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The Geneva Policy Outlook

DOSSIER

The Global Disinformation Order

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L'ÉDITORIAL

At a Crossroads – Let Us Choose Integrity!

Marie-Laure Salles
Director

Humankind and its host planet are at a crossroads as they have never been before. We live in a new age of radical uncertainty, defined by an entangled set of existential challenges and long-running structural paradoxes.

The existential challenges of our age – whether speaking about war and a return of the nuclear threat, the climate, the destruction of biodiversity and vital resources, extreme inequalities and their profoundly disruptive social and political consequences, future pandemics, cyberwars and systemic disinformation – all have a commonality: they are truly global and cannot be addressed without collaboration and joint action.

The structural dynamics that have fuelled this new age of existential challenges and radical uncertainty are continuing paradoxical trends in the evolution of humanity that have become particularly visible in the twentieth century. We have produced, as a species, immense riches, yet those riches are increasingly shared unequally. We have realised, furthermore, that to produce those material and human-made riches, we have destroyed non-renewable and vital natural resources that, in the end, condition our ability to survive as individuals and as a species. In the last century, we have created knowledge on an unprecedented scale, yet we have to face increasingly powerful dynamics of mis- and dis-information. Our technological capabilities are unprecedented, yet an invisible virus can instil existential *angst* and bring us to a halt. And while we have never been as widely and deeply connected as today, never have we felt at the same time as profoundly lonely. The generational psychological breakdown, which is a contemporary global phenomenon, clearly shows this – another worrying dimension of the spirit of our times!

Those structural paradoxical trends are largely responsible for the current succession and interplay of crises that make collective mobilisation particularly necessary.

The ultimate paradox, though, is that those structural trends are also in large part responsible for bringing along a *zeitgeist* of fragmentation and re-enclosing, across states and regions of the world but also within societies. The consequence is a weaker architecture of transnational collaboration and multi-lateral governance.

“Tomorrow is today”, as Martin Luther King affirmed a few days before he was killed. “We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now.” The time has come to focus on what has to be done. We need multilateralism and a global governance architecture, this much is clear. But it is also undeniable that our current system needs courageous transformation and reinvention – as we are facing the tough challenge of fostering cooperation in a deeply fragmented world. In that context, courage is an imperative, as I proposed in *Globe’s* last issue. When the urgency of survival galvanises courageous mobilisation, then everything becomes possible, even the impossible, as the father of Europe, Jean Monnet, said – and showed.

Courage implies, and is unthinkable without, integrity. One wonders – but this shall remain here a hypothesis – whether many of the problems that we are currently facing do not stem in fact from a long-running absence of integrity – particularly in places of power and decision-making at all levels and in all sectors. Integrity comes from the Latin *integritas*, the state of being whole, complete, but also sound (in mind). The etymological exercise takes us even one step further, to the verb *integrare*, which means to repair but also to renew, to start again, to recreate!

In the current turn of the times, as we are standing at a possible existential crossroads, let us have the courage of integrity – in its double sense of soundness and responsibility, but also of creativity and reinvention. These should be the skills of today’s leaders, leaders preparing for peace in spite of the deafening noises of war.



L'INSTITUT

The Geneva Policy Outlook

Achim Wennmann
Director for Strategic Partnerships

The Geneva Graduate Institute launched a new initiative in 2022 entitled “Geneva Policy Outlook”. This initiative aims to shape and accelerate the adaptation of International Geneva as a global hub in a rapidly changing world, and is advanced in partnership with the Swiss Confederation, the Republic and State of Geneva, the City of Geneva and the Fondation pour Genève.

The Geneva Policy Outlook is a finger on the pulse of Geneva’s policy space and helps in understanding multilateral negotiations or institutional reform processes. In practical terms, this means advancing three sets of activities in an integrated way: community building between senior policy-makers and thinkers from International Geneva and other global hubs, strategic convening on emerging global trends or issues, and the production of an annual *Geneva Policy Outlook* published on www.genevapolicyoutlook.ch.

The *Geneva Policy Outlook 2023* publication features 18 articles in English, French and German on global issues to watch and key negotiations and reform processes happening in Geneva. It includes initial reflections from the pilot phase about how to keep Geneva relevant as a global hub in the future, underlining that complexity is the new “capital” of International Geneva.

Harnessing complexity into something that is operationally valuable to address global common challenges will be at the heart of Geneva’s continued relevance. However, it will need a lot of courage to walk the talk of change. The Geneva Policy Outlook also highlights that multilateral negotiations continue to be relevant for dealing with key challenges in the long term; yet, in the current era of rapid change, an even stronger connection to the insight and experience from outside the formal diplomatic world of governments is important to speed and scale-up change. This is where “classic” diplomacy needs to reinvent itself and open up to other sectors.

Moderating the interaction between multilateral negotiations and more agile and inclusive approaches to global governance will likely become a more important field of activity for International Geneva. As part of this moderation, it will be critical for Geneva to stay connected to what is happening in other hubs around the world dealing with global commons issues. Geneva should therefore stay global in its identity so that it can have the legitimacy to deal with global commons challenges. It should remain a global city in the heart of Europe, and not become just another city in the Global North.

By focusing on the research-policy interface and on community building, the Geneva Policy Outlook inscribes itself in the continuity of the redefinition of the Institute’s vision and mission and of the collective work that “opens creative spaces for diverse communities and fosters the understanding and engagement essential to a peaceful, equitable and sustainable world”.

→ www.genevapolicyoutlook.ch

From right to left: Achim Wennmann (Geneva Graduate Institute), Manon Blancafort (UNIDIR), Dmitry Grozoubski (Geneva Trade Platform), Suerie Moon (Geneva Graduate Institute) and Sonia Peña Moreno (IUCN) during the launch of the Geneva Policy Outlook at the Geneva Graduate Institute. 31 January 2023. Boris PALEFROY.



L'INSTITUT

Teams from Africa and Europe Win 2022 Geneva Challenge on Poverty Reduction

Geneva Challenge finalist teams, jury members and managing team during the award ceremony. 22 November 2022. Eric ROSET.

The Geneva Challenge, created thanks to the vision and generosity of Swiss Ambassador Jenö Staehelin and under the patronage of the late Kofi Annan, is an annual contest that encourages master students to bridge the gap between their studies and real development policy by developing innovative and practical proposals for effecting change.

For the 2022 edition, teams of graduate students from all over the world presented innovative and pragmatic solutions to address the challenges of poverty reduction. Out of 86 project entries submitted by 344 students, 18 teams were chosen as semi-finalists. A jury then selected five finalist teams, one per continent, to defend their projects at the Geneva Graduate Institute on 22 November 2022.

This year, the jury exceptionally chose two projects for first place: the team from the Pan African University Institute of Water and Energy Sciences (PAUWES) with their project "JACCA Agro-Warehouse Integrated Solutions", and the team from the London School of Economics and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine with their "Project Connect".

JACCA Agro-Warehouse Integrated Solutions proposes a system of warehouse and storage facilities to reduce the post-harvest losses of rural farmers in the North-West of Cameroon while also offering them easier access to capacity building and microfinance. Project Connect proposes using high-school student internships to identify individuals that would be eligible for Indian government welfare schemes but who are currently not enrolled to increase the enrolment rates and effect of the state system.

Second place went to the team from Latin America with their project "What a Waste (Water)!", which proposed adopting a decentralised wastewater treatment system for favelas in Brazil. The teams from North America ("Sahaja Project") and Asia ("ePASADA") won the third prizes.

In her introductory remarks during the award ceremony, Marie-Laure Salles, Director of the Geneva Graduate Institute, stressed the value of young voices for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Elhadj As Sy, Chair of the Board of the Kofi Annan Foundation and former Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), discussed the paths towards poverty reduction, stressing the importance of equity and international cooperation. His speech was followed by a conversation with Martina Viarengo, Associate Professor of International Economics and Chair of the Academic Steering Committee for the Geneva Challenge.

In his congratulatory speech, Michael Møller, President of the Jury, announced the theme for the 10th edition of the Geneva Challenge, which calls upon graduate students from around the world to develop innovative solutions that address the global challenges of loneliness.

→ www.graduateinstitute.ch/TheGenevaChallenge

L'INSTITUT

A New Sanction and Sustainable Peace Hub at the Institute

Interview with Grégoire Mallard, Professor, Anthropology and Sociology, and Director of Research, and Erica Moret, Senior Researcher at the Global Governance Centre and Visiting Lecturer, International Relations/Political Science

You are co-managing the Sanction and Sustainable Peace Hub. In which context was it created and what are its objectives and priority projects?

The Geneva Graduate Institute has long been a champion of sanctions research. Our colleague in political science, Thomas Biersteker – widely considered as one of the founding fathers of sanctions scholarship – has run a wide range of sanctions-related projects, as well as creating the Targeted Sanctions Consortium, from which its evaluations of UN targeted sanctions have been issued in academic publications and practitioner-oriented apps. He was also part of the multistakeholder group that worked towards the creation of targeted sanctions just over 20 years ago, which were instigated in response to the public outcry associated with humanitarian impacts of the comprehensive sanctions regimes imposed by the United Nations (UN) against Iraq, Haiti and the former Yugoslavia, and by the United States (US) against Cuba.

Over the course of the last decade, other research projects on sanctions at the Institute have added to this body of expertise and capacity on this ever-popular tool of foreign and security policy, both in terms of varied academic disciplines and growing sanctions practices outside the UN framework. Indeed, the use of sanctions in diplomatic policymaking worldwide has increased exponentially in recent years, by countries across the Global North, but also the Global South; sanctions have also become far more complex. In light of these factors, we created the Sanction and Sustainable Peace Hub to showcase relevant research and wider activities on sanctions carried out at the Geneva Graduate Institute. We hope the hub can serve as a platform for future research and policy

engagement on a diverse set of sanctions-related topics, able to respond flexibly to developments in this fast-changing and increasingly prominent field.

What is the complementarity of your expertise and what can it bring to the hub?

Erica Moret – The complementarity of our research comes from the diversity of our backgrounds. I have been covering the topic for 20 years from both an academic and policy perspective, studying sanctions in relation to Russia, Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba and Venezuela, as well as in connection with conflict resolution, security guarantees in the Ukraine context, chemical weapons, cyber-attacks, alignment and leadership, the global COVID-19 pandemic and modern slavery/human trafficking. More recently, I have provided evidence on sanctions to the US Congress, both United Kingdom Houses of Parliament, the Canadian Senate and the European Parliament. The bulk of my work now focuses on the unintended humanitarian consequences of sanctions, including in relation to humanitarian assistance, migrant remittances, financial inclusion and over-compliance in the financial and private sectors. This includes applied research, strategic advisory roles and coordination of multistakeholder dialogues on behalf of UN agencies, the European Union, Global Affairs Canada and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). I also taught master's courses on sanctions at the Institute and Sciences Po and offer capacity building and training courses on sanctions for humanitarian actors at the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies, the UN Secretariat and Polisync Centre for International Policy Engagement.



Erica Moret and
Grégoire Mallard.
March 2022.
Boris PALEFROY.

Grégoire Mallard – I came to sanctions research from an interest in nuclear nonproliferation and in the global governance of trade and finance, which were the subjects of my first and second monographs. In my project “Bombs, Banks and Sanctions”, which is funded by the European Research Council, I built a team with Aurel Niederberger (now working at the FDFA), Farzan Sabet (Researcher at the UN Institute for Disarmament Research) and Jin Sun (now Assistant Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong), which focused on US sanctions programmes and their effects on the transformation of the global regulation of finance. Together with Erica Moret and Jin Sun, we combined our expertise to design a Swiss Network for International Studies-funded project entitled “When Money Can’t Buy Food and Medicine” on the unforeseen disruptions of global value chains in the humanitarian sector, out of which the idea of creating the hub emerged. We are also working together, alongside a Swiss film team, to create a documentary on sanctions and financial sector “de-risking”.

What unintended effects can they produce? Do promises of sanction-lifting persuasively bring sanctioned governments to the negotiating table? As you can imagine, answers to these questions widely vary and it would be impossible to give you a simple answer in two lines. Building on existing scholarship, our recent research is original in changing the kinds of questions asked and focusing on the effects of sanctions on the global and transnational networks of power, which can cause bottlenecks in the flows of financial instruments, traded goods and supply chains.

→ www.graduateinstitute.ch/sanction-sustainable-peace-hub

Are sanctions an effective tool for peace? From your perspective, were they useful against Iran and are they useful against Russia?

For a long time, sanctions researchers have sought to answer precisely those kinds of questions: What are the best methodologies to evaluate whether sanctions are commensurate with the policy goals and do they achieve the latter?



L'INSTITUT

Institute's UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education Policy

Interview with Gita Steiner-Khamsi, first Chair holder, and Chanwoong Baek, Co-Chair

On 21 February 2023, the Geneva Graduate Institute inaugurated the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education Policy, created to strengthen policy research in education with the vision of amplifying the voices and promoting knowledge from the Global South. Professor Gita Steiner-Khamsi, the 2017–2022 Academic Director for the Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training (NORRAG), will serve as the first Chair. Professor Chanwoong Baek, current Academic Director of NORRAG and faculty member in the International Relations and Political Science Department, has been appointed as the Co-Chair. The announcement was made at the annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, held this year in Washington, D.C.

