10TH EXPLORATORY SYMPOSIA

5TH–8TH NOVEMBER 2023

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

EISA
European
International
Studies
Association

Content

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 5th November in time for the opening dinner (at 8 pm). They will be expected to depart in the afternoon 8th 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 EISA Symposia will be held at the Excelsior Palace Hotel (http://www.excelsiorpalace.it/en/) which is walking distance (one km) from Rapallo Train station. The closest airport is "Cristoforo Colombo" 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, see: http://www.airport.genova.it/en/transportation-air-port/. 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 see: https://www.trainline.eu/train-times/genoa-to-rapallo.
- Another possibility is to arrive at Milan airport. There are direct trains to Rapallo from Milan Central Station.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

5 NOVEMBER

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

6 NOVEMBER

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

7 NOVEMBER

- 7:00–10:30 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)

8 NOVEMBER

- 7:00–10:30 Breakfast
- Departures

PANELS

Participants

Andrea Collins,
University of Waterloo, Canada

Saba Joshi ,University of York, UK

Maria Martin de Almagro,
University of Ghent, Belgium

Andrea Nightingale,
University of Oslo, Norway

Caitlin Ryan,
University of Groningen,
the Netherlands

ES2023-1

Gender, Natural Resources, and Peace

Description

Three main challenges of the 21st century are climate change, sustainable peace, and gender inequality. At present, there are a large number of international organizations and donor projects focused on an agenda for addressing peace and climate shock through an inter-related approach to gender and natural resource management (NRM). This can most clearly be seen in the UN strategic agenda on 'Gender, Natural Resources, Climate, and Peace,' which is framed around two core assumptions: 1) that NRM provides a good opportunity to increase women's political participation and economic empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected settings, particularly in light of climate shocks, and 2) that women's participation in NRM is necessary to prevent conflict in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Similar logics can be seen in related UN projects, such as the UN's 'Gender, Climate and Security' agenda. Other institutions have articulated similar agendas: the World Bank's Pathways for Peace, the OECD agenda on Gender and Environment, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) agenda linking gender-based violence and environment, and the Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) priority agenda on gender, climate. Clearly, there is a growing trend amongst donors, international institutions, and think-tanks to prioritize an agenda on 'gender, natural resource management, and peace.'

With the Symposium in Rapallo, **we intend to establish a new research group** that will take an interdisciplinary perspective to study how international agendas linking 'gender, natural resource management, and peace' are developing across different scales and regions. These agendas will be best understood from an interdisciplinary perspective, because it requires the study of diverse international agencies and practitioners, as well as encompasses complex and varied circumstances to gender relations, ecological systems, and resource management. Specifically, these agendas reflect many of the typical concerns of the **UN Peace and Security**

architecture and Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, along with focus on 'women's economic empowerment' that has long been part **of international development agendas**, and approaches to 'community natural resource management' **from environmental agencies**. While two of the applicants (Martín de Almagro and Ryan) have been working on questions about this agenda from within logics of International Relations (and especially feminist peace and conflict studies), we are increasingly coming up against the limits of what IR can explain, and consistently looking to outside our discipline, to Geography, Development Studies, and Environmental Studies, to help make sense of what these new agendas are doing, and what their affect – on peace, livelihoods, and ecosystems, are like to be.

Within International Relations, recognizing that while much of the academic debate in environmental peacebuilding is 'gender-blind' (Ide et al 2021) many of the typical discussions of WPS are missing out on the relevance of 'natural resources, conflict and climate' to the full realization of a gender just peace (Cohn and Duncanson, 2020). In comparison, Feminist Political Ecology, a sub-field of Geography, has long pointed to how natural resource governance is imbued with gendered relations of power, from household to global.

Similarly, while the logics of 'gender, natural resource management, and peace' appear new to the wider UN Peace and Security architecture, debates within Development Studies, and in particular among feminist development studies scholars, have excellent insight into the role of political economies and question the focus on women's economic empowerment. These scholars illustrate that individualistic understanding of women's inclusion in local resource economies need to be considered within the broader context of transnational supply chains, export-led development, and the global economy.

