

The Role of International Organisations in the Development of Global Order

Call for abstracts / expressions of interest

Historical and historically informed studies of international organisations (IOs) are an emerging field in International Relations (IR). Historians have for some time studied IOs and/or used archival resources from IOs as a way to overcome the national bias of traditional diplomatic history. Path-breaking studies include Mark Mazower's (2009; 2012) work on the UN, internationalism and intellectual history, Susan Pedersen (2015) on the League of Nations and the mandate system, and Patricia Clavin (2013) on the League of Nation's work in areas of economic cooperation and international development. Recent IR works on the formation of the modern international order have also emphasized the salience of detailed historical analysis and attention to global historical sociology for understanding the interconnected processes that underlie the development of the modern world (Dunne and Reus-Smit 2017; Go and Lawson 2017). This project seeks to bring together these scholarly trends with a specific focus on IOs as a site for the making of global order.

IOs are interesting objects of study not just in and of themselves, but also for what they can reveal about the development of the current global order. From their foundation in the 19th century, IOs have been intimately connected to processes of state-building and the professionalization of government administration, both in Europe and the rest of the world (Sinclair 2017; Ravndal 2018a). The establishment of 19th century international river commissions can reveal the importance of the control of nature as a "Standard of Civilization" and foundational principle of international order (Yao 2018). Formerly peripheral states like Japan could use their memberships of IOs as a way to strengthen their positions vis-à-vis the European great powers (Howland 2014; 2015). Debates over membership in IOs can help us trace the transition from a world of empires to an international system organised around the sovereign state (Ravndal 2018b).

IOs are official sites of interaction between states, and through their secretariats, may also drive global processes and serve as agents of change. Because they sit at the intersection of broader trends and bring together a number of disparate actors (state diplomats, NGOs, scientific experts, and international bureaucrats), IOs are an apt lens through which to study the development of global order. How did we get to where we are today? How did current normative commitments and practices of international relations come about? What can a study focused on IOs, both as actors and forums, tell us about the development of global order?

This project seeks to bring together scholars from IR and related disciplines to explore the formation, evolution, and interconnected nature of IOs and their role in the development of global order. The first step is to convene one or two panels at the ISA Annual Convention in Toronto, 27-30 March 2019. Depending on interest and reactions,

we would then aim to hold a follow-up workshop later in 2019 or early in 2020, with a view to putting together either an edited volume or a journal special issue.

Examples of relevant paper topics may include, but are not limited to:

- IOs and internationalism/ other ideologies
- IOs and industrialisation/ trade/ economic cooperation/ development
- The development of the International Civil Service
- IOs and international law
- IOs and imperialism/ empire/ decolonisation
- IOs and modernisation
- “New” actors and networks
- States and sovereignty
- Connections between primary and secondary institutions (English School)

If you are interested in being part of this project, please send a title, an abstract (150-200 words), and a short CV to Joanne Yao (yuan.yao2@durham.ac.uk) and Ellen Ravndal (ellen.ravndal@anu.edu.au) by 15 May 2018.