Why was the creation of this UNESCO chair necessary? What is its purpose?

Gita Steiner-Khamsi: The main purpose of the chair programme is to strengthen policy research in education in ways that help surface, amplify and disseminate expertise and scholarship from the Global South. The designation of the chair programme is in studies of comparative education policy. More often than not, reforms in education, or in other sectors for that matter, are designed in the Global North and then catapulted to the Global South. National experts are then reduced to local adapters and implementers of these imported reforms. We attempt to tackle this asymmetry. In fact, there is currently a large gap that yawns

in international cooperation between the international rhetoric of national ownership and the acknowledgement of national expertise. The study and research of policy studies at the graduate level will help to bring to light and help “certify”, at the international level, the knowledge and expertise that already exist in Global South countries.

What actions will you take as Chair?

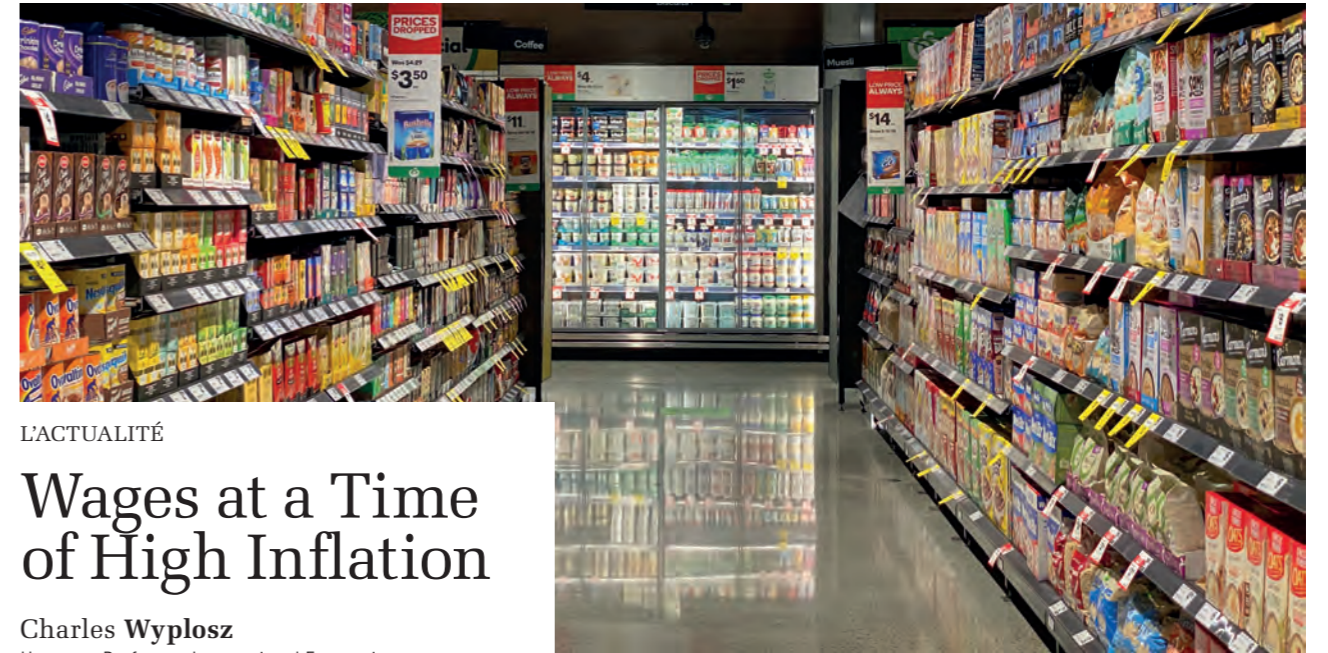
Gita Steiner-Khamsi: UNESCO is known for its convening power vis-à-vis governments and government officials. In other words, governments lend their ears to UNESCO. Drawing on UNESCO’s unique position, the chair programme focuses on policy brokerage, that is, promotes the use of research evidence for policy decisions. We will actively support scholars from the Global South to communicate their research effectively by preparing knowledge products in diverse formats and disseminating them through various channels, including video and social media. NORRAG brings substantive experience in this area and serves as an honest broker that bridges research and policy, the local and the global, and the producers and users of knowledge.

(Continued on next page)



How will this Chair connect the work of researchers at the Institute with global actors?

Chanwoong Baek: The Geneva Graduate Institute is situated in an ideal environment as it enables us to build a close collaboration with its researchers and centres. Indeed, many of the researchers and students study global governance and public policy, and closely work with IOs, governments, NGOs and academic institutions located in International Geneva and beyond, bridging knowledge production and uptake for policy and planning. We will collaborate with the academic departments, programmes and centres not only to amplify the existing research, teaching and outreach activities but also to organise new initiatives that promote the right to education and explore collaboratively how education impacts other sectors such as environment, health or migration. For example, contributing to the recent efforts to strengthen education policy studies at the Institute, we wish to invite periodically a senior faculty member from the Global South to teach a course or a series of workshops online at the Institute. We also plan to encourage and organise the development of research projects and PhD/master projects that engage issues in comparative and international education policy.



L'ACTUALITÉ

Wages at a Time of High Inflation

Charles Wyplosz

Honorary Professor, International Economics

Since the end of 2021, inflation has surged in developed countries to levels unseen for two decades or more. Inflation hurts most people. Depending on the country, employees have seen their purchasing power decline by some 5% to 15% in a short time. It would seem obvious that their earnings must be adjusted proportionately and quickly. Experience shows that this will happen, eventually. The question is: when should it happen?

From a fairness point of view, the answer is that it should be done right away. Yet, an immediate and proportional increase raises the production cost of firms, which will need to raise their prices. If wages follow suit, an inflation spiral will ensue with no end in sight. As everyone tries to raise prices and wages faster than others, inflation can continue rising. Inflation becomes a very divisive issue, with the weaker people invariably finding themselves on the losing side.

This is why it is imperative to stop inflation as early as possible. This is the task of central banks, because they alone have an effective, albeit painful, tool. By discouraging employees and firms from playing the “price hike” game, banks can then raise interest rates, which reduces spending, hence leading firms to moderate price increases. As sales weaken, firms cut into their hiring plans or fire employees. Rising unemployment, in turn, discourages wage increases. But between a recession and high unemployment, everyone loses.

Is there a less painful way to stunt the inflation spiral? Price and wage have been tried all over the world for decades but the record is highly disappointing. Controls initially work, but when they are released, inflation comes back with a vengeance as firms and employees seek to make up for their losses. If the controls last, they are gradually circumvented, as black markets arise in response to scarcity. Another popular temptation is to make inflation painless by indexing prices

and wages. The result, known as inertial inflation, is the surest route to ever-rising price increases. When traditional monetary policy is finally used, it must be even tougher.

Probably, the least painful approach is to combine standard monetary policy with voluntary wage moderation. Limiting wage increases early on may blunt the inflation spiral before it takes a life on its own. For the employees, it obviously means losses in purchasing power. They must be reassured that, once inflation subsides, wages will be progressively raised to fully catch up with prices. An additional temporary compensation for purchasing power losses accumulated in the interim period is not just fair but also stands to obtain an agreement in the first place. Wage moderation may seem like wishful thinking but it has been happening to some degree in many countries.

Franki CHAMAKI/
Unsplash

Iran : une crise ou une révolution ?

Mohammad-Reza Djalili

Professeur honoraire, histoire et politique internationales

Le 16 septembre 2022, le décès de Mahsa Amini, trois jours après son arrestation par la police des mœurs sous prétexte du port inapproprié du voile islamique obligatoire, déclenche immédiatement un tollé sans précédent dans tout le pays et plus particulièrement chez les jeunes femmes, bientôt rejointes par les jeunes hommes. De la rue, la contestation gagne les universités, puis les collèges et même les écoles. Ainsi débute la plus grave crise politique que va connaître la République islamique d'Iran depuis sa fondation.

Pourtant, l'histoire de cette république est semée de crises. Rien que dans les années 2000, elle en a connu trois importantes : 2009, réélection contestée de Mahmoud Ahmadinejad pour un deuxième mandat présidentiel ; fin 2017 et début 2018, vague de manifestations rapidement et violemment écrasées après l'annonce par le gouvernement de nouvelles mesures d'austérité économique ; novembre 2019, protestation massive contre l'augmentation du prix du carburant, réprimée dans un bain de sang sans précédent.

En quoi la dernière crise est-elle différente des précédentes ?

Elle se produit d'abord dans un climat politique interne difficile. En juin 2021, Ebrahim Raïssi, un mollah ultraconservateur au passé trouble, est élu président avec le taux de participation le plus faible de l'histoire de la République islamique.

Autre particularité : ce sont les femmes qui, très courageusement, ont déclenché cette crise – les femmes, premières victimes de la révolution islamique et de son système oppressif depuis plus de quarante ans, citoyennes de second rang soumises à de nombreuses restrictions touchant à leur vie individuelle, familiale et publique.

Cette contestation de la situation déplorable faite aux femmes se transforme durant l'automne 2022 en un mouvement de rejet généralisé du régime. Cette évolution s'explique du fait que le sort des femmes ne peut être séparé de celui des hommes et que, par ailleurs, toutes les composantes de la population iranienne ont des raisons valables de mécontentement. Le slogan « femme, vie, liberté » reflète bien ce que veulent les Iraniens et Iraniennes : le respect des droits humains, la justice et la démocratie, qui, sans une séparation de la religion de la politique, ne peuvent se concevoir.

En outre, ce qui différencie la situation qui prévaut en Iran depuis six mois est aussi sa dimension internationale.



L'ensemble de la diaspora iranienne encourage et soutient les luttes internes.

Enfin, la nature non violente du soulèvement et son caractère non religieux ont attiré la sympathie d'une part importante de l'opinion internationale. La répression féroce exercée par le pouvoir islamique, les arrestations arbitraires, la mort de plus de 500 personnes, dont une soixantaine d'enfants, la condamnation à mort de quatre manifestants par une justice expéditive ont contribué à amplifier l'empathie pour cette population qui a entrepris de se battre pour ses droits les plus élémentaires.

IRAN, Téhéran. Ce grand panneau d'affichage présentant un montage de photos de femmes iraniennes célèbres toutes voilées avait été érigé par l'organisation Owj Arts et Media, connue pour produire des œuvres culturelles et des films soutenant la révolution islamique. Le vendredi 14 octobre 2022, il a été changé et ne présentait plus que le texte sur un fond blanc. Plusieurs femmes s'étaient plaintes de l'utilisation de leur image dans le montage qui insinue que les femmes représentées portent le voile de manière volontaire. 13 octobre 2022. STR/AFP

Resurgence in Translation

Umut Yildirim

Assistant Professor, Anthropology and Sociology

The current uprising in Iran is thoroughly transnational, raising important questions about translation politics, beyond the tired binary of hijab-wearing Muslim victim versus white/white-identified Western saviour. The category of "Iranian women" in these discourses both reproduces an apolitical politics of the hijab that reifies Iran as an isolated location and castrates the many engagements and dream worlds of women living in Iran as agentive makers of politics. But when women in Iran support the Revolution, debate Islamic patriarchy and hijab, or challenge the colonial efforts of the Iranian state to suppress Kurdish demands, they create a rich field of political debate. It is worth noting that the slogan adopted by dissenting Iranians today – "Woman, Life, Freedom" – originated in the liberation struggle of Kurdish women in the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

The problem with categories such as "Iranian women" is not only that this figure has historically been imagined in the "West" as oppressed by default and thus appreciable only when it rebels to political Islam, but also that it has been used to produce Iranian difference as an ontological dysfunction in need of rectification via "Free World" correctives. These binary translations of Iranian politics have been vitalised by a humanitarian redemption politics that hermeneutically seals off its obsession with women's oppression in a chimerical Muslim world from backyard Western instances of religious fundamentalism, as when, after 50 years, *Roe v Wade* is overturned. Such binary translations that situate Iran as a facsimile of a unified Muslim world with an Orientalising twist erase the varied factors that shaped it: transnational, intersecting and contested colonial-imperial histories that give breath to various registers of religious fundamentalism in Iran and beyond; herstories that question and repudiate all forms of political violence against "Women, Lives, and Freedoms" in the plural.

How can Iran be turned into a location-based but location-unbound analytic? Celebrating so-called revolutions in countries we have little knowledge of – spoken in colonial and minoritarian languages we don't speak about, challenges to legal and doctrinal traditions we have no knowledge of, in insistent scenes of public debate and political action we barely recognise – only results in a projection of what we fear most, the suppression of our own liberties and tacit consent to the suppression of



the liberties of those living beyond our comfort zones. This "Iran as analytic" gestures towards a transnational form of convergence that brings the incommensurability of our experiences and coalitions more centrally to our feminist politics and resurgent power and dreams.

