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In search of the global political space
Or Rosenboim, Journal of Politics, Religion and Ideology.

It is my pleasure to be part of this forum. I would like to thank the reviewers for their insightful remarks and such challenging questions. I am also grateful to Jacob Hamburger and the editorial team of the journal for their work and for providing space for this discussion.

The Emergence of Globalism is an intellectual history of political spaces. It argues that mid-twentieth century political thinkers in Britain and the United States diagnosed global interconnectedness as the defining element of their era. This new condition required new interpretations of world order, which they envisaged under the banner of 'globalism'. Each chapter examines a conversation involving public intellectuals active in the US and Britain during and after the Second World War. Together, these thinkers form a loose network of international thinkers, united by a concern with the global dimension of politics. The protagonists of the study include Raymond Aron, David Mitrany, Owen Lattimore, Nicholas J. Spykman, Barbara Wootton, Lionel Robbins, Friedrich Hayek, Lionel Curtis, Clarence Streit, H. G. Wells, Michael Polanyi, Lewis Mumford, Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, Richard McKeon, Jacques Maritain and Luigi Sturzo. They all shared a perception of the world as increasingly global, and a concern with the desirable and possible world order in the global age.

The book revolves around five thematic discussions organised by order of scale, from the state to the universe. By drawing on scholarship in geopolitics, political theory, imperial studies, economics, law, philosophy and science and religion, the book seeks to widen the intellectual horizons of international thought and investigate sources that have not been previously recognised as important for shaping visions of world order. The book aims to outline the contours—rather than provide a definitive image—of the globalist debates about world order that had taken place in Britain and the United States during the mid-twentieth century.

One of the questions raised by the reviewers in this forum touches upon this notion of political spaces: what kind of political space is the 'global', and how does it differ from the national and transnational spaces of politics? In the mid-twentieth century, technological interconnectedness often appeared as a challenge to the existing system of independent states and empires, which had already been destabilised by the Second World War. But as Daniel Gorman notes, the growing attention to the world dimension of political order did not undermine the importance of states and nations as political units. International or transnational spaces were relevant for their discussion, but not sufficient. The argument that I make in the book is that national, international, and transnational spaces were measured against the backdrop of a 'global' political space that encompassed the entirety of the planet. The nation-state could be part of the new globalist order, but it was not a necessary or indispensable component.

The prime target of the globalists was the exclusionary and discriminatory ideology of nationalism, which they identified as the cause of the Second World War. The globalists recognised the state's role in shaping identities, but they did not embrace the state as the desirable basic unit of world order. If states were to survive in a global system, national politics had to be imagined as part of a spatial and conceptual matrix that encompassed the entire globe. Unlike the interwar internationalists examined by Glenda Sluga and others, mid-

century globalists did not envisage world politics in terms of nation-states and the relations between them. They saw nation-states as one out of many possible political structures in the global age. Federations, regional blocs, democratic unions, and functional agencies were imagined as alternative or additional units in a global order. The global space of the 1940s was intended to be more diverse and pluralistic than the world of states and empires imagined by interwar internationalists.

For Dario Fazzi, the global and transnational spaces can often overlap. In contemporary literature, globalism and transnationalism are sometimes used interchangeably, but I argue that the term ‘globalism’ is more helpful for understanding the political ideas that motivated the mid-century visions of world order that this book is concerned with. ‘Transnationalism’ denotes the phenomenon of the diminishing importance of boundaries between states. Yet unlike ‘globalism’, this term does not necessarily reflect a specific spatial scale. It does not necessarily convey the image of a united globe, of a unitary spatial entity that stood in the centre of the world-spanning mid-century visions of world order that I examine. What mattered for these mid-century thinkers was to imagine a world order that could—potentially—encompass the whole world.

As Slobodian and Fazzi both suggest in their insightful comments, writing the history of globalism as a political idea in the twentieth century runs two methodological risks, relating to the timeframe and the protagonists of the study. Were the thinkers that I discuss the only ones who envisaged globalism as an important political concept for thinking about the post-war world order? Did their globalist reflections emerge and disappear in the period between 1939 and 1950? These are important questions that require serious consideration.