We will use our time in Rapallo to engage in an interdisciplinary conversation about these international agendas, their links with national, regional and local priorities, and lived realities and to see where this conversation takes us. We see the opportunity to do this as part of EISA symposium as a unique and special opportunity to engage in intellectual exchange, where there is no need for an immediate 'outputs' objective, but where deep conversations can establish a foundation of a more purposeful research agenda for the future. Given the complexity of this material, being able to initiate these conversations in-person with an array of scholars from different disciplinary traditions will be important for deciding on how to address these research challenges.

Based on the expertise of the proposed group, we may, for instance, consider how to jointly develop a research program to study the relations between instances where these international agendas are 'obvious' in their deployment (such as in aforementioned UN Joint Program), as well as instances where logics of connecting 'gender, natural resource management and peace' are driven by much more organic, bottom-up concerns that remain outside the view of the international. Given both the immense international donor attention to initiating new 'gender natural resource management, and peace' projects, and the increasing attention within International Relations to 'environment and peace' we hope that such a group would have relevance to pressing empirical questions, and to growing academic debates.

Participants

Giovanni Agostinis,
Università di Bologna

Emmanuel Balogun,
Skidmore College

Andrea Bianculli, IBEI, Barcellona

Leiza Brumat, Eurac Research,
Bolzano

Frank Mattheis, UNU-CRIS,
Bruges

ES2023-2

How is regional governance made outside the EU? Policymaking and implementation in regional organizations across the global South

Description:

The purpose of the 2023 EISA Exploratory Symposium is to establish a new research group on regional governance in the global South, combining existing but separated research strands on regional policy-making and implementation. The symposium is intended to contribute to this new research group in two fundamental ways: (i) by advancing the proposal for a Special Issue, which would be the central contribution of the group to the literature; (ii) by providing the venue for drafting a research proposal for a Jean Monnet network to bridge knowledge production on regional policymaking and regional implementation between the European Union and the global South.

Agostinis, Brumat and Mattheis are currently developing a special issue proposal on policy- making and implementation in ROs of the global South, which will be submitted to a top-ranked journal in the first half of 2024. In the framework of the 2023 EISA Symposium, we aim to achieve two specific goals related the special issue project. The first one is to consolidate the proposal's theoretical and conceptual framework through the discussion of preliminary versions of a selected set of papers. The second objective is to define the final structure of the special issue proposal and to identify the complete list of contributors to be included in the proposal. In both cases, we expect to benefit greatly from the feedback provided by the Rapallo EISA Exploratory Symposium's organizers and participants.

Participants

Ryan Beasley,
University of St Andrews

Andrew Hom,
University of Edinburgh

Brent Steele, University of Utah

Maja Touzari Greenwood,
University of Copenhagen

Nomi Claire Lazar,
University of Ottawa

ES2023-3

Impact Craters: Towards a Political History and Reflexive Practice of Knowledge Exchange and Policy Relevance

Description

Bemoaning a 'gap' between academia and the 'real world' of politics and policy has become a ritual tradition in International Relations (IR). According to this tradition, scholars should steer avoid overly theoretical, methodological, or otherwise 'scholastic' concerns and instead pursue research that can offer practical traction on concrete problems. If only IR researchers would try harder, write clearer, and avoid complexity, our research could attain 'policy relevance' and achieve measurable 'impact' on world affairs. This view appears repeatedly calls to 'bridge the gap' (BtG) or pursue 'knowledge exchange and impact' (KEI). After all, because it deals with politics and security, policy relevant IR 'can plausibly claim to save lives.'[1]

Yet research that can save lives can also have a body count. Just as it might ameliorate suffering and destruction, IR knowledge also possesses intrinsic potential to suborn immiseration, domination, destruction, and death. Deterrence theory may have 'kept the Cold War cold' but it also encouraged nuclear arms races whose dangerous potential outlived bipolarity and is never more than a human or machine error away from triggering doomsday.[2] The 'democratic peace', 'clash of civilizations', 'end of history' and 'Thucydides Trap' theses shaped many a practitioner's 21st century worldview,[3] while a host of scholars spilt much ink legitimating the US invasion of Iraq, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and various climate policies.[4] As intellectual histories have shown, social science often plays a key role in destabilizing global affairs, authorizing war, embedding inequality, and pushing us closer to catastrophe.