SWEDEN, Stockholm. Demonstration in support of the Iran protests. 6 October 2022. Artin BAKHAN/Unsplash

Afghan Refugees: An Everlasting Plight

Salvatore **Lombardo**, Visiting Professor
and Alessandro **Monsutti**, Professor, Anthropology and Sociology



PAKISTAN, Peshawar. Afghan refugees in the streets of Karkhanai bazaar. 11 August 2019. Selcuk ONER/iStock

Directly following the withdrawal of American troops, the Taliban retook Kabul in August 2021, 20 years after having been ousted from power by a US-led international intervention. It was a new dramatic development in an endless series of conflicts since the Communist *coup d'état* of 1978. During the past 45 years, Afghans have consistently constituted one of the biggest displaced populations in the world. The image of the dramatic airlift evacuation of some 120,000 Afghans from the Kabul Airport in August 2021 is in everyone's memory, while what happened at the land borders of Afghanistan attracted less public attention in the West.

Last year, 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees were found living in Pakistan. People who hold a Proof of Registration (valid until June 2023) have access to education and health. Another 600,000 Afghans are undocumented, whilst 840,000 people hold an Afghan citizenship card. 300,000 Afghans are estimated to have entered Pakistan since the Taliban regained power. During winter 2022–2023, Islamabad authorities rounded up unregistered Afghans for an unprecedented and massive deportation, a practice criticised in the past by humanitarian organisations and largely found ineffective because of the porous borders between the two countries.

In Iran, the situation is equally worrying. Approximately 780,000 Afghans are recognised as refugees with an additional estimated 2.1 to 2.6 million remaining undocumented. One million new arrivals were reported in Iran since the summer of 2021; however, most were deported back to Afghanistan.

In 2021 Afghans were the largest asylum-seeking group worldwide, with thousands of people also internally displaced in Afghanistan. More than half of the population needs humanitarian aid with a vast majority of Afghan families spending over 90% of their assets just to secure food.

The current deterioration of the human rights' situation in Afghanistan and the increased humanitarian needs of the population at large beg the question as to the effectiveness of the international embargo as well as the distinction between registered refugees and undocumented people. Afghans have responded to hardship by developing transnational networks. Relying on an unlikely voluntary return to Afghanistan, deportations (from Iran and Pakistan but also from Western countries), or resettlement whilst the country faces one of the most dire times in its history is not sustainable. Instead of boxing Afghans in existing definitions and restraining Afghanistan through isolation and sanctions, it is crucial to recognise mobility as a key form of livelihood, more important today than ever, and to rely on the resilience of people, especially those living abroad or crossing international borders.

“It's the Occupation, Stupid”

Cyrus **Schayegh**
Professor, International History and Politics



ISRAEL, Tel Aviv. Protests continue against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government's judicial regulations and far-right policies. 18 February 2023. Mostafa ALKHAROUF/Anadolu Agency/AFP

Israel's current 37th government is the most far-right of its history. Even conservatives like ex-Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon think especially one coalition party, Itamar Ben-Gvir's Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Strength), is “fascist”. Its platform calls for “total war on Israel's enemies”.

The government has been materialising a rightwing drift since the 2000s. This drift has a basic cause. It's not the Orthodox community's growth, though its youth like voting for non-Orthodox ultranationalist religious parties. Nor is it Prime Minister (PM) Benjamin Netanyahu's legal troubles, since 2019, though these have made him legitimise ultranationalism and fascism to remain PM and evade judgment by hook or crook. And while the Israeli centre-left's disunity matters, and though the illiberal drift of democracies like Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and India play a contextual international role, they are not key either.

What's key is the 1967 occupation and following settlement of Gaza and the West Bank. Sure, Israel was not a perfect democracy before: in 1948–66 Palestinian Israeli citizens lived under military rule. But since 1967, state-supported settlement has both slowly radicalised and mainstreamed some religious forms of Zionism, a process accentuated by the traumas of the 1990s Oslo Peace Process, the 2000–2005 Second Intifada, and the Gaza settlements' evacuation in 2005. Hardline settlers have been formidable political organisers too.

By the later 2010s, their worldview had reshaped the Likud Party, marginalising old-style liberal nationalists like Benny Begin, producing laws like “Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People” (2018), and preparing the ground for Naftali Bennett to become Prime Minister in 2021–22.

Now, occupation-cum-settlement has fully boomeranged, taking over Israel. The religious-nationalistic and by now fascist impulses resulting from hundreds of thousands of settlers' and soldiers' decades-long daily confrontation with occupied Palestinians are shaping Israel's government to an unprecedented degree.

And now, the illiberalism innate to these impulses is threatening the foremost check in Israel, which lacks a constitution and has only one parliamentary chamber, on a majoritarian democracy: the judicial system, in particular the Supreme Court.

Yet Jewish Israelis who are now for very good reason protesting are still not addressing the Occupation. (Few Palestinian Israelis are joining them.) But without equality for Palestinian Israeli citizens, and without a solution to the century-long drama of Palestinian statelessness, now more remote than ever, Israel will never be a liberal democracy, even though it is a trusted US partner and – let's not forget – an Associated Member of the European Union.

Propaganda has always existed. As we know at least since Machiavelli, deceit, manipulation and outright lies are part and parcel of diplomacy. The emergence of new technologies (algorithms, social media) and the frantic growth of digitalisation (big data), however, have profoundly transformed the global information landscape. As the importance of traditional media is constantly eroding, disinformation, fake news and the manipulation of public opinion have grown exponentially. Accordingly, new information technologies have been likened to “weapons of mass destruction” as governments around the world use disinformation campaigns, trolls and bots – sometimes with the help of private companies – to influence and control their citizens, discredit their opponents, project power, or interfere with electoral processes both at home and abroad. Illiberal and authoritarian governments, in particular, aim to fragilise social contracts abroad by polluting public fora with noise and fake news and launching targeted disinformation campaigns, while frequently continuing to rely on more traditional propaganda and media such as state-controlled television at home. An environment in which information serves no longer critical self-reflection and debate, but merely the magnifying and buttressing of pre-fabricated beliefs and certitudes, is a good base for authoritarian regimes to consolidate their power and comfort their congregations.

States are not the sole actors in this reconfiguration of the global epistemic space; political parties, terrorist groups, hackers, corporate entities, activists and civil society organisations also partake in it. Information warfare and disinformation campaigns have thus become global issues, feeding on and nurturing a new post-truth reality based on alternative facts and, ultimately, eroding the liberal consensus on which international cooperation is based. Nowhere are the stakes of global (dis-information) campaigns better illustrated as in the medial struggles over the presentation and the interpretation of the unfolding war in Ukraine.

The following Dossier seeks to better apprehend the nature of this new era of global disinformation and how it differs from prior eras marked by the dissemination of traditional propaganda (notably the Cold War) or by the spread of American soft power through mass media and consumption.

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DOSSIER

THE GLOBAL DISINFORMATION ORDER



Misinformation
Misinformation
Misinformation
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Misinformation

USA, New York. A misinformation newsstand in Manhattan. It was set up by the *Columbia Journalism Review*, aiming to educate news consumers about the dangers of fake news or disinformation. 30 October 2018. Atilgan Ozdil/ Anadolu Agency via AFP.

INTERPRETING DISINFORMATION

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In his first major manuscript, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France (Rois et Thaumaturges: étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre, 1924)*, the French historian Marc Bloch historicised the mystical underpinnings of medieval royal authority. The legend was that French and English monarchs—somewhere between the tenth and fifteenth centuries—held *divine* healing powers. Supposedly, those God-chosen kings only had to touch their subjects in order to cure a number of

sufferers from scrofula had been healed by the kings”.

For Bloch, the goal was not primarily *disproving* that the mythic healings happened in order to lay bare the superstitious nature of medieval mentalities. Nor was he trying to *expose* the manipulative will to power of medieval monarchs, eager to consolidate their authority through legerdemain. After all, there was evidence to suggest that the kings often believed in their own powers. Bloch was more interested in the rooted specificities of why the practice developed, attracted so many ardent believers, survived for so

but because they had important sense-making functions in their own epistemic contexts.

In the case of the royal touch, Bloch claimed, the rumoured healing power of kings grew not only from changes in relationships between ecclesiastical and political authority, but also from the very partial and imperfect medical knowledge of the period. This also helps explain why the royal touch came to be attached to specific diseases like scrofula, which were chronic, but also knew seemingly “mysterious” periods of remission. Miracles were a source of hope, but they were also a source of explanation for the hermetic behaviour of the pathogen itself. Why then did people living in the Middle Ages not ask themselves about the inefficiency of the royal touch for more consistently terminal diseases? One answer is that belief in miracles also implied an acceptance of the mysterious ways of the higher powers, and their prerogative to judge about who lived or died. Thus, the miracle did not need to work “every time” for faith to crystallise as truth in the public consciousness.

By reaching into this distant past, Bloch offers us the cipher for decoding the transhistorical nature of the phenomenon we have come to call *disinformation*. The crux of Bloch’s story is not so much that truth is inherently relative and subjective, but more that *all knowledge* is circumscribed by asymmetries of power, resources, access, lived experiences, psychological or analytical propensities, and pre-existing beliefs.

“Perhaps, then, the first line of defence against disinformation is also the slowest and most difficult to secure in this age of digital immediacy – *analytic sophistication*.”

bodily afflictions, but especially a strain of tuberculosis known then as scrofula. Throngs of sufferers from all classes would come to seek this royal miracle. Apparently, surviving accounts corroborated the cure’s efficacy: in Bloch’s words, “public opinion was unanimous in affirming that great numbers of

many centuries, and then, faded away by the seventeenth century. For Bloch, as a founding member of the *Annales* school, which aspired to more scientific readings of the past, even miracles had to be taken seriously as historical objects. They were not worthy of study because they were necessarily *true*,



Henri IV (1553–1610), King of France, touching the head of a kneeling man for the king’s evil (scrofula). Engraving by Pierre Firens. Paris B.N. FA-1088. Collection Roger-Viollet/AFP

Those asymmetries impact both how knowledge is produced, and also how it is interpreted and consumed. Understanding the dynamics underpinning all manner of “false claims” requires looking as carefully as Bloch did at the phenomenon of the royal touch, taking into account the relevant political, economic, cultural and psychological constellations.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, while Bloch was still writing the *Royal Touch*, he also wrote a short piece on the problem of false news (*Réflexions d’un historien sur les fausses nouvelles de la guerre, 1921*). There Bloch stated: “Items of false news, in all the multiplicity of their forms—simple gossip, deceptions, legends—have filled the life of humanity... How do they propagate themselves, gaining strength as they pass from mouth to mouth or writing to writing?” Later, he gave an answer: “The error propagates itself, grows, and ultimately survives only on one condition – that it

finds a favorable cultural broth in the society where it is spreading. Through it, people unconsciously express all their prejudices, hatreds, fears, all their strong emotions.”

If Bloch were with us today, he might argue (as I argued elsewhere) that mere “fact checking” is not necessarily a sufficient cure for the ills of disinformation. After all, as Philip E. Tetlock showed, people also reach for concepts that reaffirm their own worldviews, meet their need for existential certainty, and satisfy their longings for power and prestige. Perhaps, then, the first line of defence against disinformation is also the slowest and most difficult to secure in this age of digital immediacy – *analytic sophistication*. Bloch was such a believer in the principles of both free and fundamentally *rigorous* thought that he fought and even died for them – at the hands of a Nazi firing squad, in 1944.

¹ “The Anatomy of Credulity and Incredulity: A Hermeneutics of Misinformation”, *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review* 1, no. 2 (January 2020).



THE GLOBAL DISINFORMATION ORDER

THE POLITICS OF INTERNATIONAL LEGAL JUSTIFICATIONS: ON TRUTH, LIES AND BULLSHIT

Fuad Zarbiyev

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“Never has there been so much lying as in our day. Never has lying been so shameless, so systematic, so unceasing.” These words could easily be mistaken for another lamentation about the age of post-truth politics in which we are supposed to live. It may come as a surprise that they were written in 1943 by Alexandre Koyré in a reflection about political lies. The concept of “post-truth” and its inherent assumption that during

the “pre-post-truth” era politicians were truthful may thus well oversimplify the complex relationship between politics and truth. Presumably, Hannah Arendt was closer to the truth when pointing out that “no one has ever doubted that truth and politics are on rather bad terms with each other, and no one . . . has ever counted truthfulness among the political virtues”. What may be new in our age is the proliferation of political bullshit.

As theorised by philosopher Harry Frankfurt, the hallmark of bullshit and what distinguishes it from a mere lie is its “lack of connection to a concern with truth”. A liar has an eye on the truth and “designs his falsehood under the guidance of that truth”: it is hard to produce an effective lie without any concern with plausibility, and little plausibility can be secured when one takes patently obvious liberty with truth. In contrast, the

IRAQ. A reproduction of a picture displayed at the Nasr or Victory Museum in Baghdad shows Iraqi President Saddam Hussein visiting Iraqi troops at a military camp in occupied territory in Kuwait after the invasion of the Gulf emirate. 2 August 1990. Karim SAHIB/AFP

“What may be new in our age is the proliferation of political bullshit.”

bullshitter is “neither on the side of the true nor on the side of the false”, being prepared to make *any* assertion “without paying attention to anything except what it suits [him] to say”. The distinction may appear overly subtle but it is an important one. As Frankfurt explains: “Someone who lies and someone who tells the truth are playing on opposing sides, so to speak, in the same game. Each responds to the facts as he understands them, although the response of the one is guided by the authority of the truth while the response of the other defies that authority and refuses to meet its demands. The bullshitter ignores these demands altogether. He does not reject the authority of the truth, as the liar does, and oppose himself to it. He pays no attention to it at all.”

