

Call for Papers

Power and Legitimacy in International Society

Convened by Jack Basu Mellish J.R.Basu-Mellish@lse.ac.uk and Cornelia Navari cornelia.navari@buckingham.ac.uk; cnavari@gmail.com

If we are to build a politics of hope for future cooperation between states to overcome the challenges of inaction on climate change, the increase in global conflict and displacement, and the entrenchment of international inequality, then it is essential that we understand the legitimacy crisis that is straining the possibility of cooperation. We also need to understand how power is generated in international society and the uses to which it can be put. The English School has the capacity for imagining new world orders, via practices and diplomatics, and many theoretical tools for the understanding of alternatives, such as regional orders and Great Power responsibility. But Power and Legitimacy remain somewhat illusive. This workshop will initiate a process of discovery by placing international society theory in the context of its rivals—Realism and Liberalism, and deriving some initial propositions concerning the placement of power and the understanding of legitimacy.

As opposed to Realist theory, Power should be understood in terms of outputs and consequential effects, not in terms of inputs or lists. In regard to Liberal theory, Legitimacy should be understood in terms of processes and procedural ethics, not in terms of ideal end states.

Power in International Society

Proposition 1: Power in International Society should be understood in terms of Authorization as well as in the Use of Force or the Appeal to Right

Proposition 2: The Institutions and Organizations of International society create and distribute all three forms of power.

Proposition 3: The social construction of international society sets the terms of disciplinary power and the costs of non-compliance.

Legitimacy in International Society

Proposition 1: Legitimacy by procedural norms requires attention to function and experience.

Propositions 2a and b: International Society legitimates Great Power activism by normatively securing the voluntary surrender of power; Great Power restraint legitimates the institutionalisation of international society.

Proposition 3: Pluralism can both undermine and reinforce the legitimacy of international society.

Some relevant questions derived from the above:

Did the Bush administration offend any rules and practices of international society when it pushed for NATO membership for Ukraine in 2008?

Can an international order be both legitimate and unjust?

Can the Security Council play a role when the Great Powers are divided?

How do international institutions and organisations embed positive peace?

Why are solidarist ethics becoming more prominent in regional organisations?

What roles do IOs and NGOs play in constituting legitimacy in international society?