

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Narratives of the Global: Contesting and Converging Stories of Global Order

Overall objectives:

- Create a cluster of interdisciplinary research teams of faculty and doctoral students from Princeton and Sciences Po dedicated to the exploring of the nature of global integration through the analysis of rival narratives and counter-narratives about the rise and character of modern global order.
- Enhance interdisciplinary research capacities in both institutions by creating bridges between International Relations, History and Regional/Area Studies (including Comparative Politics) around a convergent theme.
- Produce a collaborative template with specific features, such as doctoral seminar series, team-based learning, on-line publications, and academia/policy dialogues that can be useful for other Princeton-Sciences Po initiatives
- Reassess the heuristic significance of narratives to understand conflict and cooperation, especially in the international arena, that give insight to and help transcend assumptions about globalization and global order.

Scientific argument:

Making sense of the “global” in a post-Western world

The “idea of the global” tends to be taken for granted, especially, and paradoxically, when preoccupation with Western-centrism and the search for non-Western views of the world are shaping much of the recent thinking in international studies. Yet we know that globalization brings together states, communities and individuals with distinctive and often sharply conflicting ways of viewing the world. Most of the Western writing on global order has been little aware of the ethnocentric character of its supposedly universal theoretical categories and its dominant political preoccupations. The response so far in order to decentralize our main repertoire of the “global” and “provincialize” the West within it, has been twofold: putting forward emerging, i.e. non-Western, powers perspectives, and reintroducing culture in the international by looking at national or regional, again usually non-Western, views of the world.

Within international relations analysis (IR) there is now a solid body of work on the foreign policies of regional and emerging powers, and on their positions towards a wide range of norms and practices, from trade, to climate change to human rights and R2P (responsibility to protect). There is also far more research that explores different local, national or regional cultural perspectives on global order and more generally revisits IR from those perspectives. There is also a rich theoretical debate about the character and world-historical trajectory of modern global order. Meanwhile work within Global History has transformed our understanding of the genesis of globalization and the making of international society, highlighting, *inter alia*, the agency of the non-Western world, the richness and variety of connections across what would come to be called the global South, the depth and range of non-Western thought on ‘international relations’, the need to look beyond a simple tradition/modern dichotomy and to focus instead on the multiple structural transformations *within* modernity, and the complex processes by which Western ideas of international order and capitalist modernity have been transposed into different national and regional contexts and the mutual constitution of ideas and understandings that resulted from that interaction.

Paradoxically, while scholars and public intellectuals have drawn more attention to the multiple forces and origins of globalization, the search for ‘non-Western’ ideas and for regional and cultural ‘perspectives’ on global order has carried with it certain challenges. Uncovering the culturally specific character of particular ways of understanding the world undoubtedly encourages greater pluralism and reflexivity. But it can also lead to a cultural and regional inwardness that may work to reproduce the very ethnocentricities that are being challenged. In recent years, there has been an increasingly heated debate about whether “global” narratives even exist, and whether everything must be reduced to local or regional perspectives.

Furthermore, the search to understand what is distinctive has involved a retreat from the global, or at least thin and one-dimensional characterizations of the dynamics, forces and logics at work at the global level. Given the very power of the global, there are no longer (if there ever were) any non-Western country, regional or cultural perspectives that can gather together in any straightforward or unproblematic manner. The sheer power of the global means that attempts to identify, for example, a ‘Chinese’ or ‘Indian’ perspective on global order will face severe methodological difficulties.

This project wants to juxtapose the quest for plural perspectives against our need for integrative stories. It seeks to maintain the drive for pluralism, for historicizing and for

reflexivity but also to ‘bring the global back in’ by opening up a range of ‘narratives of the global’ and examining the nature of the contestation between and among them. The project brings together History, Regional/Area Studies and International Relations and seeks to strike a balance between the historical and the analytical. Its core goal is to examine how different parts of the world have understood the global, the impact of western globalization/globality, and the narratives that are told about how different regions, states and societies ‘fit into’ the global. Rather than bringing differently situated scholars into a conversation about the merits or demerits of an existing western conversation about global order, we aim to open up a far broader conversation in which authors uncover the production of differently situated accounts, narratives and stories about the global and its associated and related ideas and concepts. This will also involve asking how current frameworks for understanding global order have been shaped by, and constrained within, fundamentals of a social science that were created in the age of the European nation-state and then globalized through the process of imperialism. To what extent does global order require new models for organizing social science research and knowledge-production?

Why narratives?

