Nor were they totally hegemonic in shaping the landscape of monographs that followed them, which drew from varied conceptual, interpretive, and historiographic traditions; among these were critical empire histories that foregrounded questions of unequal power as well as transnational connection. But connectionist framings were influential enough that, as reservations about global history have recently surfaced, they have often tellingly conflated the act of writing history at scales larger than nations with the act of celebrating mobility, flows, and a borderless world. Has backlash nationalism proven that global history went too far? some scholars asked. Haven’t global historians, somewhat like cosmopolitan capital, abandoned those “left behind,” who merited more “local” attention? Might not worldly global historians even share some of the blame for revanchist nationalism?<sup>28</sup>

Whatever the merits of these questions, they would only make sense if global history and connectionist history were the same thing. But, fortunately, global history and connectionist history are not and have never been the same thing, even if the indispensable distinction between them has often gone unmarked. There has always been scholarship that, even as it carefully tracks and reconstructs connections, sees this task as the means to larger critical

ends, ends that are not reducible to hopes for a more inclusionary national identity among the citizens of the world's most powerful states. Among these goals is the critique of political and methodological nationalisms not merely as exclusionary or exceptionalist, but as enclosing social analysis and political ethics in ways that mask and legitimate structures of unequal power between nations and across global space, structures of power that merit—indeed, require—critical, historical scrutiny.

From this point of view, the work of global history can be reimagined to involve, alongside the challenging of national exceptionalisms, the related but deeper matter of providing critical genealogies and contingent histories of an unequal world rendered legitimate and natural by national and global structures and ideologies—including the nation-bounded scholarship—and as well as by past and present global ideologies. It is not that connection and linkage will cease to be among scholars' defining research subjects and organizing themes in such a reimagined global history, but that excavating and reconstructing them as early traces of a "global" world in the making will no longer be these histories' primary goal. Recovering and mapping connection might be productively recast as one means for carrying out global scholarship, but not its end.

Such work is, thankfully, far from hypothetical. Historical scholarship that uses reconstructed connections to critically thematize transnational and global inequalities has long existed in specific sectors of both global historiography and national historiographies "in the world." This impulse can be observed, for example, in many works that employ political-economic analyses inspired by dependency theory and world-systems theory to account for the historical development of the capitalist world economy's uneven, hierarchical, segmented structures and divisions of labor. Similarly, there are histories that track the politics of racialized and gendered difference across national boundaries, examining the ways that such hierarchies shaped and were shaped by relations of geopolitical domination. And there are works that critically historicize war-making and societal militarization—capacity-building for state violence organized by friend/enemy distinctions—and these processes' relationships to the building of national power and an unequal world. Much of this scholarship has relied upon concepts of empire. While empire analytics have varied widely in the purposes to which they have been put, and in their definitions of empire—including overly-narrowed definitions that confine the term to "formal" colonialism—at their best, they have oriented historians towards inquiries that problematize and historicize transnational and global inequalities, even as they fundamentally challenge conventional boundaries between the "insides" and "outsides" of national history itself.<sup>29</sup>

Reconstructing, as Kamola's book does, American universities' significant roles in incubating and carrying forward a particular set of global imaginar-

ies—and marginalizing others—helps historians make sense of the reasons why, by the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, connectionist globalisms tied to U.S. unipolarity, military dominance, and the marketization of society on a global scale prevailed within the university-based social sciences and humanities in the United States including, ultimately, in many of the founding charters of a globalized U.S. history itself.

Raising awareness of this intellectual history also helps open the necessary space for other global histories, animated both by well-established and emergent critical traditions and ones that remain to be imagined. Many of these nascent agendas, including ones that distinguish connection as means and end, will not have been conceivable within the matrix of institutional imperatives and dominant global cartographies so effectively charted in Kamola's work. But unlike the inexorable, unchosen, end-of-history globalizations dreamed of and brought partway into being by this book's protagonists, global history's own story is far from over.

Paul A. Kramer is associate professor of history at Vanderbilt University, and the author of *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines*, and numerous articles on the history and historiography of the U.S. in the world. He is currently completing a book on the transnationalizing of modern U. S. history. His work can be found at [paulkrameronline.com](http://paulkrameronline.com).

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