

Titre : Approches constructivistes et inclusives de l'intégration transrégionale / Constructivist and inclusive approaches to cross-regional integration

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Project synopsis:

This international research project brings together leading European researchers in Europe and the Americas to develop new theoretical concepts and methodological tools on the political and socio-economic governance of cross-regional integration and new trade agreements. From a methodological standpoint, the research team will build upon the expertise of its members in two cutting-edge subfields of trade policy analysis and regional integration: 1) constructivist approaches to the political economy of trade; 2) analysis of stakeholder consultation processes through the development of new measures of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability. The two-year schedule includes a kick-off meeting in Paris (IDA and Sorbonne Nouvelle) and an international symposium to be held in a partnering European university. During these two years, team members will disseminate their research findings and refine their methodology to prepare for future large-scale research partnerships such as European research grants.

I) PRÉSENTATION DU PROJET¹

Background

Despite the far-reaching implications that mega trade deals like the Transpacific Trade Partnership (TPP) or the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) or the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) may have on both the world economy and people's daily lives, academic scholars have only begun to analyze the defining features of what could be interpreted as a new phase of globalization. As with previous trade agreements, the field remains largely dominated by economists, while academic debates have been primarily framed through a twentieth-century prism characterized by deceptively clear dichotomies such as regionalism vs. multilateralism, protectionism vs. free trade, trade creation vs. trade diversion, South vs. North, and public vs. private actors. These binary notions are not only limited because of their narrow economic focus; they also fall short of capturing the complex governance of cross-regionalism. Because of the prevalence of what Siles-Brügge (2014) describes as "materialist interpretations" of trade policy,² the political economy of trade agreements has at best been simplified as "two-level games";³ at worst, it has been reduced to mathematical equations in complex econometric models that can hardly capture their political and sociocultural impact. Both approaches ignore the complex governance of cross-regionalism underpinned by multi-level and multi-actor power struggles that both result from and shape the process of economic globalization.

In contrast with econocentric and binary models of trade liberalization, the *Institut des Amériques* (IDA) has long nurtured an interdisciplinary approach to regional integration resting upon cross-country analyses that has become the signature of its international reputation. This research project builds upon IDA's interdisciplinary and comparative approach to the dynamics and stakes of regionalism in the Americas while extending the comparative analysis of trade policy processes to

¹ Le projet a été rédigé en anglais pour faciliter la communication avec les partenaires européens.

² Siles-Brügge, Gabriel (2014). *Constructing European Union Trade Policy: A Global Idea of Europe*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

³ Putnam, R (1988). "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42.3: 427-460.

the European Union's external trade policies, and leaving open the possibilities of additional case studies like South Korea, Australia and New Zealand (analyzed in previous works by some members of the team). To do so, it brings together an interdisciplinary panel of academic experts with the aim of fostering new research partnerships on the political and socio-economic governance of cross-regional integration and trade agreements. Our goal is to develop new theoretical concepts and methodological tools to keep up with the changing nature of international trade agreements.

From a methodological standpoint, our collaborative project will build upon the expertise of its members in two cutting-edge subfields of trade policy analysis. The first consists of new constructivist approaches to trade policymaking and political economy, and more particularly a new strand of research seeking to understand the ways in which economic ideas and "fictional expectations" can shape or capture economic decision-making.⁴ Here, the objective is to question and deconstruct key trade concepts and models that have long structured and constrained the representation of trade agreements and regionalism among scholars, policymakers, the media and the public.

The second innovative subfield in the political economy of trade from which this collaborative research project draws examines the processes of civil society's inclusion in trade policymaking. Our objective is to design robust analytical tools so as to bring new focus to a long debate that has re-emerged with the stormy debates surrounding CETA, TTIP and TTP in Europe and the Americas, particularly with the election of Donald Trump. Our team members will develop new measures of inclusiveness, accountability and transparency to assess the modes of participation of civil society groups and their actual input in the three phases of trade policymaking: 1) pre-negotiating phase, 1) trade negotiations and 3) enforcement and monitoring phase. The analysis of stakeholder inclusion mechanism will primarily focus on four policy areas: 1) labor and employment issues; 2) environmental and public health issues; 3) local government and public services; 4) digital trade.

II) LISTE DES PARTENAIRES IDA :

- **Université Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris 3)**
- **Sciences Po Paris**
- **Université Rennes 2**

⁴ Beckert, J. (2013). "Imagined Futures: Fictional Expectations in the Economy", *Theory and Society*, 42 (2), pp. 219-40.