



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Revisiting the World Order Models Project: A Case for Renewal?

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Email: a.mckeil@lse.ac.uk**Abstract**

In a context of crisis in global order today, this article proposes revisiting the World Order Models Project (WOMP), towards an evaluation of its relevance and potential contributions to contemporary debates and challenges. From this revisiting, this article argues that WOMP suffered from problematic methodological limitations and does not constitute a substitute for conventional contemporary approaches to global order today, but some of its proposals nevertheless retain relevance, and as a mode of global order research it still offers the potential for providing an important supplement to contemporary approaches, if sufficiently modified to address its methodological limitations. The knowledge this kind of project produces is argued to offer integrative alternative non-great power-centric global order policy options that are increasingly in demand, especially from the Global South, as well as from Europe. This article proceeds to revisit WOMP's research design and outputs, evaluates the arguments of its critics, and outlines the modifying methodological options for a World Order Models Project 2.0.

## 1 | GLOBAL ORDER DEBATES, PAST AND PRESENT

Alternative world order proposals offered by scholars and philosophers have never been adopted in their entirety, but they have at times proven inspirational for statespersons and populations in eras of international crisis and reordering. In the strained context of the Cold War, the World Order Models Project, also known as WOMP, sought to explore alternative world order models able to realize a more stable and just peace. Gathering a transnational network of public intellectual scholars, WOMP formed by far the largest and most ambitious research project of its kind in the history of the field, producing a large body of literature across three decades (Falk, 1975a; Galtung, 1980; Kothari, 1975a; Lagos & Godoy, 1977; Mazrui, 1976; Mendlovitz,

1975; Walker, 1988, 1994). The world order proposals that WOMP produced were not adopted in the post-Cold War world when the United States and its allies had an opportunity to modify the global order. But, in the decline of international order since that time, in the return of divisive great power politics amidst persistent common global challenges, some of WOMP's proposals for an alternative inclusive global order appear relevant again and worth revisiting.

In the decline of global order, debate has emerged concerning the sources of its crisis and gathering disorder, whether the order's 'liberal' elements will endure, and what kind of order is emerging, as the pathways to a more stable global order have become increasingly unclear and contested (Acharya, 2018; Adler-Nissen & Zarakol, 2021; Chu & Zheng, 2021; Cooley & Nexon, 2020; Goddard, 2018; Jahn 2018; Kissinger,

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2015; McKeil, 2021, 2022; Mearsheimer, 2018, 2019; Parmar, 2018; Porter, 2020; Ikenberry, 2020; Walt, 2018). These debates on the crisis and emerging future of global order are gaining increasing interest, but its major contributions are generally near-term in strategic analysis and are often great power and US-centric. These debates are still relatively disconnected from questions about alternative global order possibilities in the medium to long-term that some other scholars have explored (Archibugi et al. 2012; Bellamy, 2019; Cabrera, 2010, 2018; Craig, 2008; Deudney, 2007; Koenig-Archibugi, 2011; Marchetti, 2006; Scheuerman, 2011, 2014; Weiss, 2009). WOMP forms a major body of seminal literature on alternative non-great power-centric global order models, worth revisiting and potentially readapting, so to extend debates and connect literatures and broader networks of interested scholars. In practice, moreover, there is also growing demand for alternative non-great power-centric global order models today, especially from the Global South, as well as from Europe (Quah, 2017, 2019).

As such, in a context of the crisis of global order today, this article proposes revisiting WOMP, towards an evaluation of its relevance and potential contributions to contemporary debates and challenges. The justification for revisiting WOMP today is that the large body of research WOMP produced warrants excavation and revisiting, not only because it is a massive, intrinsically interesting, and increasingly forgotten artifact of international order studies, but also because doing so facilitates an appraisal and evaluation of the extent to which its contributions and mode of research retain relevance and application to the crisis of global order today. In this spirit, my argument is that WOMP suffered from problematic methodological limitations and does not constitute a substitute for conventional contemporary approaches to global order today, but on the other hand some of its proposals retain relevance and as a mode of research it still offers the potential for providing an important supplement to contemporary approaches, if appropriately modified to address its methodological limitations. The knowledge this kind of project can produce is argued to offer integrative and non-great power-centric global order policy options insufficiently considered in contemporary debates on the crisis of global order today.

