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9TH EXPLORATORY SYMPOSIA

7TH – 10TH NOVEMBER 2022

EXCELSIOR PALACE HOTEL
VIA SAN MICHELE DI PAGANA 8
16035 RAPALLO, ITALY

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The workshops will take place in the beautiful location of Hotel Excelsior in Rapallo. EISA has reserved one room with facilities, but usually the working groups gather in various common areas, at the bar/lounge area or when the weather was good, outside. There is no specific working space assigned.

WHEN DO WE NEED TO ARRIVE IN RAPALLO?

Participants will be expected to arrive in Rapallo on the afternoon of the 7th of in time for the opening dinner (exact time TBC). They will be expected to depart in the afternoon of the 10th of November. The symposia are self-organized: each symposium determines its own schedule while paying due attention to the timing of coffee breaks and lunches.

HOW DO WE GET TO RAPALLO?

- The Symposia will be held at the [Excelsior Palace Hotel](#), which is walking distance (one km) from Rapallo Train station. The closest airport is [Genova International Airport](#) (32 km from the hotel).
- The easiest and most cost-effective way to reach the Excelsior is to take a shuttle bus between the airport and one of the Genova train stations, Principe or Brignole. Please [visit this site](#) for more information. This should take around 30 minutes. You will then need to take a train from Genova Principe or Brignole to Rapallo (it takes between 30 and 60 minutes depending on which station you travel from). For further info on train schedules, please [visit this site] (<https://www.trainline.eu/train-times/genoa-to-rapallo>).
- Another possibility is to arrive at [Milan Malpensa Airport](#). There are direct trains to Rapallo from Milan Central Station.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

7 NOVEMBER

- Arrival of participants in the afternoon
- 8 PM Welcome dinner at the hotel restaurant

8 NOVEMBER

- 7–10:30 Breakfast
- Morning: Panels with coffee break at 11:00 AM
- 1:00–2:30 PM Lunch
- Afternoon: Panels

9 NOVEMBER

- 7–10:30 Breakfast
- Morning: Panels with coffee break at 11:00 AM
- 1:00–2:30 PM Lunch
- Afternoon: Panels
- 8:30 PM. final dinner in town (not included in the conference fee)

10 NOVEMBER

- 7–10:30 Breakfast
- Departures

PANELS

Participants

Laura Horn
Ayşem Mert
Franziska Müller
Katja Freistein
Valerie Waldow

ES2022-1

Care, Compost, Capitalism, and Cats: Dissident Anthropocenes / Dissident Scholarship

Description

The Anthropocene condition leaves us unprepared for uncertain futures. This is at least the case if we continue to think and act along the path dependencies that feel oh-so-familiar. Robert Cox has reminded us that “hegemony is like a pillow”, which, almost unbeknownst to us, creates dependencies and desires that prevent us from moving beyond modernity. Indeed, IR’s engagement with the Anthropocene has often focused on the easier-to-integrate aspects of the Anthropocene, which still aim at a reconciliation with late capitalism, the world system and western-liberal global governance. Consequently, although central IR categories seem no longer adequate to deal with the fundamental – ontological and epistemological – ruptures associated with the Anthropocene, we still find holocene IR tinkering with traditional understandings of “the state”, “the system” and “agency”, thereby keeping to the holocene paradigm, while watching it crumbling apart.

Still, shifts are occurring in a number of fields: from epistemology to ontology; from a single Western epistemology towards multiple non-Western epistemologies; from the global to the planetary; from the universe to the pluriverse; from governance to care, and from one world to plural processes of (re)worlding. With this project, we seek to clarify the stakes across a range of contemporary issues and to engage a range of IR theoretical concerns. What does it mean to include or to (re)turn to the environment, the non-human, the indigenous, the bacteriological, and the unruly? How does the concept of the Anthropocene help us to overcome the dominance of IR’s Eurocentrism and thus to (re)world international politics?

Participants:

Victoria M. Basham
 Ana Flamind
 Jamie M. Johnson
 Owen D. Thomas
 Zeger Verleye

ES2022-2**The Global Politics of Scandal in an Age of Disorder****Description:**

The discipline of International Relations has become increasingly concerned with disorder. This is a reflection of a growing consensus that we are living in an age of international disorder in which the post-war liberal world order – its actors, institutions and values – is seen as being contested, eroded and supplanted. These disorders manifest in a variety of ways: from challenges to the rules-based international order to the rise of populist alternatives to traditional sources of political authority and community. A crucial aspect of this disorderly moment is a contestation over the norms and values that regulate and bind international order. Increasingly, we are witnessing challenges to local, national and international understandings of what constitutes the appropriate, the legitimate, the permissible.

