

Call for Papers: Reactionary World Politics—Past, Present, Future

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Convenors:

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Reactionary actors and ideas are now widespread in world politics. Major parties and movements have won elections and captured institutions by promising to recreate, in whole or in part, a mythologized past. Looking beyond their domestic contexts, networked reactionaries in Europe, Asia, North America, and elsewhere now also seek to revise or reject the existing patchwork of institutions, practices, and norms that make up international order. In short, they have made their presence pervasively and globally felt. Their recurring premise is that the past was better than the present: they seek the return of elements from an idealized past — and they do so increasingly in concert.

Populists, revanchists, the global right, and the illiberal left all critique and sometimes reject elements of today's world order. They claim that order is, by turns, elitist, nihilist, a thin cover for hierarchy, an imposition of the West on the rest, a betrayal of the West from within, and/or destructive of human flourishing. This workshop will investigate whether or not and how reactionary internationalisms and movements differ from these others — or if are they part of them. It asks what role a politics of nostalgia plays in today's contestations of world order.

The workshop invites submissions that help place reaction in global context. It will ask how reactionaries are distinct from other challengers to international order. Is reactionary internationalism a mode of disruption — a rhetorical style adopted by actors across a range of views and dispositions? Or do reactionaries constitute a distinct club of actors, with core underlying norms and beliefs? We will ask how past reactionary ideas and ideologies have varied and consider their intellectual roots. We will investigate the consequences of specifically reactionary modes of order disruption for the future of world politics.

We welcome submissions addressing, though not limited to, the following questions:

- How does reaction vary globally as a form of political ordering?
- How do reactionary rhetorics interact with populist, nationalist, and other ideological rhetorical forms?
- How do reactionary actors build networks across borders?
- How does political reaction inform or impact core phenomena in world politics, such as war, peace, trade, institutionalization?
- How have reactionaries theorized world politics? How do these theories differ across historical contexts?
- How have specific intellectuals or theorists of political reaction conceptualized world politics, from across global contexts?
- How does reaction interface with the politics of the internet and the tech industry?
- How does reaction interact with potential catastrophic events such as great power war, nuclear war, and climate change?