The spatial focus of the book on Britain and the United States is motivated by two historical considerations. First, during the period in question, these countries provided a relative safe haven for free public debate which was not available elsewhere. In Europe, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes set a strict limit to freedom of expression and speech. London, New York, Chicago, and California hosted émigré intellectuals who sought to influence the post-war world order by participating in local debates about international affairs. Second, since the early stages of the war, the British and American governments engaged in planning a new world order for the post-war era. While the scholars that I discuss were not necessarily involved in official plans of recovery and reconstruction, they were certainly inspired to propose their own visions and perhaps influence public opinion and official policies.

In this light, Fazzi’s claim that ‘the spatial-temporal coordinates of the debate on globalism offered by the book are problematic, and confining them to the postwar Anglo-Saxon cultural milieu risks to be reductionist’ misses the point. The book is intentionally focused on the British and American spheres, since these were particularly important for the development and subsequent implementation of ideas about world order in the 1940s. As Andrew Williams and others have shown, post-war reconstruction was a key concern for Americans and British during the war, and the idea of the book is to present some of the scholarly and public conversations that happened alongside the drafting of formal plans and new institutions.

The book’s protagonists were indeed mostly white, educated, Western males, who could be easily described as elitist. Yet, they came from different cultural, national, and ideological backgrounds, and would not have identified themselves as part of a homogeneous social group. At the same time, as I tried to show, they were part of a loose network of thinkers who were met personally or read each other’s works. The relative absence of women from this

story is reflected, to my mind, in the title of Barbara Wootton's memoir: *In a World I Never Made*. Her story is indicative of the difficulties facing women who sought to leave an imprint on public debate in mid-century Britain. Similarly, Elizabeth Mann, who served as secretary of the Chicago constitution committee, did not participate in the committee's discussions or sign the final document.

To what extent did the political category of globalism define the ideas of these mid-century intellectuals? For Joel Mouric, the Cold War set the premises for Aron's thought throughout the 1940s. In this sense, Mouric wonders whether Aron was really a globalist, or rather a thinker of the state in the Cold War era. Mouric highlights the interpretative framework of Aron's thought, which identifies the tensions between the Communist and Capitalist blocks as the foundation of his thinking on international relations. In the book, I sought to look at Aron's writings from a different perspective, as part of a British debate on world order. By examining his reflection on the consequences of the planetary post-war order for the state, I sought to propose a diverse key for reading Aron's ideas, situated not only in the context of French politics or Cold War bipolarism, but also in that of the growing attention to the global dimension of politics. It is in this context, I argue, that juxtaposing Aron with Mitrany and Carr helps shed light on a shared concern: outlining a realist proposal for the future of the state in the global post-war order.

Other mid-century thinkers were doubtlessly concerned with post-war order. Figures like John Foster Dulles, Ralph Bunch or Hannah Arendt definitely merit scholarly attention in this context. But though their visions might be the subject of future historical research, they were not part of the historical conversations that I trace in *The Emergence of Globalism*. As I state in the book, I make no claim to have the final word on the history of globalism and globalist thinkers. Rather, I hope that other thinkers of globalism and other domains of international thought—such as militarism, socialist internationalism, peace activism, education and mass media, as Fazzi proposes—will be the subjects of future historical investigations.

