

Call for Papers : Hierarchies Beyond Relationality? Collective Singulars, Imaginaries, and the Figure of the Third

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How to think about hierarchies is one of the key questions in International Relations. Here, the advent of relational thought has changed the way we think about them where several contributions have explored how they emerge from exchanges, contacts, and other forms of relations. Relational thought has allowed for a move away from substances and given actors to embrace processes, assemblages, and fields. While there are certainly further avenues to explore, the theoretical importance of limits and boundaries of relations has increasingly come to the fore. Questions of collective singulars, social imaginaries, and symbolic orders all, in their different ways, point towards a 'beyond' those relations. They point out to the possibility that hierarchy does not follow relations, but that hierarchies precede them. In this workshop, we want to bring avenues together that explore imaginaries, symbolic orders in terms of hierarchies, modes of exclusions, and silences.

One of the avenues to explore is the 'structural' force which can be found in the figure of the third, a figure that has in social theory already been explored and that goes back to ideas of Simmel and others. While relations are fluid and fleeting, the third stabilizes positions and thus is linked to those structural forces, modes of exclusions, and silences. In this sense, the figure of the third seems one possible avenue to explore inequality and epistemic injustices in the very way relations are being formed. Building on recent IR scholarship and social theory, this workshop invites contributions to explore whether collective singulars, symbolic orders, global imaginaries can be seen as different manifestations of 'the third' through which structural forces are created and reproduced.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Approaches to 'the third' in International Relations Theory,
- Interrogating questions of power, authority, and legitimacy through mechanisms of exclusions and silences
- Performances of collective singulars, symbolic orders, and global imaginaries
- Questions of expertise, technocracy, and epistemic injustice
- The third and ways of doing truth
- Historical interrogations into any of the above mentioned topics.