Human beings make sense of complex, contested and multi-causal phenomena through the telling of stories. Indeed the widely felt power of the ‘global’ but its unfathomable and complex nature invites narrative-like account: from *mission civilisatrice* in the late 19th century globalization to the “clash of civilizations” in the early days of our current globalization, from the “end of History” to the “end of the West”. Narratives link the past, the present and the future within some overarching explanatory, evaluative or interpretative account. Even if the focus is on what is exceptional or particular, there is necessarily an implied view of what lies outside and of the role played by the dynamics of that increasingly ‘global’ outside. Narratives are clearly sources of power, creating the taken-for-granted ways of thinking within which orthodoxies come to make sense and shaping the environment within which actors play out their interests. Narratives and the rhetorical construction of narratives are the source of immense mobilizing power, especially when translated into ‘grand strategy’ – Containment or the War on Terror. It is the explicit role of time and space and the implicit notion of purpose, of movement and of potential transformation that distinguishes narrative from ‘frames’ or ‘social imaginaries’.¹ Narratives

¹ see Manfred Steger, *The Rise of the Global Imaginary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

give meaning to connections across space and time. They suggest a rational set of connections and a consistent pattern – although that rationality and consistency may depend far more on myth and metaphor than on evidence and logic. Storytelling, then, plays a key role in the social construction of reality, both in the search for rationality and consistency and in the way in which we arrive at historical or moral judgements.

Hence narratives matter normatively. Western political theory has explored many different routes whereby rational agents might come to agree on a-historical and universal norms, or on what a morally satisfactory global order would look like. A central goal has been to seek distance from historical situatedness and to avoid the snares of old-style historicism. And yet there is a strongly emotive element to communication and contestation about norms and values; these have been explored in a famous study by Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood* about narratives of national belonging and exclusion.² But what about the wider-world stories of peoplehood? This project puts that question on the table. Which norms win out politically often reflects not abstract rational argument, but rather the degree to which particular values are embedded within powerful and successful narratives at a global scale. Moving down this road presses us towards a more practice-centred approach to norms, stressing the historically situated and conditioned character of all human understanding. This includes, of course, what is different and distinctive to particular national, regional and cultural histories but also how those histories inevitably inscribe some view or vision of the larger, increasingly global picture. Narratives of the global and the collective memoirs in which they are embedded may well reinforce communitarian identities and exclusionist policies. But they are also the subjects of contestation and the sites of resistance. The aim, then, is to think about the role of contested narratives of the global in the negotiation of new normative frameworks and orders.

Format and Timeline

Structure

Given the breadth of this subject, the scale of the interdisciplinarity, as well as the ambition to create deep collaborations between faculty and students across two institutions,

² Rogers M. Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood: the Politics and Morals of Political Membership* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

we propose to create four teams, or clusters. Here is how we will divide labors: Each team will be responsible for a sub-theme (see Annex I/A for a preliminary list), and the members will report back on a regular basis to the wider consortium. Each co-PI will be in charge of one of the teams. Each team will consist of three people, including two doctoral students, one from each partner institution (so, for example, Karoline Postel-Vinay will oversee a team of three: herself and one student from Princeton and one from Sciences Po). These will comprise the core collaborating structure devoted to sub-themes within the general theme on narratives of the global.

What do the teams do? Our goal is to collaborate to create a series of interwoven, field-defining set of essays which we would submit to a top peer-review journal (World Politics, Journal of Global History etc) as a special issue theme. This will, we hope, be good for our fields and b good for our graduate students being inducted into them. The teams will be commissioned to write position papers based on data gathered, pooled, and analysed in internal, collaborative discussions. The position papers will be presented in workshops of the whole four-team consortium over the course of two days (with half days dedicated to extensive debate about each of the papers). Each team will then revise their papers and present them in a wider event with larger student and faculty commentary of the hosting institution (our provisional plan is to stage this event at Princeton). The last stage will be devoted to the polishing of the final product, in light of the wider feedback, that will be presented in another larger, showcase, event in Paris. The last gathering will also allow time for discussion on methodology and an appraisal of the project itself.

The advantages of the cluster approach are educational and epistemic: they allow for deeper and closer doctoral students and faculty/students collaboration, they enlarge our range of methodological approaches, they enable focused, transversal debate across the range of themes. In this fashion, we can be ambitious and yet not los focus, thereby enabling in-depth analysis of specifically relevant dimensions of the theme (rather than an attempt at comprehensiveness that might lead to dispersion or thin discussion).