Slobodian writes that the 'selection of protagonists may have doomed the inquiry from the start'. This judgement depends, of course, on the inquiry's aim. The main objective of this study was not to identify a worthy or normatively desirable globalist vision in the 1940s. Rather, the book seeks to chart the ambitions—and limits—of globalist thinkers who sought to use their academic and scholarly prestige as jumping board to influence public opinion on world order. As Daniel Gorman notes, most of them enjoyed a prestigious social status; they chaired university department, contributed to widely read newspapers, led popular political organizations, inspired religious believers, and were members of cultural and political associations. Their social position made these authors particularly interesting for this study, which treats them as 'public intellectuals'. This term does not imply here a normative position about the moral responsibility of the scholar in the public sphere. I use it as a historical description of scholars who had explicit intention to reach beyond their intellectual circles and speak to a 'public' (imagined or concrete) in conferences, meetings, newspaper articles, speeches, pamphlets, and books. They had, in Gorman's words, the 'intellectual prestige and social capital' to attract an audience for their visions of world order. The tensions between their democratic ethos and elitist presumptions were sometimes acknowledged (for example, by Wootton, Lattimore, or McKeon) but still not easily overcome. In this sense, the book offers a critical reflection on the ambitions of intellectuals to shape political debate, then and now.

The timeframe of this study has also raised questions by contributors to this forum. Did the idea of globalism really disappear after 1950? Were there no continuities with earlier conceptualizations of global order under the auspices of the League of Nations? As an intellectual historian, I recognize the inevitable continuities that characterize international thought in the twentieth century. Ideas evolve and transform over time; they rarely appear out of the blue or disappear without a trace. Yet I tried to highlight in the book how the mid-century period was characterized with a sense of urgency about the need to create a globalist vision of a specific kind: a globalism of political forms that would create a novel political order for the world. Indeed, earlier international thinkers influenced 1940s globalist ideas of world order, yet the League of Nations was rarely discussed as a viable or desirable model. Many 1940s globalist proposals were not based on supranational organizations, but rather on a different political structure, such as regional blocks, federations, or functional networks of agencies. The historical path from the League to the United Nations was not linear; there were many roads not taken, some of which I discuss in this book.

In the book, I conclude that the rise of the Cold War mindset led many of the globalists to abandon their proposals for a new world order. Slobodian suggests in his comments that globalism did not, in fact, end in the 1950s, but rather that its legacy can be traced through the following decade in the establishment of new economic orders and in the Non-Aligned Movement. It is possible to draw a line of continuity between mid-century British and American globalist thought and later global institutions and structures. Lattimore's tripolar globalist vision could be read as a precursor to the rise of the Third World as novel political space. Interesting differences are also evident; for example, Lattimore's vision prioritised democracy over self-determination in a manner that would have been unacceptable to the signatories of the Bandung Declaration of 1955. The centrality of the state and the wariness of challenging the international system of states was characteristic of visions of world order after 1950, even when imagined on a global scale.

Slobodian rightly argues that after 1950 globalism underwent a transformation: 'the specifically political forms of globalism ... lost out to more economic ones'. If later iterations of globalism were strongly tied to economic relations, the mid-century globalists provide a glimpse into the dilemmas of political imagination on a global scale. Mid-century globalism was characterised by an ambition to transform the *political* forms of world order by supplanting or supplementing the existing system of states and empires. By the early 1950s, these ambitions were abandoned by the book's protagonists. While the Bretton Woods system was evidently grounded in political interests and intentions, it did not seek to transform the existing system of states or create new political structures. For economists like Hayek and Robbins, the establishment of a new economic order became a means to supersede the failed attempts to create a new global order in the 1940s. It was an alternative solution to—rather than the realisation of—their earlier federalist visions.

Finally, I would like to make explicit the underlying argument that I intentionally left implicit in the book. As an intellectual historian, I trust my readers to do their own thinking and draw their conclusions from my historical account of globalism. Yet I would like to use the opportunity granted here to underline that this study is hardly intended as a quest for a normatively desirable globalist political vision. It was not my aim to write a political manifesto for or against globalism. Rather, by analysing mid-century globalist visions of world order I sought to reveal the challenges of imagining political order on a global scale, challenges which remain pertinent to contemporary attempts at globalist visions. Shedding light on the ambitions of intellectuals to envisage a new world order, the limits of their

projects become equally apparent. Since the global political space still holds great relevance to contemporary theoretical and political debates, I hope that the experience of mid-century globalists can serve as a starting point for reflection for those in search for a new global order today.

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