Other than platitudes about 'how not to bridge the gap,'[6] IR's dangerous potential and the implications of its historical record make barely a ripple in the BtG and KEI agendas ascending across academia today. Indeed, compared with reams of publications, heaps of funding, and institutional incentives that encourage – and sometimes demand – that 'world-leading' IR make a direct impact on human affairs, BtG/KEI discussions include vanishingly few assessments of the inherent perils and historical problems that attend efforts to communicate findings to politicians, policymakers, and publics. Instead, paeans to 'engaged scholarship' that can 'change the world' resound in university circles, media teams, and policy corridors, all based on an imaginative leap that such

change reliably bends the arc of history towards progress.

This assumption becomes particularly conspicuous when considering the human and political costs associated with IR's biggest impacts, noted above. Even more emblematic of a blind spot in this regard, bridge builders highlight *these same examples* as attesting to the *promise* – the plausibility and intrinsic value – of using IR scholarship to influence global politics.[7] We think it is time to take a different look at policy relevance and impact. Even a cursory but clear-eyed glance at the historical record implicates IR in huge 'grimpacts' with large body counts,[8] which undercut any idealized narrative of sound knowledge producing better policy and practice. Furthermore, KEI/BtG agendas encourage ambitious scholars to thrust 'fresh' but unvetted ideas into practical spheres with little regard for the harmful potential of treating politics like a laboratory of ideas, or to conflate regular commentary with meaningful engagement in issue areas well beyond their expertise.[9] These endemic issues, met with deafening silence in BtG/KEI circles, should occasion intense scrutiny of IR's animating assumptions, engagement practices, and empirical record of relevance and impact.

IR necessarily trucks and trades in 'dangerous ideas.'[10] BtG champions pay little heed, treating knowledge exchange and impact as facile processes requiring only sufficient academic will and incentivization.[11] This is, at best, only part of the story of what happens to knowledge, to politics, and to scholars when gaps get bridged or knowledge hits the ground. With a number of global crises currently confronting us, it is high time that IR explored a more realistic and chastened view of its ability to influence world affairs.

Participants

Ardahan Özkan Gedikli,
German Institute for Global
and Area Studies (GIGA)

Yuri van Hoef , Erasmus University
Rotterdam

Ryan O'Connor,
Birmingham City University

Euan Raffle, University of Sheffield

ES2023-4

Non-western narratives of international relations: the Mobilizing Narrative of Turkey in the 21st century

Description

This symposium builds forth upon our EISA2022 panel, *Non-western narratives of international relations: friendship, conflict and cooperation* (Section: ST05 – Globalising IR) and our inaugural session of the *non-western narratives of international relations: friendship, conflict and cooperation* (EISA Exploratory Symposia 2022).

This symposium brings together the scholars in our consortium specialised in Turkey and the Middle East, together with the steering committee of our consortium, to finalize a special issue, tentatively titled, *Non-western narratives of international relations: the Mobilizing Narrative of Turkey in the 21st century*, targeted for Global Studies Quarterly (GSQ) and the European Journal of International Relations (EJIR).

For the first time, the symposium 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), together with scholars from the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi.

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-centring 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 ensures that, after the EISA2022 and EISA2023 panels, our working group has a firm foundation moving forward, and a home at the EISA.

Concretely, after the introductions on day one, participants will give an in-depth presentation of their papers, directly followed by a brief feedback session on the same day, while an in-depth

feedback session follows each next day. This format (see the attached plan) builds in opportunities for both in-depth presentations and in-depth feedback. Arranging a subsequent in-depth feedback session on the following day furthermore creates additional time for reflection in between the sessions. This additional time also enables further reflection on the links between the papers, thereby strengthening the proposed special issue (and subsequent edited volume) with the proposed special issue editors using these discussions to generate the basis for an issue introduction. These themes will be further explored using the time available on Day 4 (see below), during which the strategic dimension of special issue planning and proposal development will be discussed.

Participants

Italo Brandimarte,
University of Cambridge

Marijn Hoijtink,
University of Antwerp

Katja Lindskov Jacobsen,
University of Copenhagen

Delf Rothe,
University of Hamburg

Rune Saugmann,
Tampere University

Digital International Relations. World politics in an age of synthetic media

Description

"Digital technologies are radically reshaping world politics, catapulting non-state actors into prominence, unleashing unprecedented torrents of information, and dramatically redrawing the contours of state sovereignty and global power dynamics" (ChatbotGPT).