Frankfurt’s reasoning may appear far afield from international law, but I submit that it is crucial to a proper understanding of the politics of legal justifications for state behaviour. It is a fact that states almost invariably take the trouble to provide legal justifications for their conduct in international affairs. This is so even in circumstances where their conduct constitutes an egregious breach of international law. Saddam Hussein justified the invasion of Kuwait by reference to international law, and so did Vladimir Putin in the context of the recent invasion of Ukraine. Does the fact that international law was mobilised by Saddam Hussein or Vladimir Putin in those instances mean

that it played a meaningful role in their respective decisions?

The answer is that only plausible justifications should be seen as relevant to the game of international law because only such justifications can reasonably be intended and count as moves in that game. It is hard to see how international law can influence state behaviour if all it takes for a state to claim compliance with international law is to put forward any justification no matter its plausibility. By contrast, if only plausible justifications count, the fact that international law is not indefinitely malleable and that for that reason, “plausible justifications are often unavailable or limited” (Louis Henkin) is likely to have an impact on the behaviour of a state that is unwilling to face public shame and ridicule associated with implausible justifications. I submit that Saddam Hussein’s and Putin’s justifications are situated vis-à-vis international law exactly how bullshit is situated vis-à-vis the truth: they are not on either side of the game of international law.

What the game of international law entails, however, is not exhausted by its rules. An analogy with Foucault’s understanding of the functioning of “truth regimes” could be useful here. Foucault invites us to consider the following reasoning: “If it is true, then I will submit; it is true, therefore I submit; it is true, therefore I am bound.” As Foucault highlights, the “therefore” that links the two parts of such assertions is not logical, it is not something arising out of truth

itself, but is a historical-cultural phenomenon. In other words, the constraining power of truth can never be a function of truth alone. When someone challenges what we commonly take to be a solidly established truth, it would be difficult to seriously engage in a rational argument with such a sceptic, whether the latter has genuine doubts or is engaged in manipulation. This is the case not because we would not be able to provide evidence, but because it would be difficult to see what would count as evidence for that person, causing them to accept the force of the truth at issue.

International law’s constraining power is no differently situated than the constraining power of truth: it is not located in international law itself, but in the socio-cultural environment its actors are embedded in—actors who genuinely believe in international law, feel obligated to justify their conduct by reference to international legal rules or offer plausible justifications when they seem to deviate from them. They perceive the inability to comply with such protocols as an unenviable position because their reputation can be adversely affected by breaches of socially important practices. If “bullshit is a greater enemy of the truth than lies are” (Frankfurt), political leaders such as Vladimir Putin for whom “the old powers of shame” (J.M. Coetzee) seem completely inoperative are then the greatest enemies of international law.

THE PROPAGANDA WAR OVER UKRAINE: UNANIMITY, ON BOTH SIDES?

Andre Liebich

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The war in Ukraine is entering its second year. Casualties, both Ukrainian and Russian, are estimated (neither side will reveal the exact number) at over 200,000. Meanwhile, the propaganda war is continuing.

In the West, there is widespread agreement that the issue at hand is the unprovoked invasion of one country by another. The issue has made NATO relevant again. A few years ago, the French president declared NATO brain dead. No one would say that today. NATO has been restored to its initial function – to keep the Russians out of Europe – as laid out in the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, but with many more members. This goal

elects Republican Congress, it has reaped numerous advantages. Western sanctions, particularly those on the importation of Russian energy, have forced Europe, previously heavily dependent on Russian imports, to seek other sources. Among these are the fruits of American fracking. This winter, European states had to introduce measures of economy and to raise their military budgets in anticipation of a Russian invasion, even as they were debating which arms to offer to Ukraine. The United States, also suffering from inflation, need not fear a Russian invasion but is also careful to supply Ukraine only with weapons that could forestall a NATO-Russian war.

democracy and authoritarianism, this has not changed the outlook of most people. The few dissenters, including those who call for an end to the conflict or who point to the dangerous effects of the expansion of NATO, are labelled as naïve or, worse, as Russian stooges. Even when the Ukrainians published a “black list” containing several dozen Western individuals considered insufficiently supportive of the Ukrainian cause, it caused little uneasiness in the West.

Russia refused to call the Ukrainian conflict a war. It has used the term “special military operation”, presumably to avoid unrest among his own population. The game plan of the Kremlin was as follows: to capture the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in a few days, in order to replace the present regime with one that would share the view expressed by Putin in an article in 2021, describing Ukrainians and Russians as one people. Instead, Kyiv refused to fall, among an outpouring of anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalism. For a few months, the war or “special military operation” seemed far away to the Russian public. Only in September 2022 did the partial mobilisation decreed by the Kremlin bring home to the Russians the reality of war next door. The mobilisation inaugurated a new flood of Russian refugees, adding to the millions of Ukrainians who had already fled their country. Nonetheless, it did not fundamentally change the perspectives of those Russians who see Ukraine as crawling with Nazis and NATO as intent on weakening Russia.

Although younger Russians are adept at using VPN and other technical devices to bypass restrictions on the use

“Most Russians, however, obtain their information from television.”

presupposed, then as now, an American umbrella. In fact, the war has become an American-Russian proxy war over Ukraine. The United States has become the main supplier of arms to Ukraine and it has kept its European allies loyal to its cause. Although the war has been costly for the United States, a situation that may or may not prevail in the newly

Particularly striking is the unanimity of Western media opinion about the Ukrainian war. Unlike the situation with the Iraq wars, and even going back to Vietnam, the media are at one with their governments in condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although President Biden has not been entirely successful in portraying the conflict as one between



of Western social media, the Russian equivalent of Facebook, VKontakte, which is firmly under the control of the Kremlin, is the most used platform in the country, according to the statistics portal Statista. Most Russians, however, obtain their information from television. Channel one, the most popular station, presents the official version of the news about Ukraine. The Russian state has long been applying measures of intimidation, outright censorship and self-censorship to pursue its goals; in 2012, it put in place the “foreign agent” law designed to constrain independent NGOs. Today, it uses the war in Ukraine and retaliation for Western measures directed against Russian media abroad, such as *Russia Today* and the news agency Sputnik, to drop all pretence to freedom of information. The Duma (the Russian National Assembly) has recently passed laws that criminalise using the term “war” with reference to the

“special military operation” and criticising the army.

The moving spirit of the information war over Ukraine, however, has been Vladimir Zelensky. Elected as president in 2019 with a platform that included the peaceful integration of the separatist Donetsk and Luhansk Republics and personally opposed to Ukraine joining NATO, Zelensky has changed his position radically. Since then, he has become a war leader, his popularity soaring to new heights as the face of Ukrainian resistance to aggression. Zelensky has conscripted all Ukrainian men, aged 18 to 60. He has publicly proclaimed the goal of recapturing all Ukrainian territory, including Crimea, which had been annexed by Russia in 2014. Zelensky has put his previous career as an actor to good use. The contrast with Putin, held personally responsible for the war, is striking. Whereas Putin rarely comments

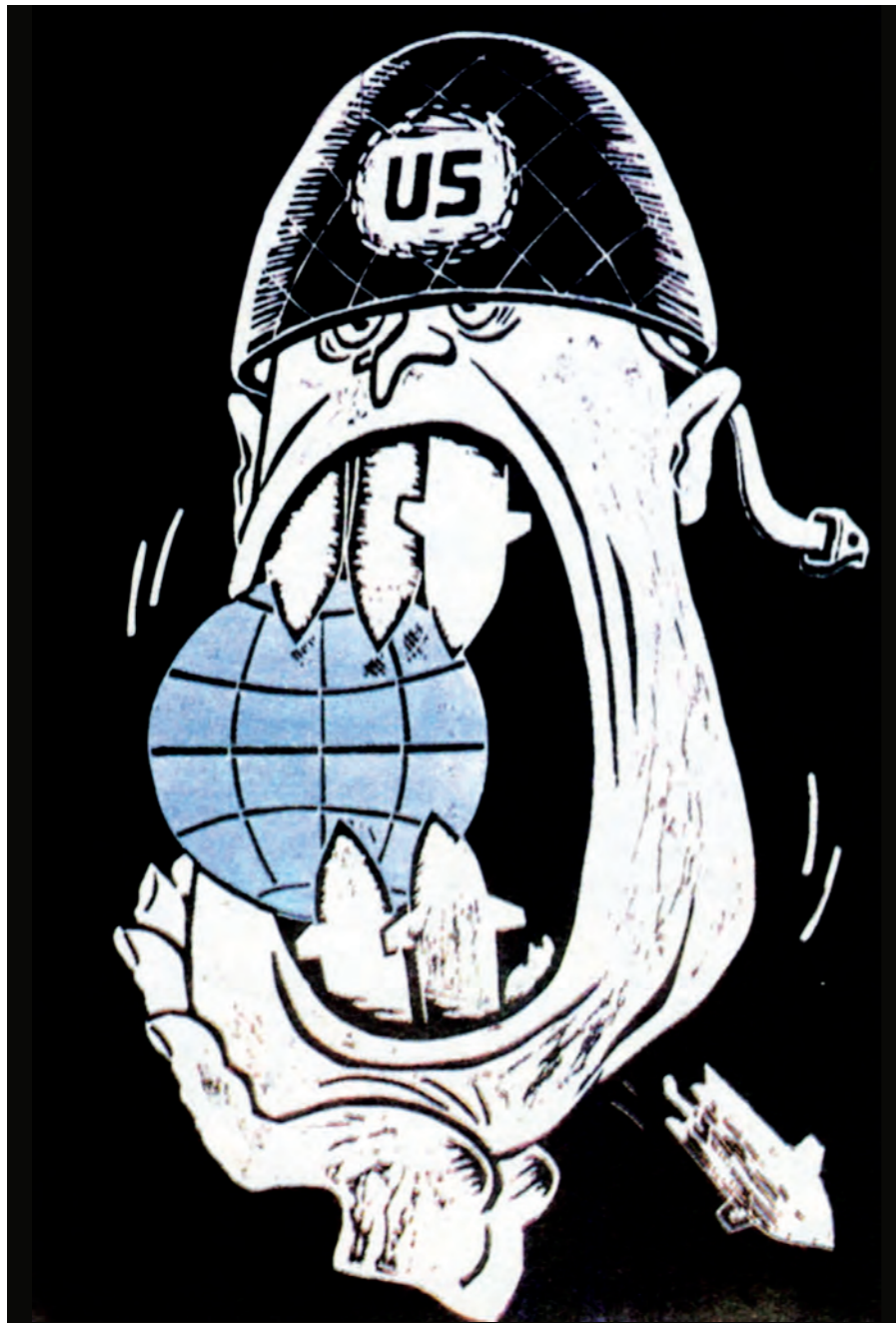
on the “special military operation”, Zelensky, in military fatigues and speaking from Kyiv under attack, has become a familiar figure in the West with his daily broadcasts. His appeal for more arms may have fallen on deaf ears among some Western governments, but the image he projects – of a small country bullied by a powerful neighbour – has certainly resonated with Western public opinion.

RUSSIA, Moscow. A man walks past a poster dedicated to the upcoming Defender of the Fatherland Day which depicts a service member and reads «For victory! For ours! For truth!». 20 February 2023. Yuri KADOBNOW/AFP

PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST: A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE

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Soviet Russian cartoon from the Cold War era. 1960's World History Archive. Ann Ronan Picture Library. Photo 12/AFP

The earth is flat. Not metaphorically as in Thomas Friedman's best-selling book about globalisation, but literally so, according to rapper BoB and other "flat earthers". They are a tiny minority. But they are out there, millions of them.

One might, indeed, think that in the 2020s anything goes. Facts seem to matter little and can always be countered with simple "whataboutism". You can find a distraction to virtually any issue, from the need to combat climate change (what about jobs and economic growth) to the necessity of alleviating the hardship of refugees (what about "our" values). Forever gone is a simpler age when the world was divided into two ideologically opposite camps that stood for clearly identifiable notions about governance and modernity. Sure, the Cold War propagandists oversold their versions by manipulating facts. But at least there was some regard for facts. In today's "post-truth era"

Effective Soviet and American propaganda did not require its propagators to invent facts, merely to highlight the convenient ones.

The end of the Cold War implied the end of the ideological East-West binary. But rather than reflecting an end of history and the dawn of a liberal consensus, the last three decades have seen an increasing number of new divisions that are not connected to a dominant ideology or grand narrative. Terms like "the free world" (or pretensions to its leadership) have lost their resonance.

When combined with the rapid development of easily available digital resources and social media, the end of an ideological binary has created a world in which recognisable soundbites are all that counts. As attention spans have diminished, complexity has disappeared. More actors, more outlets, and more freedom of expression translate into a situation where taking control of as much of the

benevolence. But NATO survived Trump's rhetoric, gained an extra member state (North Macedonia) and is considered, today, as indispensable as ever.

The impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine (that very "special military operation") on NATO is obvious. But the invasion has also highlighted the disturbing realities of the post-truth era we live in. All kinds of narratives have emerged or been floated to justify or complicate the simple fact that one country invaded another. None has been more popular and influential than justifying Russian invasion with NATO enlargement: Russia simply acted in pre-emptive fashion to prevent NATO countries from their aggressive enlargement.

Such a narrative represents an example of the post-Cold War media strategy by a state actor (Russia) that is simultaneously traditional and novel. It effectively resuscitates a Cold War mindset by elevating Russia – much like

“Effective Soviet and American propaganda did not require its propagators to invent facts, merely to highlight the convenient ones.”

it seems that disinformation is the only game in town.

But has everything really changed in the last three decades?

Cold War propaganda essentially amounted to "campaigns of truth" or battles for the hearts and minds of people based on a simple binary choice. On one side, Americans heralded the virtues of democracy and free markets while painting a dark picture of communist oppression, a system of total state control that stifled freedom at all levels. On the other side, the Soviets championed social justice while emphasising the devastating consequences of inequality resulting from capitalism.

The effectiveness of both American and Soviet propaganda, however, was based upon relative truth: there was no denying, for example, that individual freedom was poorly valued in the Soviet bloc. Equally, poverty and homelessness were visible reminders of the downsides of the capitalist system.

public space as possible is the only thing that matters. Donald Trump's success in American politics was, after all, largely based upon his ability to occupy the centre of every conversation. But aside from banal slogans, a dominant personality and hurtful nicknames for his opponents, did Trump have a core message? Doubtful. If anything, his strategy relied on obscuring facts by promoting misinformation and spreading conspiracy theories. But what is really new here?

The difference is not that binaries as such are gone. There is a natural tendency among people towards division on almost any issue. Take NATO, one of the enduring institutional bedrocks of both the Cold War and post-Cold War international system. NATO has been riven with internal tensions and disagreement throughout its long history. The alliance was declared obsolete many times before Donald Trump used it as an example of how European "free riders" had benefited from America's

the Soviet Union – into a position of counterweight to "the West". Its success, however, relies not on pointing out social inequities as was the case of Soviet propaganda but on the hypothetical and conspiratorial notion that the United States is out to conquer and dominate. In our post-truth era there is no need to provide facts. The accusation itself, constantly repeated, will suffice. It will certainly divert attention away from what may, for Russia, be uncomfortable facts.

It seems that the simple act of questioning and disagreeing has become the modus operandi in the age of social media and the internet. It is difficult to imagine that there are any facts that will remain uncontested, or any beliefs that can be contested without repercussions. Facts have become relative and beliefs have become absolute. Which raises the stakes for anyone who still suspects that the world may not, after all, be flat. Happily, they remain the majority.

VULGAR VIBES: THE ATMOSPHERES OF THE GLOBAL DISINFORMATION ORDER

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In his speech at the celebrations of the bicentenary of the Brazilian republic, President Bolsonaro explained to the crowd that had gathered for the solemn occasion that men should get themselves women to stop being unhappy. After demonstratively turning to kiss the first lady, Michelle, the president declared that he was “imbrochável” – Brazilian slang for having a lasting hard-on. He started chanting “imbrochável, imbrochável, imbrochável...”. The people gathered joined in. The video of the event quickly spread on social media and into the mainstream news.¹ The vulgarity of the chanting was striking and provoking. It scandalised the prude, broke with the conventions of the celebration, and debased all/any sensibility towards gender. This scene also directs our attention to the importance of the *atmospheres* underpinning the Global Disinformation Order and to the urgent and challenging question of how this order might be engaged, including through regulatory politics.

Let us pause to consider why Bolsonaro’s chanting attracted attention. Clearly, the quality and truth of the information were not the core points. Zealous journalists dutifully proceeded to interview the first lady, asking her if it was really true that the president was “imbrochável”. She assured them it was. That exchange, however, appeared rather absurd and out of touch. No one really

cared about the truthfulness of Bolsonaro’s affirmation. Preoccupying were the vulgar vibes of the performance and the way they infused the political atmosphere. They enshrined and fuelled the polarised and often violent identity politics of race, indignity, sexual orientation, class, education, religion and more that occupies a central place in Brazil and beyond. They also perpetuated a form of politics where moods rather than arguments matter. Bolsonaro and the enthusiastic crowd chanting with him were not deliberating or reasoning about identity politics. They were setting the tone for it. Vibes, tone, mode, atmospheres. We are far away not only from the conventional vocabulary of politics but also from the terms usually associated with the Global Disinformation Order. Considering that Bolsonaro’s “imbrochável” chanting is but one of innumerable instances of performances generating masculinist/sexist resonances and given the all-pervasive character of atmospheric politics, the conclusion is that we need to rethink the terms on which we think about and get involved with disinformation. We need to focus more on atmospheres.

This shift towards a focus on the atmospheres is no abstract exercise pertinent for academics only. It is fundamentally important for engaging the Global Disinformation Order. The vibes of vulgarity enshrined in Bolsonaro’s chanting not only accentuate polarisation

but contribute to a political atmosphere where statements about having a lasting hard-on or grabbing pussies or posting sexually charged images of oneself (pick your own choice from a disturbingly rich repertoire inspired by Salvini, Trump and Putin among many) have become commonplace. More than setting the tone, the vibes create an environment where debasing images and claims occupy centre stage. Images intimating the rape of former President Dilma as well as rumours about the labour party imposing homosexuality on the school curriculum or promoting a baby bottle shaped as a penis are examples from Bolsonaro’s 2018 campaign. In this atmosphere, disinformation is not an aberration. It is a logical and crucial part of politics. It feeds into the flow of vibes infusing it. This can be – and is – strategically manipulated. Bolsonaro relied on specialised agencies and a range of activists in his 2018 campaign. Other politicians, organisations and researchers do similarly. Their vibes are not exclusively masculinist/sexist, of course. Rather, they are designed to feed the polarised politics of moods and to reinforce the Global Disinformation Order by perpetuating the atmospheres nurturing it more generally. If we want to come to terms with this order, we therefore need to shift attention from issues of information veracity, deep fakes, bots, trolls or the debasing vulgarity of individual statements to the

“... we therefore need to shift attention from issues of information veracity, deep fakes, bots, trolls or the debasing vulgarity of individual statements to the atmospheres in which these emerge and thrive.”

atmospheres in which these emerge and thrive.

So, what exactly does that amount to? Work *with* the atmospheres, redesigning them in order to cut out the vulgar vibes infusing them, including those generated by chanting “imbrochável” at the bicentenary of the republic. This obviously is a complex task that requires rethinking the operations of the digital infrastructures and their technological affordances. Awareness of the need for such work is extensive. In politics, those resisting polarisation are

trying to shift the atmospheres, working with digital infrastructures. Current President Lula made “love” core to his 2022 campaign. Many organisations, spanning the full range from the large platforms – the GAFAM – to public institutions, are developing ideas for how to redesign digital infrastructures. Brazil adopted a “Permanent Program on Countering Disinformation” to develop measures discouraging disinformation, inscribing them in the digital infrastructures. The programme will certainly evolve and require revisions. It is no more

a panacea than is Lula’s focus on love. However, they are examples of how the global challenges of engaging with the atmospheres of the Global Disinformation Order are being tackled.

BRAZIL, Brasilia. Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro and Portugal’s President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa attend a military parade to celebrate the bicentennial independence of Brazil. 7 September 2022. Mateus BONOMI/Anadolu Agency/AFP



¹ Video recording available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQCpHB7t15w>.

THE ISLAMIC STATE'S VIRTUAL CALIPHATE

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By the peak of its territorial caliphate in Iraq and Syria in 2015, the Islamic State had developed an unprecedented virtual caliphate that used social media and messaging platforms to disseminate its sophisticated video, written and audio propaganda content that sold the virtues of the Islamic State. Much of its online content and communication strategy was devoted to selling the vision of its utopian state: a religiously correct Islamic caliphate with the structures, services

and efficacy that rivalled those of nation-states. Over half of its media output focused on life under the caliphate, with specific series dedicated to its healthcare, social support and education provision. This success of the Islamic State's virtual caliphate was intertwined with the territorial success of the group. As the Islamic State's territory in Iraq and Syria diminished from 2017 onwards and the group moved from a modus operandi of state building to insurgency, the

quantity and tone of its content and messaging changed correspondingly. By November 2017, over 90% of the Islamic State's content revolved around its new form of insurgency warfare, with key narratives framing the Islamic State's territorial defeat as immaterial, an inconsequential temporary blip in the longer conquest by jihad. The now deceased spokesperson Abu Muhammad al-Adnani made it clear in May 2016: "Do you, O America, consider defeat to be the loss

IRAQ, Qayyarah.
An armed man walks past the destroyed stadium of Qayyarah. Smoke billows from the oil wells set alight by the Islamic State. 27 November 2016. Olya MORVAN/Hans Lucas/AFP

“As the Islamic State lost its territory in Iraq and Syria, the group’s propaganda shifted to place greater attention on the group’s external provinces...”

of a city or the loss of land? Were we defeated when we lost the cities in Iraq and were in the desert without any city or land? . . . Certainly not! True defeat is the loss of willpower and desire to fight.”¹

Aside from the shifts in narrative, the number of videos produced by the Islamic State is similarly linked to the territorial reality of the group. The Islamic State's video production went from a peak of 81 videos published a month in April 2015 to a low of one video in June 2018.

A key factor behind this decline is the momentum-sapping defeats faced by the Islamic State and the loss of prestige around the Islamic State's core in Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State's video and print campaigns relied on a religious narrative of establishing a caliphate that was given sustained momentum by the group's military, territorial, recruitment and governance victories in Iraq and Syria. Over the past five years, however, the Islamic State in its Iraqi and Syrian territory has remained in a highly restricted insurgency phase. With only a few notable operations, it has proved unable to regain its lost territory and had three caliphs killed. Indeed, the current caliph, Abu al-Hussein al-Husseini al-Qurashi, remains widely unknown; he has never spoken or even appeared in any Islamic State messaging. Put simply, there is not enough "positive" news or narrative for the Islamic State to maintain a fraction of the content it produced at its peak.

There are however two trends that have maintained the resiliency of the Islamic State online: the shift to the provinces and the decentralisation of media operations.

As the Islamic State lost its territory in Iraq and Syria, the group's propaganda

shifted to place greater attention on the group's external provinces, some of whom have been operationally more successful in recent years. In 2022, the Islamic State claimed in *al-Naba* – its weekly newsletter – to have conducted 2,015 operations across all its provinces; most operations took place in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel (*Islamic State's West Africa Province* and *Islamic State in the Greater Sahara Province*) region in Africa, followed by Iraq and then Afghanistan (*Islamic State's Khurasan Province*). The successes in these provinces have dominated the centrally produced Islamic State's propaganda content and these provinces have begun to produce significant amounts of their own content.

One example is the *Islamic State's Khurasan Province*, which created its own official media production office (al-Azaim Media Foundation), supported by at least six other propaganda units. It produces a regular magazine, *Voice of Khurasan*, which features increasingly transnational-orientated content in Pashto, Arabic, English and Dari that is frequently translated into the Urdu, Hindi, Uighur, Uzbek and Tajik languages. This is in addition to a regular stream of books and videos. This content produced by the external provinces is thereby a key pillar in replicating the propaganda strategy that made the Islamic State in its Iraqi and Syrian provinces so successful.

Finally, the Islamic State's online supporters have been crucial to the maintenance of a "virtual caliphate" through the creation of decentralised communities outside of Iraq and Syria that maintain the online presence of the Islamic State. This shift to online decentralisation had to occur due to the loss of territory in Iraq

and Syria, where the supporters who directed the online operations were previously located. These decentralised communities have developed significant network resilience, shown adaptability and have the ability to evade the content moderation of social media and messaging platforms. Decentralisation has thus been essential to ensuring the continuity of the Islamic State's online presence, despite the group's territorial losses and reduction in content.

In conclusion, it can be observed that, unlike other cases discussed in this Dossier, it is conceptually difficult to use the term "disinformation" when speaking about the Islamic State's virtual caliphate. Certainly, the Islamic State has to adapt its propaganda to different audiences and to the territorial evolution of the caliphate over time. However, the Islamic State's content and narrative need to remain consistently grounded in its belief system and its spiritual aspiration to establish a rightly guided caliphate. The aim therefore is not so much to spread disinformation and thereby confusion but to sell key messages to its targeted followers.

This article is based on doctoral research conducted by the author prior to his affiliation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and does not reflect the views of the ICRC.



¹ Quoted in H. Ingram, C. Whiteside and C. Winter, *The ISIS Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).