I present this argument in three steps, first by reviewing WOMP and its critics, then by considering arguments for a WOMP 2.0, and finally by providing an outline of the modifying methodological options for such a project.

## 2 | WOMP AND ITS CRITICS

The World Order Models Project was an academic movement, by far the largest of its kind in the history

### Policy Implications

- This article has policy implications for global order reform in the medium to long-term, including United Nations reform, by clarifying the research of alternative non-great power-centric global order policy options.
- This research has policy implications for the contemporary crisis of global order and its grand strategic and multilateral responses, by facilitating the clarification of alternative inclusive non-great power-centric global order models and transition strategies.
- This research has broad policy implications for sustainable development and global equality, by facilitating inclusive global order models designed for common global interests, superseding the interests of great power politics.
- This research has policy implications for clarifying the range of legitimate global order models that are possible in a post-Western-centric global order, by facilitating the clarification of culturally inclusive alternative global order models.

of the field, reaching from the 1960s to the 1990s. Self-described as a 'movement', it gathered a transnational, cross-cultural, and transdisciplinary network of prominent scholars committed to raising global consciousness of common global interests and values, to articulate alternative models of world order, and to devise peaceful change strategies. The post-War and emerging Cold War context of WOMP's origins included significant interest in the conditions and necessary institutional bases of a lasting world order, with prominent proposals ranging from enhanced international organization and world government to a balance of power concert system (Clark and Sohn, 1958; Claude, 1956; Falk 1966; Hoffman, 1968; Kissinger, 1957). In this context, Sual Mendlovitz (1975) explains the idea for WOMP arose from the pedagogical aspects of the study of the elimination of war as a social institution, and in the idea of mobilizing a global academic movement for peace. He explains further that his own intellectual inspiration and approach to this project was indebted to Grenville Clark and Louise Sohn's (1958) *World peace through world law*, that suggested to him how 'formal constitutional models can lead to clarification of issues, and perhaps even more importantly become a mobilizing instrument for social and political action' (Mendlovitz, 1975, p. xv). No other WOMP participants were convinced by Mendlovitz's favoured world government model (Falk, 2021), but their debates

on alternative models did have the intended effect of clarifying many of the issues and stakes involved in world order modelling.

The first meeting of WOMP was held in New Dehli, 1968, with further meetings in host institutions across the world, in Japan, East Africa, Western Europe, the United States, and Latin America. With funding in part from the Carnegie Endowment for Peace and the Rockefeller Foundation, the Institute for World Order was established in New York and WOMP was formally launched. WOMP was an academic movement, as such, but it sought global public 'impact', to foster global consciousness and serve as the intellectual vanguard of global transformation. The extraordinary aspiration of this movement perhaps reflected the times, the late 1960s context of widespread demands for change. On the other hand, it was an impressive research project with significant assets, including its distinguished and transnational network, its large volume of scholarly output, and the multi-decade timescale of its activities. WOMP was a serious and impressive project, although its impact on practice was ultimately far below its aspirations.

As a transdisciplinary research project, WOMP had no singular theory or methodology, but instead had a pluralistic research agenda designed for open-ended outputs with information feedback loops. It had three research stages or phases, assigned to three decades: the 1970s as 'The Decade of Consciousness Raising', the 1980s as 'The Decade of Mobilization' and the 1990s as 'The Decade of Transformation' (Falk, 1975b, p. 213). The 1970s involved the articulation and comparative assessment of alternative models. This had two components, the articulation of common global values, and second the exploration and comparative articulation of alternative models to institutionally realize those values in world politics. A major premise of WOMP's research design was that no one scholar has sufficient perspective to articulate a global perspective, because of their situatedness and background of culturally specific assumptions. Convening a truly 'global' body of scholars, as such, was an epistemic method, to gain a global perspective on global interests and values. The values they settled on, through discourse and disagreement, included peace, economic wellbeing, social justice, ecological stability, and species identity.

