

International Relations in times of Transformations

Call for papers. Doctoral Conference University of Sussex. 28th-29th May 2020

In April 2019, Nancy Fraser wrote a pamphlet *The Old is Dying and the New Cannot Be Born*. Written in reaction to Trump's election, the pamphlet discussed the transformations underway as the global hegemony of neoliberalism collapses around us. The Gramsci quote selected as the title of the pamphlet has been the hackneyed slogan of our times for at least a decade. Writing in 2010 for *Monthly Review*, Stephen Gill similarly used the quote to describe the 'global organic crisis' of neoliberalism triggered by the financial crisis. We are in a time of transformations. We have been for a while.

The thrust of the often repeated Gramsci's quote was on the 'morbid symptoms' of the 'interregnum' between the old and the new. This conference instead invites submissions to imagine we are post-interregnum. What is the new world order we now inhabit ten years after the financial crisis?

Such transformations are multiple. Extractivist capitalism has triggered planetary transformation and environmental collapse. Fascist and far-right movements are resurgent in the likes of Trump, Bolsonaro and Modi. A decade of quantitative easing has created a political economy of inflated asset prices and a precariously leveraged shadow banking system. A generation of 'post-'neoliberalism has created a state of constant precarity. The rise of the gig economy and hostile environment has solidified violent and unstable labour and immigration conditions. At the same time, protests in Hong Kong, uprisings in West Asia and North Africa and beyond, and the emergence of Extinction Rebellion and other climate justice movements have revealed how new resistances are shaped by and are shaping these transformations.

International Relations scholarship takes a specific place in the movement and interpretation of such transformations at the nexus of knowledge production and power. The field accrues power and produces material effects by foregrounding certain processes, relationships and subjectivities at the expense of others. As a result, the embedded power relations of institutionalised schools of thought can lead to a blindness towards unfolding social

transformations and be complicit in stymying new approaches and politics. By contrast, theory also has the power to upend our understanding of the world by focusing on that which was previously ignored, marginalised, and deemed irrelevant. Recent theoretical contributions in international relations and related disciplines have achieved this by uncovering the roots of the discipline in colonial administration, by mining the archives of scholars excluded from the canon, by tracing a legacy of white supremacy in cherished theoretical approaches, by locating the routine, everyday violence (in policing, immigration, labour, administration, medicine, and knowledge production) that reproduces liberal states, and by tracing the generative role of gendered and sexualized imaginaries in foreign policy, war, and political economy. To this extent, the conference also asks how International Relations is engaged and/or complicit in this process of transformation and our understanding of it?

Reflecting upon the contested nature of theoretical and worldly transformations, we invite papers and panels from a range of disciplines including international relations, global political economy, security studies, international theory.

The conference takes place at the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK. It will be held Thursday 28th and Friday 29th May 2020. The conference is organised by doctoral researchers in the Department of International Relations at the University of Sussex. The conference is open to everyone, but we particularly encourage PhD researchers and early career scholars to apply.

Please send 200 word abstracts to IRtransconf@sussex.ac.uk by Friday 28th February 2020.

Papers/panels could address:

- Transformations in the politics of knowledge production
- Political economy of fascism
- Gender and sexuality in international politics
- Finance & everyday life
- Decolonising knowledge production

- Global health, resilience, medicine and psychiatry
- Political economy of the household
- Technological transformation and power
- Cybersecurity and the socio-technical construction of power
- Central banking politicisation/depolicitisation
- Alternative theoretical and methodological approaches
- Algorithmic security, big data, and AI
- Politics of -centrisms and the emergence of national schools of IR