L'ENSEIGNEMENT

The Institute Welcomes Caroline Rusterholz

Eccellenza Assistant Professor, International History and Politics

Before joining the Institute as an Assistant Professor, Caroline Rusterholz was a student here, earning her PhD at the Institute and the University of Geneva. Previously, she was a Wellcome Trust Research Fellow at the Faculty of History, Cambridge University. She was also a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Postdoctoral Fellow at Birkbeck College and Cambridge. Her research focuses on the transnational history of sexual and reproductive health, population and family in the twentieth century. Her first book, *Deux enfants, c'est déjà pas mal: famille et fécondité en Suisse (1977–1970)* (Antipodes, 2017), explores why Swiss parents limited the size of their families in the 1960s. Her second monograph, *Women's Medicine: Sex, Family Planning and British Female Doctors in Transnational Perspective (1920–70)* (Manchester University Press, 2020), traces the key roles played by British women doctors in the production and circulation of contraceptive knowledge from a transnational perspective. Her third manuscript (under contract with Oxford University Press) is a socio-cultural history of young people's sexuality in Britain from the 1960s to the 1990s, using the Brook Advisory Centres (Brook) as a case study.

Her new research project, "Race and Sexual and Reproductive Health Charities in Postwar Britain", which was awarded an Eccellenza fellowship and a European Research Council (ERC) starting grant (declined), explores the racialisation of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) charities and the ways that minoritised communities advocated for their SRH needs.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Teaching about Troublesome Violence

Aidan Russell

Associate Professor, International History and Politics



Teaching and learning are troublesome things. At least, they should be. But sometimes we need to *make sure* that they are.

Troublesome things are what bring most students, professors and researchers to the Institute – things that disturb us, fears we want to understand, challenges we don't yet know how to face; these "things" are one of our most important shared characteristics as a community.

But what happens when the trouble becomes routine? Like any other form of practice, professors tend to get more comfortable with teaching as we go on. And this in itself can be worrying. It is an awkward secret that the more assured we become in what we do, the easier it is to become comfortable with things that should always be uncomfortable.

When I joined the Institute in 2013, fresh from a PhD myself, I knew that teaching about violence was one such troublesome matter. But the more I teach, year after year, the more I risk allowing the sufferings of others to become an intellectual game rather than an ethical problem. Teaching about violence should continuously challenge my thinking about who I am and what I do in the world. Course content changes, ideas evolve, but the familiarity of the subject matter risks becoming worryingly comfortable. The same risk is there for students as well. A desire to comprehend the incomprehensible drives them to learn. But after 14 weeks of academic articles and class discussions we risk neutering that essential sense of disquiet through a false reassurance of knowledge.

Insight, understanding, empathy, action: these are all things we are looking for to help us deal with the things that disturb us. The safety to make mistakes, to ask a

foolish question, to misunderstand, is an important part of this pursuit – comfort has its place. But we have to keep worrying each other all the same. Why are we interested in such things? What do we think we are doing when seeking explanations or telling others' stories? What has been lost? What damage is done by rendering such experiences in the languages we use in the classroom? What do we hope will continue to live with us when the class is done and assessment over? I ask these questions of my students, but I need them to ask the same of me.

I'm proud to say our students can be a troublesome lot. For some, the violence we study together has been too present in their own histories to ever become banal. For others, a vital ethical drive continues to overrule the problems of the routine. We are all vulnerable to becoming comfortable with things we should not be, but together we can keep a little discomfort alive. The trouble that brings us to the Institute is important, and it needs to survive the teaching process. Do we learn to reassure ourselves that we no longer need to worry, or to help us face the trouble?

March 2023.
Boris PALEFROY.



L'ENSEIGNEMENT

ChatGPT: Large Models, Expert Skills and Academia

Oana Ichim

Senior Post-doctoral Researcher at the TechHub

ChatGPT is not a sudden creation enabled by advancements in artificial intelligence. It has a genesis and comes with quite an impressive number of occurrences and contingencies, all of which allow a clearer understanding of its functioning and a better assessment of its added value.

As the name suggests, generative AI produces or generates text, images, music, speech, code or video. Behind this concept lie machine-learning techniques that have evolved over the past decade, allowing us to explore and produce a specific output out of a large corpus of data. ChatGPT is a type of large language model (LLM) that uses deep learning to generate human-like text. GPT actually stands for "generative pretrained transformers": "generative" because it can generate new text based on the input received, "pretrained" because it is trained on a large corpus of text data before being fine-tuned for specific tasks, and "transformers" because it uses a transformer-based neural network architecture to process input text and generate output text. Large models are trained on massive datasets represented by books, articles and websites; ChatGPT is one such LLM trained through an innovative technique in state-of-the-art LLMs: reinforcement learning from human feedback (RLHF).

OpenAI has not yet disclosed the full details around its creation but they acknowledged that their models can still generate toxic and biased outputs. All the above disclose

the background against which potential and futile expectations regarding ChatGPT may arise.

ChatGPT is indeed the largest LLM trained with innovative techniques. However, LLMs construe text based on probabilities learned during training, but are incapable of (re)producing innovative text or knowledge. In short, this means that ChatGPT does not understand its own responses; it can be tricked into answering a question that it initially does not understand because it is built from a lot of data about which it knows nothing. As ChatGPT is a "product" of OpenAI, it will soon have a competitor. Competition in this field is all about talent and compute power: who has the largest cloud supercomputing technology, the "coolest geek" and the richest investor.

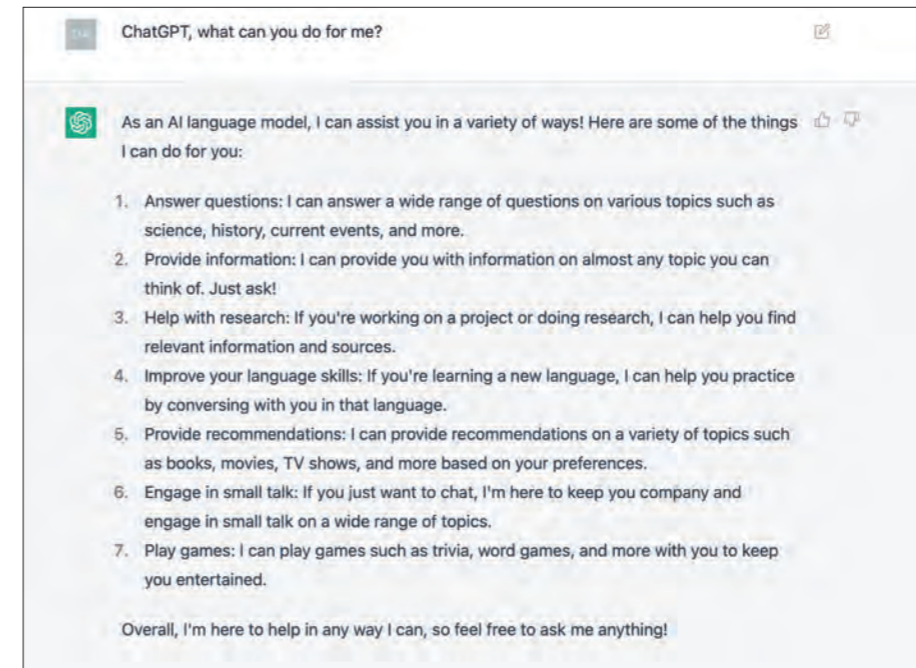
How can academia cope with this new technology?

In light of the above, it should follow that ChatGPT is neither a far-reaching opportunity nor a clear threat, but a mix of both.

Rethink exams (essays and take-homes)

If ChatGPT can create student essays, it cannot, as it has been shown, understand nor draft coherent plans. Exams will have to be redesigned away from summarisation towards different goals, such as ordering information overload,

March 2023.
Boris PALEFROY.



extracting overall themes, discovering new perspectives, identifying values and symbols, creating analogies. Students' skills will have to be reoriented; if ChatGPT can provide the "bullet points", students will have to provide the criteria or the yardstick that "hold the bullet points together". While ChatGPT may state facts, students should locate values, including across disciplines. It is up to the students to "leverage" the volume of information against the various human insights that help "playing" with that information.

Create specific managerial infrastructure for managing disruptive technologies

Academic institutions have to develop structures for managing disruptive technologies and especially for exploring possibilities for testing and using those technologies. Universities "cradle" the talent that AI giants and start-ups strive for. It is thus crucial that specialised internal structures keep universities updated with the latest developments in the field of AI research and innovation while, at the same time, lobbying for partnerships with various stakeholders in the AI environment. A strategic partnership between universities and key investors may "shake" the AI economic landscape, orienting innovation away from commercial "predators" and towards more responsible stakeholders.

Develop curricula on the epistemological implications of technologies

There is no better place than academia to start voicing concerns and raising awareness of AI contingencies. It is wrong to argue that professors are on their way to disappearing, or that ChatGPT threatens academia. Professors are not unknowledgeable, they are just unprepared for what is called the "data deluge", but it is up to them to start ordering knowledge and start fitting together the

pieces of the disjointed monster of information. Academia needs to develop courses for leveraging the attractiveness of technologies.

Reconsider the rules of authorship and co-authorship

If articles or essays are built from sources available on GitHub or students participate in conferences in which they are the "experts" in a field but the computing part is done by their collaborators, clear rules should delimit the extent of their contribution; even clearer rules should state the role of people gathering and curating the data as opposed to those who use it and transform it.

Consolidate research centres and invest in an academic brand

Research centres have to consolidate the academic-specific brand against the new digital technologies and adapt it, not transform it. It is crucial to remember that humanities have not fundamentally changed their approach in decades, despite technology altering the entire world around them. It is imperative to replace our AI resistance and engage with the topic so as to be capable of producing relevant publications.

→ www.graduateinstitute.ch/tech-hub



LES ÉTUDIANT·E·S

Student-Led Geneva Summit on Africa Makes Its Debut at the Institute

Interview with Zachariah Jambo, Master Candidate in Development Studies

On Friday 28 October 2022, and for the first time in its 95 years of existence, the Geneva Graduate Institute hosted the Geneva Summit on Africa. This one-day event was held under the theme “Foregrounding Africa: Excellence and Innovation”.

What is the Geneva Summit on Africa?

The Geneva Summit on Africa is a student-led initiative that was born out of the desire of African students at the Institute to create a platform to amplify African voices and stories. The aim is to invoke discussions and debates around the narratives that have shaped the (mis)understandings and perceptions of the African continent by many around the globe for decades.

It is widely acknowledged that Africa is not merely a “basket of natural resources” for the world, yet out-moded imageries and outrageous othering adorn the minds, thoughts, feelings and perceptions of many. Contrary to this, there are formidable signs of continued progress that deserve to be celebrated, even as there are unique challenges.

With 70% of the continent’s population under the age of 30, the Summit is a stage where conversations unfold on the diverse roles that the young people of Africa can play in shaping its future for decades to come. The Summit also spoke to the role that others across the world can play in supporting the vision held by young people in Africa.

This is a new opportunity for the spirit of Pan-Africanism, and spearheads a novel kind of leadership driven by highly

motivated individuals who are focused on the long-term realisation of Africa as a force to be reckoned with on the global stage.

What did participants experience at the Summit?

The day began with keynote address by Pamela Angwech, Founder of Gulu Women’s Economic Development and Globalisation (Uganda), and two panels: the first on “Youth Innovation and Change in Africa”, and the second on “Arts, Society and Development in Africa”. Panellists included Yacine Rezki, President of the Fair Trade Tax Association; Aminata Kone, Director at Environmental Africa; Benazir Hilali, Co-founder of Axle International; and Marie Chantal Umunyana, Founder and Director of Umubuyeyi Elevate. Other panellists included painter and artist Obou Gbais and Joseph Kaifala, Co-founder of the Sierra Leone Memory Project.

These panels allowed attendees to take part in the exchange of ideas and solutions, and engage with the speakers and their work, all while learning about current affairs in Africa from leading practitioners and development experts based on the continent, in International Geneva, and beyond.

Lastly, the Summit closed with a networking cocktail, which continued conversations around the issues raised throughout the day, and built connections and friendships to expand their academic and professional networks.

19 December 2022.
Boris PALEFROY.



LES ÉTUDIANT·E·S

Fostering Dialogue on East Asia

Interview with Camille Lau, Master Candidate in Development Studies and President of the Contemporary East Asia Studies Initiative (CEAS).

The Geneva Forum on East Asia was held from 7 to 11 November 2022 at the Institute as a place to create “constructive dialogue to discuss the role and significance of East Asia within the international development and governance agenda”.

This is the second year that CEAS organised the Geneva Forum on East Asia. What topics did the Forum focus on in 2022?

In curating this year’s events, it was of crucial importance to focus the spotlight on topics that are underrepresented in the public discourse related to East Asia, so discussion was held on areas including environment, trade, security, gender, political partnerships and economic development. In addition, the Ambassador Roundtable aimed to discuss the relationship between East Asia and Europe, as well as geopolitical challenges in the context of the great decoupling.

How does the Forum contribute to furthering knowledge about East Asia?

Similar to the mission of our initiative, the Forum aims to bridge the existing gap between East Asia and the world, which is especially vital here in International Geneva. Unfortunately, discussion and awareness of relevant issues and perspectives of this region remain limited. Our activities aim to provide students a holistic experience to further knowledge about East Asia through academic, professional and cultural exchanges. We have invited ambassadors, experts, scholars and practitioners to discuss East Asian affairs through the lens of different expertise and experiences. We have also invited practitioners

working in international organisations and Institute alumni to share their valuable experiences with students during career fairs.