WOMP participants each contributed major studies on world order models to realize these values, developing a large number of models, and rich conversation between them, in a comparative method. Each scholar was meant to bring a regional perspective, African, Latin American, North American, etc., and while each member also brought with them their disciplinary training, be it international law or political science, the transnational and transcultural composition of WOMP's membership fed into a culturally inclusive outlook – or the aspiration of one – on preferred world order models. Rajni

Kothari and Ali Mazrui for instance approached the topic from the discipline of political science, and both emphasized an element of cultural pluralism required for an alternative world order model. Kothari's (1974) *Footsteps into the future* proposed an alternative world order model that emphasized global economic redistribution and principles of autonomy and non-domination, but also stressed the need for global integration and principles of solidarity amidst cultural plurality. Mazrui's (1976) *A federation of cultures* proposed the 'convergence' of world cultures, not through their fusion, but as an inclusively pluralistic global cultural integration. In their *Revolution of being* (1977), Gustavo Lagos and Horacio H. Godoy, representing a Latin American perspective, argued for a 'humanist international society' to support a 'world commonwealth of peoples' model. Johan Galtung's WOMP contribution, *The true worlds*, explored alternative models to reduce structural violence, partly by diffusing authority, but also by establishing a 'world central authority' with 'a role as a major articulator of problems and conflicts' (Galtung, 1980, p. 382). Through these works and others, a culturally inclusive approach to world order knowledge and preferred world order models made WOMP far ahead of its time, as the rise of culturally inclusive 'post-Western' and 'Global IR' have become major trends in the study of international relations today (Acharya, 2014; Shani, 2008).

The intention of WOMP's research design, furthermore, was to receive public as well as inter-scholarly feedback on its proposed models, in a continually adaptive and open-ended process. In that research mode, WOMP had a large scholarly output. Collected edited volumes such as Mendlovitz's (1975) *On the creation of a just world order* integrated the project's rich conversation on alternative models and global values. The WOMP journal *Alternatives* was founded in 1975 to further integrate world order knowledge and to disseminate it. Rajni Kothari's leading editorial statement in the first issue of *Alternatives* defined the journal's scope as a search for transcultural world order models that offer genuine alternatives to contemporary structures, because:

the world has reached a stage when it should steer clear of both imperialist claims to universality and the normless striving for relativity; it should affirm both the principle of *autonomy* of each entity (human as well as social) to seek out its own path to self-realization and the principle of *integration* of all such entities in a common framework of interrelationships based on agreed values. The world as it is at present constituted violates both autonomy and integration as principles informing human arrangements. It is a world based, instead, on a framework

of dominance that works through endless fragmentation and tension, one that relies heavily on instruments of violence and institutions of inequity. Hence the need for *Alternatives*.

(Kothari 1975b, p. 5)

In addition to its journal, book series, and collected volumes, WOMP also published reports and a working papers series on numerous world order problems, especially nuclear arms, publicizing WOMP perspectives in policy discourse. WOMP models distinguished near, medium, and long-term futures, in strategies of transition that sought to foster global consciousness, toward long-term global transformation. WOMP writings and activities included the utility of future studies, alongside peace studies, as a source for mining alternative models, and for considering strategies of transition. The futurological and peace studies outlook of WOMP was not teleological, however, because its emphasis on better and worse possible futures necessitating strategies of transition assumed a spectrum of possible futures, subject to the contingency of human collective actions or inactions in the near and medium futures.

Discerning these strategies and models with any analytical leverage required diagnosing the present world order and sources of its crisis, about which WOMP scholars shared a number of assumptions. The first assumption was that the international order of the 1960s and early 1970s was 'not working', because it was failing to address common global interests concerning nuclear arms, ecological management, and global development. An alternative world order was assumed to be needed, moreover, because the international order was not only a structural hurdle to addressing global challenges, it also was in many respects a source of them too. Its great power-centric structure in particular was seen to both reduced all global-level policy challenges to questions of superpower relations, while also placing the superpowers in a conflicting relation that exacerbated mutual hostilities in a global struggle affecting all humankind. WOMP participants however diverged widely on what alternative models could feasibly overcome these challenges. Mendlovitz favoured a world government model, but all other core WOMP participants opposed it, as neither necessary for common global interests, nor desirable (Falk, 2021). Richard Falk's (1975a) *Study of future worlds* provided the most exhaustive comparative assessment of alternative world order models, preferring a global consultative model in which a body responsible for articulating common global interests would provide guidance for the states, in the formation and management of global policy priorities.

