Call for Proposals

Mobilization, Interaction, Contention: Relations Between NGOs/Civil Society and States in Times of Covid-19

An Interdisciplinary Workshop (conducted in three meetings)

Conference abstract:

The Minerva Center for the Rule of Law Under Extreme Conditions, the *National Knowledge and Research Center for Emergency Readiness*, and the *Haifa Center for German and European Studies* (HCGES) at University of Haifa, are pleased to announce a three-day online workshop on *Mobilization, Interaction, Contention: Relations Between NGOs/Civil Society and States in Times of Covid-19.* This interdisciplinary event will examine if and how the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis have influenced relations between states and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society actors.

We welcome submissions from scholars who wish to develop publishable papers based on empirical research and theoretical analysis. Our aim is to include a diverse yet comparable set of geopolitical contexts, drawing from disciplines such as Law, Geography, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Media, Medical Humanities, Social Work, Criminology, and Business Management. We also encourage applications from NGO/state/civil society professionals, activists, artists, and journalists – abstracts should clearly indicate whether the perspective submitted is research and/or experience based, and can offer insightful analysis.

(For possible paper themes/questions, see below).

Dates:

Wednesday, **23 June 2021**
Monday, **28 June 2021,**
Wednesday, **30 June 2021**

Place:

Online platform (Zoom or otherwise)

Workshop format

- Each of the three days will include two sessions: a roundtable or keynote presentation, and a workshop panel, in addition to short opening and closing remarks.
- The roundtable/keynote presentation will be 45 minutes long with a 30-minute Q&A, followed by a 20-minute break, and workshop panels will be 2-2.5 hours long (with a 15-30 minute break).
- Workshop panels will include 4-5 presentations, 15 minutes each, with a discussant responding to the papers, and if time allows - an open discussion to conclude.
- The workshop panels will be open strictly to participants (in the panel itself and in other workshops); roundtable/keynotes will be public (with pre-registration).
- Participants will be asked to send their papers to discussants and other panel participants no later than June 10, 2021.
- We aim to publish an edited volume (as book, journal special issue, or research report) based on papers presented in the workshop.
- All workshop events will be in English.

Keynotes and roundtable participants:

Suggestions welcome!

Submission guidelines:

- Deadline for submissions: Monday, 01 March 2021. Decisions expected by 01 April, 2021.
- Submissions will be accepted in either Word or PDF documents.

Please include the following details in the document submitted (and not in the e-mail):

- Full name and e-mail
- Affiliation(s)
- The time zone/country in which you will tentatively be in each day of the workshop.
- If two or more authors, please include all of the above details for each author.
- Paper title

- 500-1000 word extended abstract. Abstracts should clearly convey the methodologies used for the empirical research, geopolitical context(s), and main claim(s)/research questions/analytical framework/theoretical innovation.
- Note that inclusion of references in the abstract is encouraged but optional – citations and bibliographic details should not be considered in the word count.
- Indication (yes/no) whether you would like to be considered for the workshop-based special issue to be edited by the organizers.

Please submit all abstracts by the deadline via **e-mail titled:** *NGOs/Civil Society and States in Times of Covid-19 + your name(s)* **to:** Minervaextreme@univ.haifa.ac.il

Possible paper themes and questions:

Structural outlines and applied scholarship insights

- Identifying models of cooperation (or lack thereof) and other types of interaction and relations between states and NGOs/Civil Society;
- Differentiation between the roles played by local and transnational NGOs; and, how local and transnational NGOs cooperated and/or competed with each other and vis-à-vis states;
- Degrees and orientation of influences: does the state yield particular power over NGOs/Civil Society during COVID-19? Or, perhaps, do NGOs/Civil Society have more leeway?
- Can state and NGOs/Civil Society cooperate in emergency preparation, and if so – what are the most useful mechanisms and arenas for facilitating such interactions?
- What conclusions can be drawn about the prospective roles of NGOs/Civil Society in other types of crises or emergency?
- How did NGOs/Civil Society contend with economic hardships, decline in donations?
- To what degree was non-state actors' relevance dependent on their own self-mobilization? Can NGO activities during the pandemic be characterized as self-mobilized, mobilized by the State, or a collaborative venture of NGO and government?

- Identifying positive/negative correlation of success/failure in dealing with COVID-19 with the actions of NGOs/Civil Society and the infrastructure available for cooperation (or lack thereof) with the state and other sectors.
- Which state extensions and agents tended to cooperate more or less with NGOs/Civil Society – municipalities, medical institutions, social welfare, government offices?

New and Emerging Issues following COVID-19
- How did COVID-19 influence activism, Civil Society engagement, and willingness to volunteer?
- What role did religious communities, leaders, and institutions play, and how do they relate to existing categories as Civil SocietyNGOs//state agents?
- Was there a demise of certain NGOs? What new modes of non-governmental work/Civil Society activism emerged during COVID-19?
- Did COVID-19 influence the frequency and character of state communication with non-state actors?
- Did COVID-19 change non-state actors' influence on state bureaucracy or political policies?

Navigating mandates and expertise
- NGOs/Civil Society contention with COVID-19 state policies that threaten/ed human and civil rights, democracy and liberalism.
- How did NGOs adapt their mandates and work-plans to contend with emerging issues? Is there a typology of such adaptations between different kinds of organizations (human rights, humanitarianism, development, etc.)?
- Vacuum: where and when did NGOs/Civil Society step-in for the state? In which geopolitical and economic contexts were NGOs/Civil Society less effective, or absent? Are there patterns of transnational/local NGO effectivity?
- Who were the actors that facilitated either cooperation or managed tensions between the state and NGOs?
- What other forms of expertise, beyond medicine, emerged as significant for NGOs/Civil Society?

Geopolitical and historical comparison

- The role of NGOs/Civil Society in response to COVID-19 in states who experienced SARS or MERS, with or without comparison to cases in which there was no such prior experience.

- When, where and how did states directly rely on NGOs/Civil Society – was it in contexts directly related to governing the virus, or perhaps oriented more in relation to economic repercussions?

- How did prior state-NGO/Civil Society relations (pre-pandemic) influence COVID-19 dynamics – issues of confidence, suspicion, cautious respect and more.

- Outlining the similarities and differences in state-NGO/Civil Society interactions between different political systems and contexts of political rhetoric and challenges of sovereignty: within the EU and between EU and other states; in nations where populist government intimidates NGOs/Civil Society and limits their impact; in nation-states where NGOs are already heavily relied upon; in areas where foreign aid is dominant