What are some of the main challenges facing this region of the world?

The main challenges faced by East Asia include geopolitics and the great decoupling, sustainability, and governance. Troubled US-China relations, the role of China in the global and regional sphere and questions on how East Asian countries may respond to increasing power politics contribute to a broader geopolitical reconfiguration and the re-centring of the region. Furthermore, sustainability challenges surround the gap between ambition, action and reality, albeit widening inequalities and environmental challenges requiring immediate and consolidated regional actions. Lastly, in a challenging political atmosphere with increasing divisions, how East Asian countries may facilitate their coordination on strategic issues through regional cooperation and integration remains a contested issue, but also the key to a more cooperative and sustainable future.



LES ÉTUDIANT·E·S

It's Me, Hi, I'm the Migrant, It's Me

Xenia Mejia Chupillon, Master Candidate in Development Studies and Coordinator for the student-run Migration Initiative

To mark International Migrants Day on 18 December 2022, I examined the use of refugee, migrant and expat labels and their different interpretations.

Human mobility has been a common phenomenon since the beginning of our time. Our nomadic nature is evident at our very core: *Homo sapiens* left Africa, moved to other regions and eventually found a way to populate nearly every corner of the globe. In this sense, it can be argued that to a certain extent, we are all migrants. And as international students, we are also all migrants here in Geneva. Even if you were born in Switzerland, you might come from another canton.

Nevertheless, the term "migrant" seems to have many meanings to many people, who appropriate it in different ways. For example, I have been told by many people in Geneva that I am not a migrant but an expat, the difference being that I am doing my master's here and have a certain skillset, hence, I am not like a "normal" migrant. I do not have any doubt that I am a migrant, but the situation makes me wonder what makes someone a "normal" migrant. Is it a construction worker or a person working in the domestic sector? What if I told them that I have done babysitting and dogsitting activities to fund myself here? Would I be then viewed as a migrant and not an expat anymore?

In this line, I would like to further reflect about the different labels that are used to differentiate people and put them in diverse categories. People tend to create a group of "us" (let's say the expats, the "good" migrants) vis-à-vis the "others" (the migrants, the refugees). Sometimes, it seems that the perception of being a migrant was linked with being undocumented, having a low-skill job or even being a criminal. The expat label is a selective status difference, coming without the negative

connotations embedded in the term "migrant". Almost like a red-carpet entry to any country. iStock

In using terminology in these various ways, conversations, rather than being constructive on what makes someone an expat or a migrant, were more a reproduction of a xenophobic discourse. Maybe for a relationship labels matter – and this perhaps merits a discussion – but in this context, do they?

Given that on 18 December we celebrated International Migrants Day, I wanted to share this story to urge us all to be conscious of our everyday discourse and how it could replicate toxic and xenophobic narratives, maybe without us even realising. We should all bear in mind that regardless of our job and our nationality, we are human beings that left the place we knew as home and moved to a different location to try to pursue our dreams.

In the end, you, me, us, them, we are all migrants, aren't we?

LES ÉTUDIANT·E·S

Nos étudiant·e·s reflètent de mieux en mieux le monde dans lequel nous vivons

Entretien avec Cyprien Fluzin, doctorant en droit international et assistant à l'Académie de droit international humanitaire et de droits humains (Geneva Academy)



Titulaire d'un master en droit de l'Institut et d'un autre de l'Université Harvard, vous êtes actuellement doctorant et assistant d'enseignement à la Geneva Academy. Quel est le sujet de votre thèse et quels cours enseignez-vous ?

Ma thèse porte sur les questions juridiques qui se posent lorsque des ressortissants étrangers participent à des conflits armés (les fameux « combattants étrangers », ou « volontaires internationaux »). À la Geneva Academy, j'assiste des cours et enseigne principalement en droit des réfugiés. J'organise aussi des conférences permettant à nos étudiant·e·s d'échanger avec des membres de forces armées.

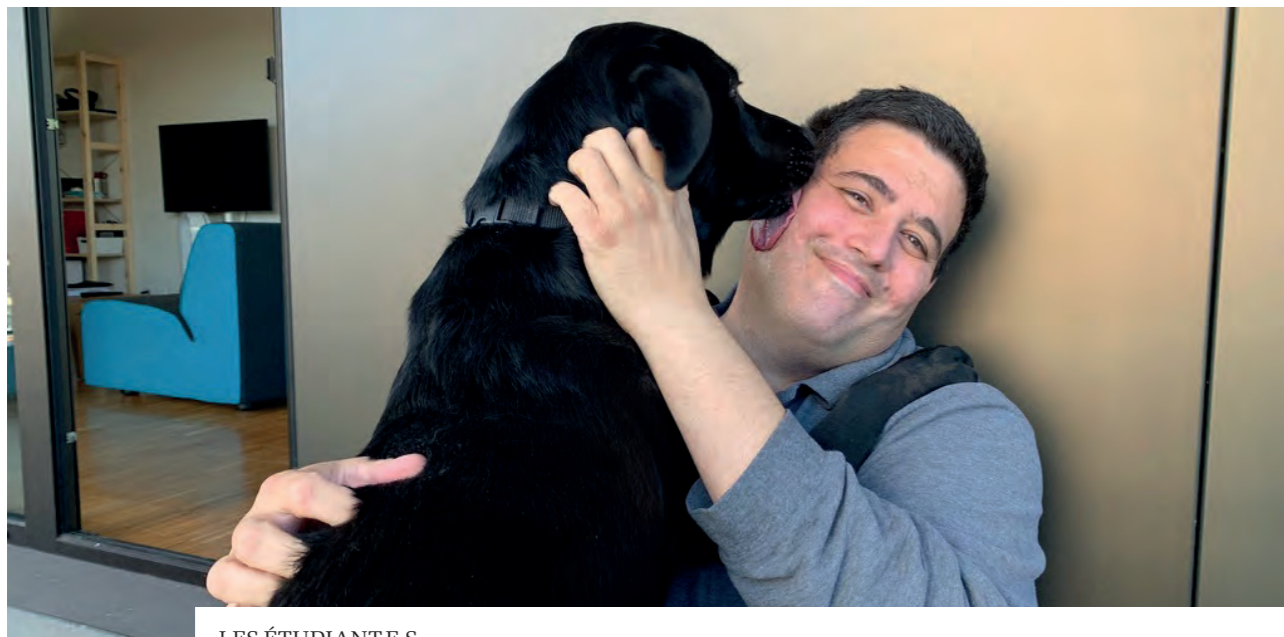
Qu'appréciez-vous particulièrement dans les différentes activités que vous menez et pourquoi ?

J'apprécie d'abord la substance des questions sur lesquelles je travaille, qui donne le sentiment de faire quelque chose qui a du sens, bien que souvent en lien avec des tragédies humaines.

Au quotidien, ce sont les aspects collectifs de mes activités que j'apprécie le plus. Le doctorat est un projet individuel exigeant et difficile. Les carrières académiques sont aussi souvent décrites comme solitaires. Néanmoins, il y a heureusement de nombreuses opportunités de participer à des entreprises collectives, de créer du lien et des synergies : c'est le plus enrichissant. J'apprécie également énormément l'enseignement : chaque année j'apprends beaucoup des étudiant·e·s. Leurs projets et leur enthousiasme sont une source de stimulation ; quant à leurs inquiétudes et critiques, elles sont une source saine de remise en question.

Quelles évolutions observez-vous chez nos étudiantes et étudiants ?

Même avec peu d'années de recul, je dirais que j'observe des changements mais aussi de la continuité. Des changements d'abord, en matière de diversité : des parcours, des intérêts et des origines géographiques, culturelles et socio-économiques. De fait, nos étudiant·e·s reflètent de mieux en mieux le monde dans lequel nous vivons. Nous ressentons aussi les effets d'évolutions sociales plus larges : beaucoup de nos étudiant·e·s prêtent aujourd'hui plus d'attention à certaines problématiques telles que les discriminations raciales, de genre ou sociales, ainsi qu'à leur nature et manifestations systémiques. Beaucoup sont aussi plus critiques, et le font entendre. Cela crée d'ailleurs parfois des tensions. Néanmoins, c'est là que je vois de la continuité : depuis sa création, l'Institut se veut le défenseur de valeurs humanistes et incarne une forme d'idéalisme. Les revendications de nouvelles générations étudiantes témoignent donc à la fois des progrès accomplis et de ce qui reste à faire. Dans l'ensemble, c'est une dynamique enthousiasmante, et qui donne de l'espoir en ces temps incertains.



LES ÉTUDIANTES

On Ability

Kevin Jura,
Master Candidate in International Affairs

I have both visible and invisible disAbilities, making being at the Institute and in Geneva an interesting challenge.

I walk with a cane due to the injuries I sustained at work over the years at the hands of several patients. These injuries and the other experiences I have had in my professional life have resulted in my undergoing multiple surgeries and developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety.

In addition to PTSD, depression and anxiety, I also have an invisible “disAbility” – autism (formerly known as Asperger’s syndrome). My autism makes social settings very uncomfortable for me. This is partly because I struggle to recognise and understand non-verbal communication and tend to take things literally, and I have difficulty expressing my thoughts clearly and concisely. This makes things like speaking up and participating in discussions in my classes and student organisations difficult. I have learned to be extroverted (to some extent) but I am truly an introvert that does not enjoy speaking in class unless I have something substantive to add to the conversation.

This is why I have Bob, my certified service dog. He helps me with my visible and invisible disAbilities, assisting me with my mobility and PTSD. Having invisible disAbilities can be a challenge because I often get questions about why I need Bob. He is a trained service dog, not a therapy dog.

Although the Institute is not the perfect academic institution for those with visible or invisible disAbilities, it is actively working to change that and become more inclusive.

The team from Student Services, more specifically Student Wellbeing & Support and our Academic Advisor, work to help students succeed.

I say this from personal experience, as I could not have succeeded without their support and friendship. Student Wellbeing & Support began assisting me before my arrival here in Geneva. They helped me find a veterinarian for Bob as well as appropriate healthcare providers for myself. The Academic Advisor provided me with wonderful academic support and advice.

In addition, the Institute has a DisAbility Task Force comprised of administrators, faculty, staff and students, which I am fortunate to serve on.

The deliberate capitalisation of the letter “A” in “DisAbility” is to show that although someone may have a visible or invisible disAbility, it doesn’t mean that they do not have abilities or are unable to excel in their personal, professional or academic lives.

I have had the privilege of meeting a lot of wonderful people at the Institute, and I am grateful for those opportunities.

I share all of this to exchange my experience and spread awareness for the spectrum of disAbilities, both visible and invisible.



LES ALUMNI-AE

Le journalisme de guerre pour éviter l’oubli

Rencontre avec Maurine Mercier,
correspondante à Kiev pour la RTS

Maurine Mercier, ancienne étudiante de l’Institut, est journaliste et correspondante à Kiev pour la RTS et d’autres médias francophones. Elle a récemment été récompensée par le Prix Bayeux Calvados-Normandie des correspondants de guerre et le Prix du journalisme radio des Médias francophones publics (MFP) pour sa couverture de la guerre en Ukraine et par le Prix Jean Dumur pour son travail en Ukraine mais surtout en Libye et en Tunisie.

Comment êtes-vous arrivée au journalisme ?

J’y suis arrivée par défaut et non par vocation. C’est le voyage, la découverte du monde et le souhait de sortir de cette coquille suisse qui m’ont poussée à faire du journalisme. J’aurais préféré être photographe, mais je n’en avais pas le talent. J’ai aussi pensé à l’aide humanitaire. Finalement, je suis tombée amoureuse de la radio car c’est un vecteur formidable qui permet d’informer dans le respect des interlocuteurs et des auditeurs, sans rester avachi derrière un écran et en faisant fonctionner son imaginaire tout en continuant ses activités. J’ai beaucoup d’estime pour ce média terriblement moderne.

Pourquoi choisir le journalisme de guerre et quelles ont été vos premières expériences ?

Je ne sais pas si j’ai choisi le journalisme de guerre. C’est plutôt le désir de voyager et de faire du terrain qui m’y ont amenée. J’ai aussi du mal à accepter que l’on ne parle plus de guerres comme en Libye ou dans le Donbass.

C’est dans le Donbass que j’ai vécu ma première expérience de guerre, en 2014. Les gens se sont vite lassés de ce conflit qui est pourtant la prolongation de celui que l’on vit aujourd’hui. Comme pour la Libye, ce n’était pas forcément évident pour les rédactions de s’y intéresser.

Quand j’ai commencé à couvrir la guerre en Libye, les autorités libyennes ne délivraient pratiquement plus de visas aux journalistes. La Libye est devenue un trou noir à 350 kilomètres des côtes européennes, alors que l’Europe a aussi pris part à la révolution qui s’est transformée en guerre civile en 2011. La Libye est le théâtre d’une crise migratoire dont on ne veut plus entendre parler côté européen. Je me disais que notre responsabilité, en tant que journalistes, était de couvrir ce pays. Je déteste la guerre. Je ne supporte pas la violence. Mais il est de notre devoir de ne pas faire les autruches. Ce sont mes véritables motivations. Pour comprendre, il faut être là, il faut couvrir. Le journalisme de guerre, c’est pour éviter l’oubli.