At the heart of this moment in global politics is scandal. Contemporary global politics is rife with scandals of war (Abu Ghraib, Bucha), finance (Panama Papers, Libor), governance (McKinsegate, Congo Papers), labour (Rana Plaza, Foxconn), sexual exploitation (#MeToo, Oxfam), race (Windrush, the US' travel ban), civil liberties (Snowden, Cambridge Analytica), and the environment (Deepwater Horizon, Dieselgate). What is interesting about scandal is that it is not simply a label we apply to events in which a certain norm, law or principle has been transgressed. Instead, scandal should be seen varyingly as a site of popular contestation and struggle, a mode of publicisation (a way of *seeing*), a genre of political communication (a way of *speaking and narrating*), a source of entertainment, a currency in the political economy of international news media, an instigator of political mobilisation and community, and a prompt for a range of political interventions and practices (including public inquiries and truth commissions, political apologies, judicial mechanisms, reconciliation processes, forms of public shaming, protest and other forms of contestational politics). As members of our group have recently argued, scandals are moments in which relations of international order are at work; in which power, violence and inequality are revealed and reproduced.

Participants

Simon Frankel Pratt
 Christopher David LaRoche
 Markus Kornprobst
 Benjamin Tallis
 Alena Drieschova

ES2022-3**Practices of Distancing in IR****Description**

This group project aims to establish a new research group that centres on what we term “practices of distancing” – activities that knit together social and physical geography to establish relations of proximity, empathy, neighbourliness, solidarity, and shared senses of geopolitical conditions across polities. We draw inspiration from the state of the field and from the potential realignments and trajectories generated by the Russia-Ukraine war and by European responses to it. The project should therefore speak to both cutting edge theoretical discourses and practical policy problems.

As activities that affect how individuals subjectively feel distance and proximity to other peoples, events, and objects, practices of distancing involve a wide spectrum of contemporary phenomena: top-down and bottom-up narrative and rhetorical moves or attempts to build and sustain institutions; forms of technologies that modify how space is experienced over time; and historical legacies of identity construction and domination (especially concerning race, ethnicity, and empire). Little extant work in the field of international relations (IR) has centred on distance in these broader or “subjective” terms, or combined it with practice turn concepts. We aim to introduce treatments of subjective distance drawn from sociology, psychology, and political theory to IR scholarship under the practice turn umbrella.

By drawing on this multi-disciplinary body of work, we link relational conceptions of international politics, such as fields or multiplicities, to individuals' subjective senses of distance – physical, social, temporal and hypothetical. Importantly, these elements are often combined and directly correlate with affect: the more distant an object or event under consideration is subjectively perceived by a subject, the less strong that subject's affective response to that event or object will be. What is considered distant or near, however, is amenable to change and manipulation, as is famously the case in racial dynamics that involve social distancing. Put simply, people care less and do less about distant things – but what is distant and what is near is not given. Conversely, close things solicit emotional attention and trigger repertoires of care.

This has manifested in a compelling way in the generous welcomes Ukrainian refugees received from European countries and from the significant military support European states have offered to Ukraine – in marked contrast to the limited solidarity and support offered to Syrian refugees over the past decade. It also provides context and clarity to questions about the future of NATO, the European Union, and Europe as a civilisational project. Given this immensely important moment in European political life, we therefore see this project as highly valuable to multiple audiences or constituencies, both in scholarship and in international and domestic governance.

An IR-oriented research cluster on practices of distancing not only contributes to our scholarly and public vocabularies for discussing the current geopolitical moment, but also to those aforementioned disciplines already engaged in the study of affect and interpersonal identification. These fields broadly underappreciate how subjective states affect large-scale social structures and dynamics, and are in turn affected by them. This is where we not only draw from other disciplines but may be in a position to give something back to them, especially because IR itself addresses human interaction and organization at the highest levels of social, physical, and temporal distances.

