

University of St Gallen, Switzerland

'International Organization(s) in Crisis'

Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS) Biennial Conference

13-14 June 2023, St Gallen, Switzerland

During the past two decades, practitioners and scholars have witnessed a series of crises – financial, health, security, democratic, and climate – that have increased risk and uncertainty for individuals, states, and international organizations. As we seemingly head into an era of multiple and overlapping crises simultaneously unfolding at different speeds, what are the consequences and prospects for international organisation and its attendant organizations? How are international organisations affected by and responding to a world in crisis?

For the SNIS 2023 conference to be held at the University of St. Gallen, we invite paper proposals that focus on this broad theme and consider its implications across four tracks: technology and security, norms and normativity, governance and policy, as well as methods and methodologies.

You might consider the following questions to generate proposals:

- How should we think about international *security* in a world where international organisation and organisations face crisis?
- How are power shifts and *technological change* contributing to a re-shaping of governance in international *security*?
- What are the effects of these multiple crises on the international *normative* order? Is the international *normative* order itself in crisis?
- How are actors reaffirming and transforming shared standards of *appropriateness*? What might (*international*) *political theory* contribute to these discussions?
- How have international organisations such as the EU tackled *policy making* in crisis?
- How do states of crisis affect *legitimacy and membership* in international governance arrangements?
- Are traditional *methodological* approaches to the study of international organisation and international organisations sufficient for understanding current challenges?

Submission details

Please submit your abstracts for consideration online ([Submission Process | IPW | University of St.Gallen \(unisg.ch\)](#)). For further information on the conference and its theme, please visit [SNIS 2023 conference | IPW | University of St.Gallen \(unisg.ch\)](#). For questions, please contact conference.SNIS@unisg.ch.

We encourage submissions from early career scholars and those belonging to traditionally under-represented or disadvantaged groups such as the global south and scholars at risk. There are no registration or participations fees for this conference. Catering will be provided by the organizers. Moreover, a few travel and accommodation grants are available for scholars in need.

The deadline for submissions is November 14th, 2022.

Details about the conference tracks

Security and technology

This track is concerned with how we think about international security in an emerging world order increasingly characterised by the juxtaposition of both order and disorder, making and unmaking. The rise of new powers and the proliferation of new technologies is contributing to a sense of growing uncertainty about international cooperation and governance.

We seek contributions that address a range of questions including (but not limited to): how is a rapidly changing technological environment (including cyber, nuclear, conventional and autonomous weapons) affecting human security, strategic policy, and the international legal order? What kind of security governance structures may be needed to confront proliferating crises? How might international organisations affect and be affected by the emergence of new powers?

Norms and normativity

While it is a truism to state that international organization is taking place in a time of crisis – or even crises –, it is much less clear how the normative underpinnings of international organization react to these multiple crises. After all, if we understand norms as ‘shared expectations’, it is norms that allow us to make a distinction between ‘normal times’ and ‘times of crisis’ in the first place. They tell us what ‘is normal’ and what ‘ought to be’. From this perspective, a crisis constitutes a moment to reassert norms (resilience) as well as an opportunity to transform them – be it by developing them further (innovation) or by undermining them (unmaking).

We are looking for papers that share an interest in how norms are (re)produced as they are referenced and contested in times of crisis. This includes the possibility that it is not just external crises that put pressure on specific international norms but that the international normative order itself is in crisis. Papers could look at norms from an empirical perspective, asking how actors reaffirm and transform shared standards of appropriateness in international relations, or from a normative perspective, asking what (international) political theory contributes to discussions on the reaffirmation and transformation of international norms in times of crises.

Governance and policy

This track is concerned with crisis modes of policy making and institutional arrangements that result from the management of and response to transboundary crises. First, crises have been considered both as promoters and as threats to international cooperation. Regardless of whether they further or endanger international cooperation, the making of international and supranational organizations and their policies can hardly be disentangled from crises. Second, and given the overlap of different crises, governments are faced with having to make trade-offs, which may undermine or reinforce policies to achieve long-term targets, such as climate change mitigation.

On the one hand, we seek contributions that address crisis modes of international policy-making such as packages to recover from the Covid19 pandemic. On the other hand, we welcome contributions dealing with state(s) of crisis of international governance arrangements such as concerned with issues of legitimacy and membership.

Methods and methodologies

For this track, we welcome paper proposals that address questions relating to how we study International Organization and its attendant organizations. Have we properly conceptualized and operationalized key concepts and collected the appropriate data for assessing outcomes? Are existing rational and sociological approaches to institutional analysis sufficient or does the subfield of IO need to expand the toolbox and take account of new research approaches in political science, economics and international law?