

EWIS 2019 Call for Papers

Resilience and Hope in a World in Relation

Workshop Convenors:

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Workshop Summary

Thinking about a 'world in relation' highlights that contemporary global problems are increasingly complex, diffuse and uncertain, and extend without clear limits. Global problems are unusually interrelated, thereby problematizing traditional policies and forms of governance. Inter-relation increasingly entails a focus on context rather than universal lessons learnt and requires constant re-adaptation and experimentation. Both the nature of current problems and the shifting methodologies to address them are of interest and concern to IR scholars and international policy-makers alike and take us into new territory. The problems of knowing and acting can seem wicked and overwhelming in the contemporary (Anthropocene) age. It then becomes important to consider the methodologies for thinking through these problems, specifically as more things are datafied, while new tools and methods for seeing and sensing are also introduced.

In this fundamentally interrelated world, resilience has emerged as a prominent methodology and policy strategy to adapt to policy crises in multiple fields of action from refugee emergencies, to climate change, to disaster recovery. Resilience, for many advocates, begins to stake out a break with modernist or 'top-down' understandings of governance as 'command-and-control' and instead seeks more processual forms of engagement, working with difference and contingency. Some approaches to resilience claim to operate often from the 'bottom-up', seeking to grasp the emergence of opportunities and to work with more immanent forms of agency, embracing new knowledges and new ways of seeing and thinking beyond traditional problem-solving framings.

This brings resilience closer to critical constructions of hope, where the faith in in 'top-down', anthropogenic', 'engineering' or 'technical' solutions is displaced through a hope in 'critical', 'local', 'natural' and 'bottom-up' approaches. By bringing framings of hope and resilience together, this workshop seeks to engage with the question of whether it is possible to sustain 'hope' through developing alternative forms of resilience or, by contrast, if humanity is collectively seen to be the problem rather than the solution, will attempts to save humanity inevitably be construed as hopeless?

The foundations of IR as a discipline were occupied with the relations between states, and this workshop proposes that our disciplines' future lies in thinking of a world in relation where relations are multiple, shifting, non-bounded and adaptive. In sum, this workshop is interested in how the world of inter-relations, flux, blurred boundaries and distinctions, become readable in new and exciting ways. We hope to use the workshop to discuss ways of thinking around these debates, and to explore the possibilities for future collaborative publications. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Forms of community resilience - such as through new sensing technologies
- Utopian and hopeful imaginaries that inform resistance and critique
- Gendering resilience and resistance

- New regimes of power/knowledge in the Anthropocene
- From International Relations to a 'world in relation'?
- Resilience in framings of disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation or conflict recovery
- Assemblages in a world in relation
- Recovering hope in pessimist narratives of International Relations