

Call for papers

**About the re-birth of cooperation in world politics:
Governing, balancing, ordering**

Convenors: Alina Isakova (alina.isakova@uni-bielefeld.de / alinaisakova13@gmail.com),
Martin Koch (martin.koch@uni-bielefeld.de)

Cooperation has for quite some time been a key characterization of world politics but seems to be outdated today. The current public debate and scholarship tend to (over-)emphasize competition among countries and the increased polarization in world politics. Despite various tensions and crises, cooperation is not absent but remains a mode of interaction among states and non-state actors alike. The workshop will focus on cooperation in an increasingly fractured world and aims to study forms and mechanisms of cooperation, taking into account its a/symmetrical nature and structures (social, political, or economic hierarchies) it is embedded in. At the same time, the discussion seeks to incorporate the variety of inter-actor relations, which are often narrowly defined as either cooperation or competition, yet cannot be fully captured by either description. To grasp the nuances and importance of such relations, we make use of three conceptual poles:

- (1) *Governing* – dealing with so-called ‘global challenges’, crises, and conflicts by global governance institutions, regional, and local actors. Here, we are interested in looking into how and in which formats collective global governance happens; actors’ strategies, roles, and positions in collective global governance; and how actors’ shared visions of common challenges can create an impetus for cooperation.
- (2) *Balancing* – managing a variety of competing interests, different priorities, and perspectives, especially against the backdrop of the ever-increasing emphasis on strategic competition and geopoliticization. Here, we will delve into the interplay between competition and cooperation and its impact on collective governance; how geopoliticization and regionalization reflect/impact the existing hierarchies; and the roles of non-state actors in sustaining/contesting these hierarchies.
- (3) *(Re)Ordering* – (re)producing existing norms, rules and practices or transforming them. While a lot has been written on the topic, we are interested in how we can better understand these processes through focusing on cooperation. For instance, we would look into how (re)ordering happens by means of and through cooperation among actors; the (prospective) transformations of the existing hierarchies through such (re)ordering; which actors and to what extent contribute/oppose/benefit from such processes.

These three conceptual poles aim at reflecting a broad international studies agenda, while focusing on what/how/with what effect happens in world politics. Approaching them from the perspective of cooperation allows us to move beyond the traditional IR approaches, and towards more interdisciplinary agenda in international studies. We thus invite participants to go beyond the dichotomy of cooperation/competition, social/political, local/global in their analysis, while (where applicable) making use of the growing scholarship on hierarchies in world politics and/or critical international studies. The participants could focus on one of the conceptual poles, the interplay thereof, or suggest other important dimensions of world politics that reflect the current state of affairs and transformations.