Searching for alternative world order models better able to meet common global challenges, for WOMP, required calibrating models to common *global* rather

that *international* interests, which in essence made the search for 'accessing' a global perspective of common interests a primary task. In Falk's (1977) seminal essay, 'Contending approaches to world order', Falk conveyed an alternative approach to 'world order', understood ambitiously as a just world order realizing the common values of humankind. WOMP took humankind rather than international society as its point of reference and understood a 'world order' in a partly descriptive partly normative sense, as an order in the service of the common values of all humankind. Mendlovitz, as WOMP's Director, argued that, 'To think, feel, and act as a global citizen is the essence of world order inquiry' (Mendlovitz, 1981, p. 367). Humankind in the 20th century, for WOMP, was a single political unit, although not yet a political unity transcending international society as such. This was a kind of cosmopolitan imaginary underlying the entire project. The shared WOMP assumption was that the planetary interdependence of the 20th century had made humankind a relevant political unit and single social system in need of corresponding planetary-level political institutions and forms of global consciousness and global community.

WOMP attracted numerous supporters, such as Harold Lasswell (1977), who wrote an enthusiastic review essay. WOMP also attracted numerous critics too, some internal, and not all unsympathetic. Internal critiques targeted WOMP's enlightenment assumptions. The similarities of WOMP to the 'utopian socialists' was suggested to be a telling sign of misguided idealism, a St. Simonian enlightenment belief that the world's strategic, ecological, and injustice problems could be overcome with sufficient application of sheer reason, sufficiently disseminated in education (Targ 1979–80). R.B.J. Walker, as a WOMP insider, applauded the challenge that the project made to mainstream theory and found importance in it, but also made two related deep criticisms. First, like other critics, he argued the entire enterprise was premised on philosophical enlightenment assumptions and universalizing aspirations, and therefore any alternative world order model proposal it produced would be a less than genuine alternative, a still highly modern and largely Western model. For Walker (1994, pp. 236, 239), 'this literature has perhaps been overdetermined in its embrace of universalism as the obvious solution ... it is a problem precisely because of the manner in which alternatives to it are for the most part already produced by it'. Walker's (1988) own WOMP contribution, *One world, many worlds*, emphasized cultural diversity and argued that any possible one world order would necessarily also exist within many cultural worlds. The real debate, for Walker, is not between realism and relevant universalist utopias, both of which rest on modern and largely Western assumptions. Rather, the real debate for Walker is between modern and other than modern models. Hence, the second criticism Walker made, following from the



first, is epistemic, the claim that because the rapidly emerging future of global order is an historically unique and not entirely modern configuration, it is therefore in principle largely unknowable (Walker, 2009).

Mainstream social scientific critiques were methodological, noting that WOMP lacked a theory, that it was insufficiently empirical, and that it was too normative (Oakes & Stunkel, 1981; Wilkinson, 1976). Against these criticisms, WOMP defenders suggested its methodology was more hermeneutic than 'empirical', being keenly interested in investigating cultural and trans-cultural perspectives on world order (Sylvester, 1981). Policy-oriented critiques were pointed too. Stanley Hoffman, for instance, a prominent scholar of world order trends at the time, expressed a set of policy-oriented criticisms from a mainstream perspective, claiming:

the World Order Models Project, which seeks to eliminate war, poverty, injustice, and ecological disaster by the creation, on the basis of national self-determination, of a world polity, with a world assembly as its chief policy-making organ. One recognizes ... the old model of world government and world peace through world law ... The general assumption is made that the four [global] values that ought to become the world's priorities are, or can be made to be, universal imperatives – to which all the components of the global community would give not widely divergent meanings ... Next, there is a tendency to believe that the perils of scarcity and the rising demands of equity will somehow provoke a transition to a post-Westphalian order, rather than exacerbate conflict, as long as public consciousness is heightened. Finally, excessive reliance is placed on transnational populist coalitions. Not only are populist forces weak or impotent in many countries ... but populism often tends to be more parochial than enlightened, more driven by internal fears than drawn to global solutions.