We have a provisional set of sub-themes, but propose to hold off on final content commitments until we go through an initial planning workshop. So, for now, they are: (1) a critical reflection on the concept of the “global Cold War,” and the debate over whether the ideological east-west divide was the axis of global order and disorder as we are in the midst of reckoning with the 70th anniversary of the bipolar conflicts; (2) an examination of debates

and narratives of world economic integration, from the early 20th century debates about imperialism to current discussions of globalization, which have been so influential to both global history and international political economy; (3) an effort to untangle the logics of empire and liberal internationalism, in particular tackling the warring views of American power as bullying or benevolent; (4) a study of the United Nations system as a site of contest and (re)negotiation of global narratives, looking at the legacy of World War Two post-conflict thinking and 1945 as global event, but also taking into account the *longue durée* impact of deeper rooted normative legacies, such as the ubiquitous “standard of civilization” of the 19th century globalization. *See Annex A for more details of these sub-themes.*

Criteria for participation

The general aim is to have a truly interdisciplinary network of doctoral students and faculty and therefore careful attention will be given to a balanced representation of the various fields involved (History, IR, Regional Studies). It is important, too, not to create yet another space for presentation of individual work in progress or chapter of dissertations – more or less loosely related to the general theme - as this would miss the point of the enterprise and not create real added value. For this reason, we underscore the importance of *collaborating* within and between teams, a model we adapt from the natural sciences.

We believe this participatory model also addresses the challenges of doing work in an interdisciplinary way. Instead of a melange of disciplinary voices, we propose to confront the challenges of mixing them. Each team will include both historians *and* political scientists, for instance, and bridge area *and* international expertise. This, we feel, will not only produce a unique and important intervention in our fields as they seek new pathways to thinking about global order in our global times. Finally, the experience of cross-disciplinary collaboration will yield lasting lessons for our doctoral students. Especially at doctoral level, the workshops and other discussion venues will be designed to compel students in History, IR and Regional studies/Comparative politics to develop a proficiency in dialogue and collaboration across the boundaries. Accordingly, we will select our doctoral student collaborators for their capability and commitment to exploring these frontiers.

Calendar

There will be three stages corresponding to the three years of the initiative: an initial exploratory stage, focused on refining (as there is already a fair amount of coordination among the lead applicants) the sub-themes and including the doctoral students into our discussions; a slightly longer research-intensive collaborative stage that will include presentation of preliminary results; and a finalization stage comprising evaluation/comments by external participants and that will yield to at least one academic publication, paper or/and on-line (anthology or special issue of journal) as well as a report on the initiative that records its various proceedings and could be used for future research.

The provisional timeline is as follows:

October 2016, Sciences Po: general planning workshop on contested narratives of the global, followed by two Princeton faculty residencies at Sciences Po.

Nota bene: There will be an international symposium envisioned for June 2016 in Paris by two of the lead participants and funded by the French Foreign Ministry. We will hammer out some of our details there to prepare for the October workshop. The June meeting will enable us to probe specific venues of cooperation such as academia/policy planning but also faculty/doctoral students around our theme.

Spring 2017: one-line workshop to discuss the preliminary findings, problems, and prospects for each time, and one Sciences Po faculty short residency at Princeton.

October 2017, Princeton University: First drafts of position papers in a workshop open to participation for CERI/PIIRS and respective History Department members (including visiting scholars and students), followed by two Sciences Po faculty short residencies at Princeton.

Spring 2018: on-line discussion of second drafts of teamwork with invited external commentators and one Princeton faculty short residency at Sciences Po.

October 2018, Sciences Po: showcase Symposium to wider public, followed by two Princeton faculty short residencies at Sciences Po.

March 2019, Princeton: assessment and follow-up planning, followed by two Sciences Po faculty short residencies at Princeton.

We should add several clarifications to this time line. First, the co-PI's would be responsible for ensuring that their teams caucus regularly for data gathering and discussions (live and on-line), the production of position papers, and preparation for all the workshops. We would propose to create an online site for the whole consortium, with Google-doc dedicated space for collecting data, sharing drafts, and staging online hangouts. To that end, we are also proposing short-term, up to one week, faculty residencies. These will be occasions for visitors to collaborate with the team members from the other institution, offer seminars and talks to hosts, and participate in the intellectual life of the partner institution. This enables us not only to deepen the collaboration but to enhance the bridge-building between across the institutions.