Est-ce un handicap ou un atout d’être une femme dans ce métier ?

Pour moi, cela a été un formidable atout d’être une femme, notamment en Libye. Quand on est un journaliste homme, on ne peut pas pénétrer dans les maisons et interroger les femmes. On se prive de la moitié des habitants et habitantes d’un pays. Souvent, les Libyens me disaient « tu nous épates », « tu prends des risques ». Ils avaient vu débarquer des hommes journalistes et pensé qu’ils étaient là pour dire qu’ils avaient « fait » la Libye comme une forme



d'exploit. Comme je suis revenue constamment dans le pays durant six ans, ils ont compris que je n'étais pas là pour parler de moi, mais de la situation en Libye et des Libyens. Être femme, cela permet aussi de se cacher derrière un voile et des lunettes de soleil. L'un des risques, en Libye, est le kidnapping, aussi pour les Libyens d'ailleurs.

Être une femme est aussi un avantage lorsque l'on travaille sur la difficile et essentielle question des viols, comme je l'ai fait en Libye, en Tunisie et maintenant en Ukraine. J'ai recueilli à Boutcha le témoignage d'une mère violée deux semaines durant par des militaires russes. Elle s'est dénudée devant moi pour me montrer les coups, les marques et ses blessures, ce qui aurait été impossible avec un journaliste homme.

Vos études à l'Institut sont-elles utiles pour votre profession ?

Je ne pense pas avoir été l'étudiante la plus assidue parce que je rêvais déjà d'ailleurs. C'était le seul endroit où l'on étudiait des matières internationales et j'ai pu le faire sans la frustration que j'aurais subie dans à peu près toutes les autres facultés. Mon objectif était de passer mes examens et de partir quatre mois chaque année pour découvrir la Chine, l'Amérique latine. L'Institut m'a aussi offert des cadres d'analyse très précieux.

Pourquoi vous êtes-vous installée en Ukraine ?

Un peu pour les mêmes raisons que celles qui m'ont poussée à m'installer six ans en Afrique du Nord. J'ai besoin de vivre dans un pays pour me sentir légitime dans ma démarche journalistique et à ma juste place pour comprendre les situations. Vivre dans un pays en guerre, c'est aussi subir la guerre et parler des Ukrainiennes et Ukrainiens qui souffrent. Cela permet de ressentir au plus près cette peur, cet état d'hypervigilance dans lequel on entre souvent, cette

atmosphère qui est très dure à supporter parce que la mort plane tout le temps. Cela permet de trouver des idées de sujets et de mieux comprendre les gens.

J'ai aussi très à cœur de couvrir les événements sur le long terme. L'actualité, c'est bien, mais la compréhension nécessite du temps. L'Ukraine, comme cela se passe très souvent, va lasser. C'est alors que l'on peut essayer de dérouler des sujets sur des durées plus longues et mettre en lumière toutes ces zones grises que l'on ne voit pas quand on est là juste en coup de vent. Pour l'instant les projecteurs sont encore braqués sur l'Ukraine mais j'imagine qu'avec les mois, ils se déplaceront vers d'autres événements, d'autres drames et d'autres pandémies. Et moi, je m'engage à rester sur place car cela est nécessaire.

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1927-2027 | OUR ALUMNI-AE, OUR HISTORY

Kofi Annan

Class of 1962

Kofi Annan joined the United Nations (UN) system in 1962. In 1997, he was nominated as its seventh Secretary-General. Kofi Annan shared the Nobel Peace Prize with the UN in 2001 for his efforts towards the promotion of peace and human rights worldwide. During his acceptance speech, he noted that "peace must be sought, above all, because it is the condition for every member of the human family to live a life of dignity and security".



© Associated Press.

Kofi Annan met with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad in 1998 in an attempt to reach a peaceful solution to the stand-off between Iraq and the UN.



© AFP.

In 1998 the former UN Secretary-General visited the Mulire Genocide Memorial in Rwanda.



© UN Photo.

Wrapping up a two-week visit to South Africa in 2006, Kofi Annan met with former President Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg and toured Soweto.



Learn more here

Micheline Calmy-Rey

Class of 1968

Micheline Calmy-Rey was elected president of the Swiss Confederation in 2007, the second woman in history to have ever been elected for the role. Before her presidency she was the only woman to serve on the Conseil fédéral in 2004–2006. Micheline Calmy-Rey also worked at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, where she practiced positive discrimination in favour of women in court cases where parity between men and women was not respected.



© AFP.

In 2008, committed to resolving the crisis surrounding Iran's nuclear programme, Micheline Calmy-Rey wore a veil in order to speak with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. She justified her action, which was criticised in Switzerland, by saying that the step was necessary in order to open dialogue.



© Pete Souza, The White House.

United States President Barack Obama and Micheline Calmy-Rey met in Istanbul in 2009 during a meeting with the heads of Turkish and Armenian diplomacy. Barack Obama called on the two countries to normalise their relationship, with Switzerland playing the mediator role in the conflict.



© Presidential Executive Office, The Kremlin.

Micheline Calmy-Rey and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev met in 2011. Negotiations between Georgia and Russia, mediated by Switzerland, led to an agreement between the two countries that directly enabled Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization.



[Learn more here](#)

Nouvelles publications



McGraw Hill.
August 2022.
504 p.

The Economics of European Integration

Richard **Baldwin** and Charles **Wyplosz**

The seventh edition of this definitive text on European economic integration by Richard Baldwin and Charles Wyplosz was published in August 2022. The first edition was published in 2004. Since then, the European Union has undergone profound changes, including 13 new member states, Brexit and 8 new members of the European Monetary Union. European institutions have also been significantly reshaped, with new initiatives taken in the wake of the Covid pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine. This new edition continues to reflect this evolution in order to provide students with an accessible presentation of the facts, theories and controversies that are driving rapid change at the heart of Europe. It updates the text to reflect the latest data, developments and events in context within every chapter to offer an expert analysis of the contemporary status of integration within the European Union.



Dialética (Brazil).
September 2022.
236 p.

Direitos Humanos: uma breve introdução

Andrew **Clapham**

This new Portuguese translation of Andrew Clapham's second edition of *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction* covers the history and philosophy of human rights and details developments concerning rights related to torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, freedom of expression and discrimination. Issues related to lethal force through the use of drones and the so-called "right to be forgotten" are discussed, and there are sections on the rights of persons with disabilities. According to the author, "there is sometimes a tendency among those working in international organisations or in international relations to consider human rights merely as 'aspirations' or 'desires'. Human rights today belong to all individuals and not to some future utopia. If those rights are violated, it represents a violation of the law, not the disruption of a dream. Those convicted of genocide or torture go to prison. States found in violation of human rights pay out compensation. Of course many human rights violations go unpunished but claims related to injustice continue to be framed as demands for human rights to be respected."



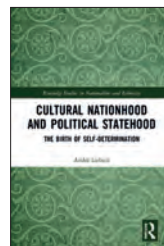
Editora Unesp.
December 2022.
400 p.

O Destino Da Floresta: Desenvolvedores, destruidores e defensores da Amazônia

Susanna **Hecht** and Alexander **Cockburn**

Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn's *Fate of the Forest: Developers, Destroyers, and Defenders of the Amazon* is now available in Portuguese. First published in 1989, it has gone through five editions in English, one in Spanish and one in Korean. It was revised again in 2011. In many ways it is a foundational analysis for understanding the processes and politics of Brazilian Amazon development and its current destruction as a part of contemporary development history, framed through its complex but largely ignored deeper social history. It contextualises the dynamics of Brazilian occupation in the Cold War period within the national political ambitions of the military dictatorship and the resistance to it as Amazonia broke into a land war among indigenous and traditional populations, battling against the large-scale corporate ranches, mines and small-scale settlers. Framing the social movements and their environmental allies as part of an emergent political ecology, the book places Amazonia into a recognisable social history of transformation, one with huge local and planetary environmental costs.

Nouvelles publications

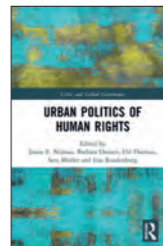


Routledge.
July 2022.
120 p.

Cultural Nationhood and Political Statehood: The Birth of Self-Determination

Andre **Liebich**

Following several contemporary studies of nationalism, Andre Liebich provides a critical examination of the peculiarly modern concurrence of cultural nations and political states as it developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He argues that this is one of the most fateful coincidences of modernity; so firmly engraved in today's consciousness that most scholars and policymakers assume the correlation of cultural nationhood and political statehood to be intellectually unproblematic, yet the consequences have been overwhelming. The conflation of cultural nation and political state has imposed an isomorphism of language, culture, and politics upon the world. It has predetermined democratic practice by enforcing the doctrine that the will of the people can only be the will of a people. It has led to the assumption that every nation may become a state. The book's originality lies in tracing the genesis and the elaboration over time of this curious contemporary assumption.



Cities and
Global
Governance.
Routledge.
November 2022.
246 p.
Available in
open access.

Urban Politics of Human Rights

Edited by Janne **Nijman**,
Barbara **Oomen**, Elif **Durmus**, Sara
Miellet and Lisa **Roodenburg**

Increasingly, urban actors invoke human rights to address inequalities, combat privatisation and underline common aspirations, or protect vested (private) interests. The potential and the pitfalls of these processes are conditioned by the urban and are deeply political. These urban politics of human rights are at the heart of this book. An international line-up of contributors with long-term engagement in this field shed light on these politics on four continents and eight cities, presenting a wealth of empirical detail and disciplinary theoreticalisation perspectives. They analyse the "city society", the urban actors involved and the mechanisms of human rights mobilisation. In doing so, they show the commonalities in rights engagement in today's globalised and often deeply unequal cities characterised by urban law, private capital but also communities that rally around concepts as the "right to the city". Most importantly, the chapters highlight the conditions under which this mobilisation truly contributes to social justice, be it concerning the simple right to presence, cultural rights, accessible housing or, in Covid times, healthcare.



Oxford
University Press.
October 2022.
256 p.
Available in
open access.

New Mediums, Better Messages? How Innovations in Translation, Engagement, and Advocacy Are Changing International Development

Co-edited by David **Lewis**, Dennis
Rodgers and Michael **Woolcock**

The notion of development influences and is influenced by all aspects of human life. Social science is but one representational option among many for conveying the ways in which development is conceived, encountered, experienced, justified, courted, and/or resisted by different groups at particular times and places. As international development has become more quantitative and economics-centred, there is an enduring sense that what is measured (and thus "valued" and prioritised) may have become too narrow, that the powers of prediction claimed by some areas of economics and management may have overreached, and that the human dimension is in danger of being lost. Reflecting this concern, this book contributes to new conversations between science, social science and the humanities around the roles different kinds of knowledge, stories and data play in relation to global development. It brings together a team of multidisciplinary contributors to explore popular representations of development, including music, photography, theatre, radio, video games, blogs and fiction.



CEPR Press.
September 2022.
217 p.
Available in
open access.

Global Economic Consequences of the War in Ukraine: Sanctions, Supply Chains and Sustainability

Edited by Luis **Garicano**,
Dominic **Rohner** and
Beatrice **Weder di Mauro**

Six months of war have caused extensive damage to Ukraine and have had a transformative impact on the world's economic, financial and geopolitical status quo. The effects have been wide-ranging and unequal among countries, contributing towards global food shortages, a European energy crisis, mounting geopolitical tensions and rising inflation. In response to these extraordinary circumstances, CEPR set up a VoxEU debate that invited research contributions to assess and inform the evolving policy debate. This eBook gathers a selection of the most pertinent of these submissions for an early stocktaking of lessons and to provide a first assessment of what might lie ahead.



CEPR Press.
December 2022.
445 p.
Available in
open access.

Rebuilding Ukraine: Principles and Policies

Edited by Yuriy **Gorodnichenko**,
Ilona **Sologoub** and
Beatrice **Weder di Mauro**

This book offers a comprehensive analysis of what Ukraine should become after the war and what tools policymakers can use to fulfil these goals. It provides perspectives from leading scholars and practitioners. While each chapter of the book covers a specific sector, there is a natural overlap across the chapters because Ukraine's reconstruction should involve a comprehensive transformation of the country. The leitmotif of this book is clear: reconstruction is not about rebuilding Ukraine to the pre-war state; it is about a deep modernisation of the country on its path to European Union accession. All critical elements of the economy and society will have to leapfrog and undergo reforms to help Ukraine escape its post-Soviet legacy and become a full-fledged democracy with a modern economy, strong institutions and a powerful defence sector. Ukraine's ownership of the reconstruction will be key to its success.



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Couverture: RUSSIA, Moscow. A souvenir kiosk offering among others a drawing depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin holding a baby with the face of US President Donald Trump, based upon a propaganda poster showing late Soviet leader Joseph Stalin holding a baby. 5 July 2017. AFP

Impression: Jullierat Chervet

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