(Hoffmann 1978, p. 181)

As such, Hoffmann critiqued WOMP on the grounds of the feasibility and likelihood of its alternative world order proposals. For Hoffmann, conflict over global values was more likely than consensus, and the proposed ascension of an equitable post-Westphalian global polity was less likely than the descent of international society into resource conflict and multiple local revolts against globalism. In hindsight, these are damaging criticisms, because the divisive conflicts of humankind, over values, resources, and global authorities, has endured, even after the closure of the Cold War. The revolt against

globalism in recent years, moreover, has forced global order modellers to reconsider the legitimation challenges facing the construction of a post-national global order (Borzell & Zurn, 2021; Falk, 2018). Like Hoffmann's criticism, most external critiques of WOMP attacked it as 'utopian' idealism, sometimes harshly (Fraser, 1977). The defence WOMP scholars made against these criticisms, was to distinguish 'relevant utopias' from utopic models proper, and to remind their critics of the necessity for distinguishing near and medium-term world order objectives, in adaptive and open-ended world order transition strategies (Falk, 1978). A *relevant utopia* was conceived as a world order model that reflected global values and was in principle a possible future if facilitated by a feasible transition strategy.

Another prominent world order theorist, Hedley Bull, made another powerful external critique, although he was not entirely unsympathetic to WOMP. Bull's own influential approach to order in world politics was itself influenced by his formative conceptual engagements with Falk's world order research at Princeton University. With characteristic astuteness and from his own approach, Bull suggested that:

the study of models of future world order ... needs to steer a careful course between, on the one hand, the arbitrary exercise of designing utopias (the kind of exercise exemplified by Clark and Sohn's work on world government) – and on the other hand, the exercise of a cold-blooded prediction of the future that is based simply on the extrapolation of existing trends and fails to take account of our capacity to shape the future.

(Bull 1975, p. 62)

Bull did not disagree that nuclear weapons, ecological degradation, and injustice were not major problems in world politics. Bull even suggested that humankind required the development of a 'cosmopolitan culture', a view shared by WOMP thinkers. But he questioned whether alternative world order models were necessary to address these global challenges. Instead, Bull stored his confidence in a gradually maturing international society, as a highly imperfect but nevertheless more reliable pathway to world order (Bull, 2002 [1977]). He saw no existing 'global community' to speak of, leaving 'space-ship earth' without any pilots besides statespersons, who themselves were deeply divided. An axiom of peaceful change that Bull subscribed to, underpinning his own assumptions, was that the pursuit of justice was meaningless in a context lacking order. The pursuit of justice, as such, for Bull, required working through the established international order.

In debate with Bull, Falk argued, instead, that transformative change must come from the populations of world society, from 'below', pressuring statespersons.

Falk later revised this position and included sympathetic states in 'new internationalist' coalitions with non-state actors. The potency of Bull's argument has diminished overtime, too, because non-state world society actors have become increasingly understood as a necessary source of activist pressure, as international society has been slow to adapt, especially to ecological imperatives (Falkner, 2017). In this context, Falk maintains his position on the need for modified world order institutions, because international society continues to struggle to manage world order challenges, and suggests that Bull's approach under-appreciated the disruptive role of neoliberal economics (Falk, 2017). The populist revolt against globalism has disrupted inter-state international society as a source of order in world politics, but in that same movement there has also been a retrenchment of the state, against globalism, which suggests that the state still has an unavoidable role to play in the making of world order.

### 3 | WOMP 2.0?

WOMP's research has had less impact on practice than it aspired to, while many of the challenges and crises facing world politics that gave WOMP its impetus still trouble international society today and in some respects are in a worsened condition. Reflecting on WOMP, Falk has suggested that, 'WOMP was in some sense ahead of its time, and might have had more impact if undertaken after the turn of the century, the end of the Cold War when greater public awareness existed of global governance challenges' (Falk, 2021, p. 379). In this respect, there is a question of the contemporary policy relevance for a renewed and revived project of a similar scope and research remit. In an essay from 2014, Falk also suggested the revival of WOMP, in a new project designed for 21st century contexts (Falk, 2014). This suggestion, however, was made before the current phase of the crisis of global order, before the revolt against globalism and only at the beginning of increasingly strained US-China relations. What I propose to do in this section is to reassess Falk's argument for the revival of WOMP, in the context of the crisis of global order today.

