

History and Theory in International Relations

An EJIR special issue

EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF
*International
Relations*

The editorial team of the *European Journal of International Relations* invites proposals for contributions to a special issue on the intersections of history and theory in the study of international relations. The problem of the entanglement of history and theory is not a new one and neither is it exclusive to the discipline of international relations. It is a perennial concern of scholars in the social sciences and the humanities how to balance attention to the particular (history) with a desire to identify the universal (theory), and how to move from sustained engagement with the particular toward articulation of the universal or the other way around. This is a long-standing concern in various fields of study, which has given occasion, over the years, to a number of important special issues, edited volumes and monographs.

How to balance history and theory, or how to move from history to theory or from theory to history, may be a problem that defies resolution. Having said that, it is also a problem that one cannot *not* engage with and that certainly the *European Journal of International Relations* cannot ignore. As an editorial team, in line with the aims and scope that the EISA and the ECPR SGIR defined for the journal, we believe that solid research in International Relations must have a strong theoretical scaffolding. We are committed to fostering the development of theoretical ideas and to facilitating theoretical debates. As an editorial team, we are simultaneously convinced that theoretical concepts should not be unmoored from empirical reality, whereby we believe that “empirical reality” ought not to be confused with current empirical reality. The more sustained our engagement with the complexities of the historical record will be, the more fruitful our theoretical endeavors should be.

It might be noted, in this regard, that since the appearance of the 2013 EJIR special issue on the “End of International Relations Theory,” the discipline has witnessed a massive increase in historically oriented scholarship, which one would think and hope to have an impact on our theoretical ideas and approaches. It is for these reasons that we invite contributions that revisit the intersection of history and theory in international relations and thus engage with what may well be a perennial problem. However, to the extent that this is indeed a persistent concern, each generation of scholars must grapple with it anew, and it must do so in a context that is different from the context in which previous generations of scholars grappled with the problem. Grappling with the problem of history and theory at the start of the second quarter of the twenty-first century happens in a different context than earlier iterations of that same undertaking. The political context has changed (e.g., the apparent return of great power competition); the socio-technical context has changed (e.g., humankind’s entry into Anthropocene); the theoretical context has changed (e.g., the growing self-evidence of relational and processual arguments, increased attention to questions of race, gender and hierarchy); and also the methodological context has changed (e.g., the ready availability of digitized sources). It is in this changing context that the EJIR special issue will revisit the intersection of history and theory in international relations.

Timeline

1 June 2023	Call for proposals
1 October 2023	Proposal submission deadline
15 October 2023	Decision about proposals
April 2024	ISA pre-conference workshop
15 June 2024	Deadline for submission of paper
Autumn 2025	Publication of Special Issue (issue 3 or 4)

How to submit a proposal

If you are interested in contributing to this special issue, send us a one-page abstract by 1 October 2023 (ejir.editor@gmail.com).