The second is that not only are teams committed to on-going collaboration, but we will be seeking to leverage the insights of our work to extend the discussion beyond the confines of our academic homes. Starting with the first, June 2016 event, we propose to open lines of communication with policy-making and advocacy constituents. One of our precepts is that understanding the rival stories about global integration and disintegration is an important – perhaps vital – component to understanding conflict and discord, our hope is that our findings will transcend the purely professional domains. We also want to explore the question of whether our project clears the ground for a new direction in training graduate students – on that may better integrate historians and political scientists at Sciences Po and Princeton. To that end, in the third year of our collaboration, as we finalize our papers, we will also reach out to our networks to diffuse our findings and explore the prospects of follow-up, durable, engagements. This may include the creation of a more standing joint training program or graduate student exchange, thus going beyond the particulars of this project to anchor a new model of inter-institutional graduate education and collaborative research in global studies more generally.

ANNEX A

Provisional sub-topics

1. Revisiting the “Global Cold War” narratives

Most Cold War historians have been slow and reluctant in adopting a global perspective. Heavy archival asymmetries – i.e.: the greater availability of US and European primary sources – led many to focus on the European core of the bipolar antagonism. A certain methodological conservatism induced many historians to privilege a state-centric and great power approach that during the Cold War found its primary geopolitical expression in the highly institutionalized European bipolar equilibrium. Asia was either ancillary or complementary to this orthodox, Eurocentric view of the Cold War. But a global turn eventually affected Cold War studies as well. It did so with a vengeance. Emphasis on the Cold War interpreted as a struggle between alternative models of industrial modernity led to investigate how the two superpowers competed to project globally (and apply locally) their visions of the future; agency of lesser actors was discovered and duly emphasized; new, exciting archival discoveries in the most remote corners of the world transformed the field and, in a way, the profession of the Cold War historian itself; the more general historiographical emphasis on the global and the transnational affected also the study of the post-1945 rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold War could not be narrated but in global terms. It had to be “de-parochialized” and “de-centered”, according to the jargon often used to describe the process under way. This shift has produced remarkable achievements. But the narrative of the global Cold War poses extraordinary problems in terms of methodology and, one could add, perhaps even professional ethics. Decentering the Cold War has often diluted its historical meaning and blurred its ultimate significance; the persistence of huge archival imbalances is now compounded by the limited possibility to critically cross-check and verify many primary sources; the important attention to the role and agency of other actors outside the traditional bipolar duo has sometimes produced an underestimation of Moscow and Washington’s centrality (and of the banal fact the Cold War was primarily about the United States and the Soviet Union). This historiographical evolution and its discursive underpinnings are at the center of the scholarly

discussion today. Reflecting on the narratives of the global means therefore engaging with this transformation of the field of Cold War studies: with its heuristic potentials, the important results it achieved, but also its limits and contradictions.

Mario del Pero will be the principal PI of this cluster.

2. World Market Integration: IPE and Global History

From the late nineteenth-century onwards, historians and social scientists have fretted about how to make sense of the world market at a time in which most of the social sciences were cued to thinking in terms of nation states. Global integration has, therefore, been the subject of profound debate from the very beginning, raising issues of development and underdevelopment, inequality, and interdependence. From Hobson's critique of imperialism and capitalism in the 1900s to the refined analytics of International Political Economy, there has been a seam of vibrant discussion around what we call, often without knowing quite what we mean, globalization. And yet, there has been a stubborn divide between how global historians record these processes and how IPE scholars make sense of the world. This team will investigate both the histories of these two fields and the prospects for building bridges across them. Among our guiding questions will be: how do rival narratives reconcile integration of the world economy with widening inequality within it? What have been the principal and competing stories of breakdown in 1929, 1973, and the wobbly (and still precarious) events surrounding 2008? How might we think about the workings of the marketplace and governance over time?

The PI for this sub-theme is Jeremy Adelman.

3. American-led global order: untangling the logics of empire and liberal internationalism

Historians and international relations theorists have long debated the character of the American-led post-1945 global order. One prominent narrative, developed extensively by historians, is that the United States, unrivaled in power after World War II, seized the opportunity to reorganize the world, and in doing so, built an empire. To be sure, it was a new type of empire – built not around colonies but client states, transnational capitalism, and a global system of alliances. In this view, the United State continued the Western imperial