Falk's argument for reviving the project rested on two main premises, first, that order in international society has stagnated and declined in several respects, and that second, scholars and public intellectuals have a responsibility to address these problems, with their skills and privileged resources. This argument has some merits, because world order has stagnated and declined, hence the rise of prominent debates on global order today. The emerging future of international order is unclear and debated today, and the problems of war and nuclear arms, ecological crisis, inequality, and injustice identified by WOMP, in the 1960s and

1970s, remain strangely similar and in some respects worsened, within an uneasy and tense international environment of increasing uncertainty and instability. Falk identified these strains on global order in his call for a revival of WOMP:

There is also a deepening uncertainty about the reshaping and management of world order in the near future. There is a growing consensus about the relative decline of the United States, but less agreement on whether this will morph into a process of absolute decline or produce a militarist last ditch effort to restore American global pre-eminence. There is also the prospect of the regionalization of world order with countries such as the United States, China, Brazil, India, and the EU playing roles as regional hegemon ... It is against this background that the question of a rebirth of WOMP takes shape, at least in my mind.

(Falk 2014, p. 186)

In this context of increasing international uncertainty and instability, there is a case for exploring alternative global order models. Predominant debates on the emerging future of global order are generally near-term in strategic analysis and great power and often US-centric, being still relatively disconnected from questions about alternative global order possibilities in the medium to long-term that some other scholars have explored (Archibugi et al. 2012; Bellamy, 2019; Cabrera, 2010, 2018; Craig, 2008; Deudney, 2007; Koenig-Archibugi, 2011; Marchetti, 2006; Scheuerman, 2011, 2014; Weiss, 2009). In practice, moreover, there is growing demand for alternative non-great power-centric global order models, especially from the Global South, as well as from Europe (Quah, 2017, 2019). In this respect, given the pressing crisis of global order today, there is a case for reviving a WOMP-style project mapping feasible alternative non-great power-centric global order model options, while clarifying transition strategies.

Yet, the methodological limitations of WOMP, without modification, undermine its potential contributions. There are three major categories of limitations I will identify here. The first, suggested by Falk, is the problem of underlying enlightenment assumptions. From the experience of participating in WOMP, Falk recommends potential partnership with United Nations programmes and use of internet capabilities, but he leaves it an open question whether a new WOMP project should and could abandon or distance itself from its enlightenment heritage;

Whether this Enlightenment orientation is too tainted by its Western past, too limited as well as by its secularist confidence in

science and technology and its disdain for religion and tradition, to serve us well in the present is a foundational question. It leads naturally to a related issue as to whether WOMP, if it were to continue, should do its best to disavow this legacy, or at least to incorporate non-Western perspectives into the very sinews of the undertaking.

(Falk 2014, p. 191)

Methodologically, a WOMP 2.0 project, in this respect, would require deep methodological redesign, from an enlightenment methodology to a more thoroughly 'post-Western' and 'post-secular' one. In a context of growing scholarly interest in 'post-Western' and 'Global IR' today, this modification would likely attract significant interest (Acharya, 2014; Shani, 2008).

Second, some of the consensual and functionalist assumptions that WOMP scholars shared rightly attracted criticism and may also require reassessment in light of contemporary social theory. On the one hand, the absence of a single shared social scientific theory of global order and its transformation provided WOMP with the advantages of theoretical pluralism, useful for producing rich debate and a wide variety of world order models and strategies to comparatively assess. On the other hand, however, assumptions that imply that a consensual and pacific global order is possible, somehow transcending conflict, are challenged and contested at the level of social theory (Go, 2016; Tilly, 2016). What role is there of contention and recognition struggles, for instance, in alternative global order models? Different scholars and traditions will adopt different positions, but there nevertheless are first order questions about the processes and meaning of modelling 'world order' here, needing reconsideration, at the level of social theory. This is not to say that WOMP scholars did not take conflict seriously. Ali Mazrui (1975), for instance, was well-aware of 'stratification conflicts' both in their Marxian and Weberian formulations, but Mazrui nevertheless also conveyed Parsonian assumptions about the possibility of consensus transcending such conflicts. While WOMP's theoretical pluralism is an asset in approaching global order studies in a transcultural and multidisciplinary mode, the presence of theoretically controversial assumptions about the possibility of consensual and commonly preferred outcomes at a global level poses a potential methodological question, given the aims of clarifying possible world order models.

