

## **The Revenge of Tocqueville. The resurgence of individual local politics and membership organising at the expense of apolitical and professional INGOs**

*Wednesday, 17 June 2020 17:00 (1h 30m)*

This panel explores the rising tension in the relations between professional and grassroots civil society organisations and the rise of individual as responsible agents of aid delivery. The first paper is an empirical research on the rise of grassroots NGOs in the US and what this effect may have on international norms. The findings show that despite expected differences in sophistication and financial accountability, small and large organizations alike converge in their narration of beneficiaries, with the “needs-based” approach prioritized over “rights.” The presenter will discuss the implications of these findings for beneficiary empowerment. The second paper explores the wider context of the Oxfam GB scandal for the aid sector. The research findings reported show that the problem of sexual misconduct is much more widely spread in NGOs than previous research has suggested, and highlights a dearth of research on this topic and that longstanding concerns suggest that there is an industry-wide problem, especially in aid abroad, as highlighted in the outcome of the statutory inquiry on Oxfam. The third paper explores individual agency and moral responsibility of aid workers vis-à-vis the systemic and structural environment of NGOs the author will present arguments that authenticity stands at the core of responsible behaviours in bureaucratic context as key underpinning of actors ability to make independent judgements and their ability challenge existing practices. The final paper discusses the limits of leading NGOs and philanthropists as global governors in the context of national politics and weak international regulatory oversight. Comparing the regulatory changes in Hungary and India the paper explores the boundaries of private non-democratic power of global governance actors.

**Track Classification:** Non-Governmental Organisations Working Group