project as European empires faltered in the 20th century, and in the second half of the 20th century created the last and most extensive empire. But a second narrative sees American global order-building in the 20th century very differently. The notion of empire misses the more distinctive and novel forms of order that it has manifest. Unlike traditional empire, the American order has been both built upon and circumscribed by two great order-building projects of the last century – the Westphalian project and the liberal internationalist project. The spread of the Westphalian nation-state and the rise of new forms of institutionalized cooperation have fundamentally reshaped the terms of American global domination – doing so to such an extent that the term “empire” itself misses the larger logic, character, and trajectory of modern international order. In this view, the United States might be best seen not as the “last empire” but as the first post-imperial global power. In the first narrative, the United States is the heir to European imperialism and empire. It is a narrative in which “the West” rose up to dominate the world. In the second narrative, a claim is made that far more basic for understanding the changing role of empire and imperialism in world politics is the ways in which Europe and the United States differ. Exploring this theme will reveal the underlying assumptions of these rival narratives, chart their points of origin and genealogies, and their influence on policymaking – both in the United States and beyond. How did America’s distinctive ideas, interests, geopolitical setting, and historical timing as a rising state impact the shaping and reshaping of international order in the 20th century? In what ways have the great global projects of Westphalian sovereignty and liberal internationalism served to reinforce and/or undermine imperial forms of domination?

John Ikenberry will be the main PI for this team.

4. Whose International Community? Negotiating Worldviews and Identities at the United Nations

Whether it is challenged by the extremist voices of radical Islam or the less belligerent ones, but probably stronger ones in the long term, of the so-called emerging (non-Western) powers, the notion of “international community”, as epitomized by the United Nations in the last decades, seems increasingly unsustainable. What has been encapsulated by expressions such as “the West and the Rest” or the “post-Western world” raises far more complex questions than some of the now well-identified legitimacy issues that international institutions have had to tackle with since the end of the Cold War. The diversification of agency since the 1980s

and more specifically the empowerment of non-state actors has challenged the predominant position of states in international cooperation and regulation and required a structural change, the invention of a new governance, that institutions such as the UN and the World Bank were eventually able to adjust to. The challenge to “the West” – a loosely defined Western-centric order – is of an entirely different nature and calls for novel analytical tools. Questioning the relevance of the post-1945 international architecture, and indeed the legitimacy of Western predominance that lies within, implies to revisit a fundamental meta-narrative for cooperation and regulation with deeply rooted normative assumptions. It also implies to look not only at what that meta-narrative is made of, but what it is *not* made of, the worldviews and collective identities that have been implicitly excluded from it. The United Nations Organization, with its specific claim to universality, offers a vantage point from which to analyze how the “international community” and the idea of the “global” that sustains it, are being redefined; how various narratives of the global are being contested and negotiated, uncovering, beyond the long shadow of World War Two post-conflict thinking, even more deeply located normative legacies such as the ubiquitous “standard of civilization” of the European made 19th century globalization.

This team will be led by Karoline Postel-Vinay as the PI.

ANNEX B

Lead applicants

The lead applicants profiles complement one another. Not only do they represent equally both universities, but they cover two main disciplines involved – IR and History. Moreover, they bring various regional perspectives, from the United States (Ikenberry), Latin America (Adelman), Europe (del Pero) and East Asia (Postel-Vinay).

Jeremy Adelman

Jeremy Adelman is Professor of History in the Department of History and the director of the Global History Lab at Princeton. He specializes in Latin American history as well as Global history. Among his numerous publications he has co-authored *Worlds Together*, *Worlds Apart* that offers a history of the world since the beginning of humankind. He is

currently working on two books. *Latin America: A Global History* is forthcoming with Princeton University Press. He is also completing a book about global thinking from the nineteenth century to the present.

G. John Ikenberry

G. John Ikenberry is Professor of Politics and International Affairs at the Department of Politics and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton. He specializes in American foreign policy and theories and debates about international order. Among many other books, he has published *Liberal Leviathan: the Origins, Crisis and Transformation of the American World* (Princeton, 2011) that presents a broad analysis of the rise of global order during the era of American dominance. He is interested in the role of ideas, visions and narratives in global power relations as shown in his latest books on *America, China and the Struggle for World Order* (Palgrave, 2015) and *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge, 2014)

Mario del Pero

Mario del Pero is a Professeur des Universités in the Department of History and researches in the Centre d'Histoire at Sciences Po. He specializes in International history and transatlantic relations. Among numerous publications he has published *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Making of American Foreign Policy*. He is currently working on the multiple dimensions of the Cold War, from the local to the global, including a research on US evangelical missionaries in early Cold War Italy and the post-Cold War first humanitarian wars.

Karoline Postel-Vinay

Karoline Postel-Vinay is a Directrice de Recherche in the Center for International Research and teaches in the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po. She specializes in International Relations theory and Northeast Asian politics. Among numerous publications she has published *L'Occident et sa bonne parole: nos représentations du monde de l'Europe coloniale à l'Amérique hégémonique* that presents a non-Western perspective on geopolitical narratives. She is currently working on a book on the structuring narrative of the United Nations.