Third, the epistemic method of WOMP that pursued a 'global' perspective by gathering a global network of scholars representing regional perspectives, has limitations. While it did produce novel debate and ideas about common global interests and values, the ability of elite scholars to 'represent' regional perspectives has limits. The glaring absence of women from WOMP's core participants, for instance, hints at the limitations of

a 'microcosm' method. Mendlovitz argued that the privileged position of scholars provides them with training and resources, especially time, as well as information, that enables their added-value insights and gives them a special responsibility to address pressing global problems. Their privileged position, while facilitating these things, on the other hand also nevertheless specifies their perspectives too. In this respect, a WOMP 2.0 would need to reconsider the epistemic method of accessing or formulating a 'global' perspective, either as supplement or as an alternative to WOMP's elite global scholarly network method.

A WOMP 2.0 has merits and relevance to contemporary debates, but the need to reconsider underlying enlightenment assumptions, as well as its trans-disciplinary social theoretical assumptions, and epistemic methods suggest that a WOMP 2.0 would need to involve major methodological modifications and research redesign.

## 4 | METHODOLOGICAL OPTIONS FOR A WOMP 2.0

There are numerous methodological options for a modified WOMP 2.0. I will provide a brief outline of options in respect to each category of modification suggested above.

First, abandoning Western enlightenment assumptions has been rightly suggested by WOMP's internal critiques, but doing so in some respects is easier said than done. An issue for instance is the very impulse of the project itself, to 'order' the world, which would need to be reconsidered as a matter of first principles. Toward this end, WOMP 2.0 could seek to 'provincialize' Western enlightenment assumptions, by situating them in a wider global set of cosmological and geo-cultural outlooks (Chakrabarty, 2007). A provincializing option as such is an alternative to the less feasible option of abandoning or disavowing enlightenment assumptions altogether. A deeper and broader global conversation about global order, in this respect, could be initiated through a 'provincializing' method in a WOMP 2.0.

Second, critiques of consensual functionalist assumptions underlying proposed models of alternative global order futures invites systematic transdisciplinary discussion of contemporary social scientific theory and core social concepts relevant to global order. Refined and rigorous theoretical pluralism could be developed by drawing on contemporary social theory, distinguishing claims and assumptions about conflict that different theorists may hold from meta-theoretical methodological assumptions (Jackson, 2011). Reconsidering assumptions about conflict from contemporary social theory would also need to be addressed alongside a reconsideration of the peace studies heritage of WOMP. In this respect, clarifying underlying methodological

assumptions could also potentially facilitate the ‘provincializing’ of Western-centric social scientific assumptions about conflict and peace studies, toward a methodologically pluralistic post-Western framework for alternative global order studies (de Koeijer & Shilliam, 2021).

Third, to overcome the epistemic limitations of a global microcosm method, WOMP 2.0 could employ broad empirical studies about the values and global order preferences that people hold, through global surveys. These empirical surveys of global order preferences could be organized on regional and global scales, toward an aggregate and comparative assessment. The findings of these kinds of studies are often surprising and provide substance for further reflection on the legitimacy of alternative global order models. Some empirical studies for instance illuminated significant support for cosmopolitan global order reform in the Global South (Webb, 2016). Broad global surveys could also be conducted on staggered annual or biannual regular intervals across a WOMP 2.0 study, generating information feedback loops from research outputs and global order trends. Employing broad empirical studies could usefully ground global transcultural and transdisciplinary scholarly debates on alternative global order models, by identifying global order preferences. Utilizing internet capabilities can facilitate a far larger and more diverse global network of scholars too, with more frequent connectivity, which could be grounded by broad empirical survey studies of global order preferences.


## 5 | CONCLUSION

The World Order Models Project is a celebrated achievement in terms of its scale of transnational scholarly activity and impressive research outputs, even though its policy impact in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras was less than it aspired to. Revisiting WOMP today reveals that while it suffered from problematic methodological limitations, some of its proposals nevertheless retain relevance and as a research mode it still offers the potential for providing an important supplement to contemporary approaches, if sufficiently modified to address its methodological limitations. Extending debates on global order today, through a revived and appropriately modified WOMP-style project offers a supplement, as well as a potential challenge, to conventional approaches, by clarifying alternative preferable non-great power-centric global order models possible in the medium to long-term future. Clarifying alternative models and their pathways, moreover, has potential for inspirational impact on populations and statespersons grappling with strategic choices in responding to the crisis of global order today.

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