Participants

Tom Sauer
Yoichiro Sato
Elena Atanassova-Cornelis
Peter Jakobsen
Jagannath Panda

ES2022-4

A Comparative Analysis of Alliances and Alignments in Europe and the Asia-Pacific in Times of Declining US Power, a Rising China, and Russian Aggression in Europe

Description

The post-Cold War international order has led to three challenges for the West. *The first challenge* was the ending of the Cold War, which had served as the fundamental rationale of the US-centred alliance systems in both Europe and Asia. The disappearance of the common threat and the resulting “Pax-Americana” moment in the post-Cold War period led to partial rearrangements of the US-led alliance systems, but not fundamental changes to the systems *per se*. Throughout the 1990s and until the mid-2000s European states made minimal efforts to diversify their security dependence on the Exploratory symposium proposal “Alliances and alignments in Europe and the Asia-Pacific”

US, either by developing an European-only security alliance or by enhancing bilateral alternatives. In Asia, the uncertain prospects associated with a rising China and the related absence of a multilateral regional security alliance have kept the utility of the US-centred alliances high in the post-Cold War period.

The second challenge was that while the fear of US disengagement in the post-Cold War era was initially about its political willingness, the relative decline of the US has gradually turned the question into that of capability. Notwithstanding the significant increase in the US defence budget, Donald Trump’s “America first” policy elevated the European and Asian doubts about the credibility of the US alliance commitments. The Biden administration has made efforts at reassuring its allies and friends of America’s continuing security engagement in both regions. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 at a time of China’s increasing assertiveness in the Asia-Indo-Pacific maritime theatre, hence the challenges this poses to the rules-based international order, have once again reinforced regional anxieties about US disengagement.

The third challenge is that for the first time since very long, a war in which one of the great (nuclear) powers is involved takes place on European territory. The ongoing war in Ukraine is directly related to the security order that was created after the end of the Cold War: the expansion of NATO (despite the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact) and the (perceived) exclusion of Russia in this regard. Although the immediate consequence of the war will be a strengthening of NATO (and possibly its extension with the admission of Finland and Sweden), a stable European security order will require a satisfactory answer to the Russian demands. In Asia, both China and its neighbours, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, and especially Taiwan, are closely watching how the war in Europe unfolds, especially the attitude and behaviour of the US. While regional reactions to the war have been much more muted in Asia than in Europe, the impact of the war is already visible in the Asian theatre, especially on the part of US treaty allies. This is observed, for example, in the resuscitation of domestic debates on the utility of nuclear weapons possession in countries such as Japan and South Korea, as well as Australia's growing strategic outreach to Japan and focus on AUKUS. At the same time, Russia remains one of the largest sources of weapons for some players, notably Vietnam and India, even though both countries are simultaneously strengthening their security ties with Washington. For its part, Moscow continues to rely on the support of Beijing. All this adds to regional uncertainties about stability in the Asia-Pacific where the division between "friends and foes" remain less clear-cut than in Europe, contributing to a more fluid security order.

This is an opportune moment to comparatively examine the two regions' responses to the perceived decline in US alliance credibility amid the rising Russian and Chinese threats.

Participants

Alex Waterman
Ardahan Özkan Gedikli (online)
Mohamad Forough (online)
Ryan O'Connor
Yuri van Hoef

ES2022-5**Non-Western Narratives of International Relations: Friendship, Conflict and Cooperation****Description**

This symposium will build forth upon our EISA2022 panel, *Non-western narratives of international relations: friendship, conflict and cooperation* (Section: ST05 - Globalising IR). For the first time, the EISA2022 panel in Athens brings together our working group on non-western narratives of IR, a collaboration between Birmingham City University, the Erasmus University Rotterdam, and the World Order Narratives of the Global South (WONAGO) project based at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), introducing our work to the wider EISA family. The papers presented at EISA 2022 form the basis for a special issue for the journal *Politics & Governance*, which we plan to submit during Q1 2023.

This symposium is intended to lay the foundations for the proposed special issue and edited volume. First and foremost, the symposium will give us the opportunity for an additional in-depth (and in person) discussion and deliberation of the next versions of our papers, and the edited volume we later wish to publish, for which the special issue forms the vital first step. Our project, non-western narratives of IR, brings together a wide variety of scholars, who have worked on re-centering the debate by drawing upon decidedly non-western approaches to make sense of IR across themes of conflict, cooperation and friendship. The special issue and edited volume, not only serve to introduce to the field new non-western approaches to the concepts of friendship, conflict and cooperation, but also serve as the next step in this burgeoning field and the foundation of our research group. The support of a symposium will ensure that, after the EISA2022 panel, our working group will have a firm foundation moving forward, and a home at the EISA.