

Author Meets Critics: Marina Duque's *The Making of International Status*

Wednesday 3 June 2026 15:00 (1h 30m)

Scholars have traditionally assumed that status is a function of state attributes, particularly material capabilities like military and economic resources. Drawing on an interdisciplinary body of research, Marina Duque argues instead that status depends on patterns of state relations. To understand how international hierarchies of status are established, Duque traces their roots back to key transformations that magnified global inequality at the foundation of the modern international order. As Europeans turned to imperialism in the nineteenth century, status distinctions legitimized inequality by drawing a boundary between “civilized” Europeans entitled to sovereignty and “uncivilized” non-Europeans unable to govern themselves. Once established, status distinctions reinforced inequality via cumulative advantage mechanisms: the higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. It is no coincidence that, to this day, status evaluations rely on governance ideals associated with the West. By analyzing the global network of diplomatic relations since the early nineteenth century, *The Making of International Status* develops a theory of status that situates the concept at the heart of contemporary international politics.

Track Classification: Foreign Policy Working Group