

Authority, Legitimacy, and Informality in Contemporary International Organisations

Wednesday 3 June 2026 09:00 (1h 30m)

This panel examines how traditional approaches to understanding international organisations (IOs), which have revolved around the concepts of formal delegation and principal control, require nuancing in lights of how contemporary IOs actually function. Across diverse cases, which include human rights, peacekeeping, macroeconomic policy, and migration governance, we observe the need to theorise informal practices, relational dynamics, and struggles for authority among multiple stakeholders with competing interests. The papers collectively advance our understanding of IO design and functioning, internal and external legitimacy, accountability and control, and informality in global governance. They showcase the methodological diversity and sophistication in the field of IO studies including interviews, archival methods, participant observation, and surveys.

Track Classification: International Law and Politics Working Group