



Isaac A. Kamola. *Making the World Global: U.S. Universities and the Production of the Global Imaginary.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2019. 304 pp. \$99.95, cloth, ISBN 978-1-4780-0417-2.

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How did universities come to imagine the world as global? Isaac A. Kamola takes up this question in an insightful and distinctive contribution to the study of knowledge and power. In the 1990s, the language of the global and globalization became organizing concepts in much of public life, including in US universities. Universities not only studied the global in multifaceted ways but also marketed and conceived of themselves as global, setting up programs and outposts around the world. Kamola's interest is in the historical and social basis of what he calls the "global imaginary." This way of thinking about the world replaced earlier organizing concepts based on nation-states, areas, and regions. Universities were no exception.

Presuppositions define social imaginaries. If you presume the world is composed of distinct national economies and societies, it makes sense to study national development and modernization. If you presume the world is global, it makes sense to study globalization and to reorganize the production of knowledge accordingly. Scholars tend to zero in on whether a concept is adequate or correct in terms of truth value. Kamola wants to know how an organizing concept like the global became hegemonic. Which individuals and institutions served as its bearers? What strategic sites marked out its genealogical itinerary to dominance?

Kamola works in a political science department and was trained in international relations. In the past few decades, questions about the sociology of knowledge have become common across the humanities, fueled in part by the vibrancy of science and technology studies. But in the social and political disciplines more invested in their scientific status, they are rarely asked. These fields have not had anything like anthropology's continuing reckoning with its imbrication in histories and practices of empire and war, despite (and because of) their proximity to power.[1] Overdue in disciplinary terms, Kamola's intervention is all the more significant for it.

Histories of world order concepts form another backdrop to Kamola's study. In recent decades, histories of imperial and anti-colonial thought, of the ideological origins of the League of Nations and the United Nations, and of the geographic concepts informing US postwar planning have worked to denaturalize the world of nation-states and their accompanying teleologies of national self-determination.[2] The United States' distinctively anti-colonial approach to world power led US officials and philanthropic foundations to organize knowledge production in terms of area studies, while the discipline of international relations studied relations between states and advised on the superpower contest. Kamola seeks to take this story

forward to the global and to make a methodological or theoretic contribution to how we approach the study of power/knowledge. Just as the founding of area studies shaped the organization of knowledge—if not always in ways intended or foreseen—so too has the global imaginary.[3]

Kamola's basic thesis is that the concept of the global was nurtured in the business world of the 1980s, particularly in marketing and finance. It then became "a compelling way to frame the rapidly changing post-Cold War world" (p. 83). Business schools first circulated the idea of the global as a "picture of the world," and soon the concept remade the social sciences (p. 49). Kamola tells his story through chapter-length studies, beginning with modernization theory and the national development imaginary of Robert McNamara's World Bank and the research it sponsored. He then turns to Harvard Business School professor Theodore Levitt and the global as a marketing imaginary, one concerned with how to sell people the idea they want globally branded products.

Kamola moves next to A. W. Clausen's reshaping of the World Bank. A former president of the Bank of America who had overseen its international expansion, Clausen shifted the World Bank away from a model of national economic development. Clausen saw the world as a global financial market, and the World Bank's role was to facilitate transactions between creditors and debtors. An early university casualty of Clausen's structural adjustment programs for borrowing countries was African higher education, conceived as a public subsidy that lacked an adequate rate of return.

With the end of the Cold War and the rise of global finance, area studies lost their strategic significance as a way of organizing knowledge about the non-European world at US universities. Kamola narrates this part of the story through the political scientist Kenneth Prewitt's stint as head of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Faced with a collapse in funding, he cut the budget of area studies. Private and philanthropic funders were

now more interested in the global and globalization. These structuring financial pressures merged with Prewitt's political science vision of universal and generalizable knowledge. Area studies might supply local data, but proper scientific knowledge transcended location. Kamola's coda is John Sexton's time as president of New York University (NYU), during which he rebranded and reorganized it as a globally networked university. The university now faced the very global financial pressures its professors had theorized about.

Kamola is perhaps most successful as a theorist of power/knowledge, outlining an approach to the history of truth that takes seriously the reproduction of key concepts. He shows how to bring together ideas with the social forces that turn them into organizing frames for the institutions that fund and produce knowledge. Kamola's narrative is episodic, more suggestive than comprehensive in historical terms. While his account of the global as gestating in the business world of the 1980s is surely right, he could have done more to tell us what connects his chapter-length studies and why he chose his sites of research. The chapters on the SSRC and area studies, and on NYU and the global university, could usefully have been accompanied by more evidence indicating their wider significance.

In the final analysis, Kamola's materialist and Althusserian approach to knowledge production may be too determinist for many historians—and other veterans of academic institutions. I am often struck by the sheer contingency of the outcomes of structuring forces in university life, as policies and pressures boomerang unexpectedly. That said, ideas and their bearers with an elective affinity to power do have a way of winning out one way or another. From another point of view, Kamola could have been more of a structuralist. Technological forces and knowledges, as well as military and strategic developments and their knowledge requirements, drop out of the narrative after the early Cold War founding of area studies. Is any his-

tory of the global imaginary adequate without these subjects? Equally, Kamola is surely on to an important thread when he connects Prewitt's positivist and universalist rationalism with the moment of the global. As other scholarship has shown, rational choice, game theory, cybernetics, and their mathematics were incubated in the Second World War.[4] They guided the military use of the very technologies that so compressed time and space in the decades following in both strategic and commercial spheres. How this story continues in and beyond the age of the global is one worth investigating.

Notes

[1]. This is not due to a lack of excellent scholarship: see, for example, Nicholas Guilhot, ed., *The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Ido Oren, *Our Enemies and US: America's Rivalries and the Making of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); and Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[2]. Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

[3]. See, for example, Bruce Cumings, "Boundary Displacement: The State, the Foundations, and the International and Area Studies during and af-

ter the Cold War," in *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 173-204; and Zachary Lockman, *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

[4]. See, for example, S. M. Amadae, *Prisoners of Reason: Game Theory and Neoliberal Political Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Paul Erikson, *The World the Game Theorists Made* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); and Philip Mirowski, *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

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