Whether or not one agrees with the quote above from the Large Language Model (LLM) ChatbotGPT, digital technologies are undeniably exerting a growing influence on global politics. Technologies such as AI, machine learning, big data, cloud and quantum computing, or sensors of various types, shape how global politics is done, by whom and where it is done, and with what ends. No realm of international politics will be left unaffected by their use. Indeed, while technology has historically been deeply political, current academic and policy debates urgently point to new media's unprecedented "synthetic" properties (Bateson 2020; Jacobsen 2023; Steinhoff 2022). Not only are technologies used by humans to produce digital data. Increasingly, digital technologies generate their own datasets, correlations, and representations in ways that are 'not actually referring to real persons, objects, and events' (Jacobsen 2023: 2). With that development, they cannot be assumed to simply reproduce or entrench social biases or power relations. Rather, they produce new visions of 'the international', rewriting the ontology of global politics and our ways of accessing it.

Yet, IR as a discipline still lacks a conceptual vocabulary and an analytical apparatus to grasp the fundamental transformation of global politics through the digital. This is why our proposed symposium seeks to start a conversation on "Digital International Relations". Collectively we will explore approaches and methods to study the profound transformations of international relations through digital technologies and synthetic media. In taking these urgent empirical puzzles seriously, the "Digital IR" research agenda advances existing conversations in the discipline in important ways. We seek to develop new analytical approaches that help us make sense of the synthetic politics of digital technologies both conceptually and methodologically. In doing so, we aim at addressing IR's lack of attention to synthetic processes in world politics, currently limited to few isolated analyses that still shy away from generating broader theories, conversations, and approaches to the current transformations of the international.[1]

To develop this novel perspective, we will bring together various strands of scholarship, which thus far unfolded separately in specialized sub-disciplines of the field. The digital transformation of the international has been most intensively discussed in the field of Critical Security Studies and Military Studies. Existing work has highlighted not only how technologies are changing warfare but also how (extended) security is thought and practiced (Brandimarte 2022; Saugmann 2019; Suchman 2020). Increasingly, algorithms and neural networks are deciding who is considered suspicious and what is considered a security threat (Amoore and Raley 2017; Bellanova and de Goede 2022). At the same time, cloud infrastructures and digital platforms are shaping the structure of and practices within the security field (Hoijtink and Planqué-van Hardeveld 2022). In the field of development and humanitarian assistance, researchers have discussed how the digital intersects with and feeds into the emerging nexus between development and security (Duffield 2016; Jacobsen 2015; Jacobsen and Fast 2019; Nedelcu and Soysüren 2020; Rothe, Fröhlich, and Rodriguez Lopez 2021; Sandvik et al. 2014). While these scholars are often critical of the changes described, the literature on "peace tech" takes a more positive stance toward digital technology (Firchow et al. 2016; Hirblinger 2022). For example, it discusses the potential of geomapping, the use of smartphones, or social media in peace-building processes and emphasizes the crucial role of local ownership and stakeholder engagement in digital transformations. In the field of global environmental governance, existing work has pointed to the role of digital sensing, AI, or Big Data in sustainability transitions and in the governance of transnational environmental risks (Dauvergne 2020; Gabrys 2016; Rothe 2017). Given the lack of progress in many international environmental regimes, hope is pinned on digital technologies that are believed to monitor environmental change more accurately, manage scarce resources more efficiently, and help local populations adapt more smartly. Finally, in the field of diplomacy, recent scholarship has studied how video-conferencing platforms and other synthetic media are transforming diplomatic practice and thus a key arena of international relations (Adler-Nissen and Eggeling 2022; Eggeling and Adler-Nissen 2021).

The proposed symposium will bring together and synthesize the various strands of debate on digital technologies and global politics. For this, it will break with the conventional workshop format and instead use a combination of creative methods, which include short reflection papers in preparation of the meeting, collective mapping exercises, reflection walks, as well as experimentation with digital (visual) methods. In doing so, we seek to push the "Digital IR" agenda along three pathways:

- *Governing through the digital*: How do digital technologies transform global governance and its objects across policy domains and beyond the cyber (security) field?

- *Digitalizing the international*: How do digital technologies enact the international and how do they remake international relations at the polity and politics levels?

- *Doing digital IR*: How are we doing IR through and with digital technologies? How does it affect the production and circulation of knowledge as well as the ways we work together?