

Workshop on
Lawyers and Developments in International Law

21st February, 2020 – London, LSE Department of International Relations

Conveners:

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Lawyers have played important functions in the creation, development, and enforcement of international law (IL) in their capacity as representatives of States in the international arena. Increasingly, lawyers have also operated within ‘global civil society’ as part of NGOs and transnational advocacy networks in the development and enforcement of IL and as advisors to multinational corporations on the development of ‘soft’ law standards. The role of judges and prosecutors, both in terms of transnational networks between national courts as well as in the context of the increase in international judicial bodies, has also been well-documented as a potential driver for international legal development.

However, while literature in International Relations (IR) has examined the role of the public entities that employ legal professionals in IL development, lawyers and private law firms are seldom directly theorised as actors themselves. This workshop thus aims to better understand the role of lawyers as actors in IL development, conceptualising lawyers as a form of epistemic community operating in the international and transnational legal sphere. Can lawyers and private law firms be understood as ‘international actors’ in their own right, and in what sense?

In this workshop, we seek to bring together leading and rising scholars from IR, IL, and other related disciplines to explore this issue in a small and interactive format. We invite submissions that tackle questions such as:

- What are the different roles and degrees of agency lawyers may have in different areas of IL?
- How do lawyers gain entry into the spheres of IL development – either by direct participation in international treaties, or indirect pathways such as advising clients, technical assistance and capacity building programmes, as well as public and academic commentary—and how do they legitimise their authority?
- What are the political and normative implications of private legal actor-led IL development?

Relevant examples of areas in which the agency of lawyers can be observed include:*

- International Criminal Law (ICL) created a professional class of defence counsel operating in international criminal tribunals, representing the individual interests of the defendant. What role, if any, do defence counsel play in the overall development of ICL and the practice of international criminal justice?
- Increasingly, private law firms have been advising States and training bureaucrats on the negotiation of investment treaties, and more broadly capacity building and technical assistance in the area of international investment law and investor-state dispute settlement. How does such forms of involvement of private law firms impact changes in the international regime?
- Individual lawyers, in the capacity of consultants, as well as private law firms and legal professional associations are frequently involved in the early and behind-the-scenes process of drafting treaties on human rights and international crimes, particularly in the context of regional organisations. What is the implications of such involvement of legal actors?

* This list is merely indicative of the types of topics that may be part of the workshop and is not meant to be exhaustive.

Submission Procedure:

We invite interested scholars to submit an abstract of no more than 500 words by **4th October 2019** at lawyersinIR@gmail.com. Please submit your proposal as a PDF attachment along with a short biographical note as a separate document.

Proposals will be selected based on their quality, originality, and engagement with the workshop themes. Accepted submissions will be notified by **1st November 2019**.

We expect to receive a draft of your papers by **10th February 2020**. We do not expect fully-developed papers at this stage. Short ‘think pieces’ of 10 to 15 pages that speak directly to some of these questions on the basis of your theoretical and empirical expertise will suffice for the purposes of this workshop. Based on the feedback from the workshop and quality of the drafts, it is envisaged that some of the participants will be given the opportunity to further develop the paper for a journal special issue.

Practical information:

The workshop will be held at the London School of Economics and Political Science in London, UK. We have limited funds to cover travel expenses from within the UK and Europe—priority will be given to graduate students and early career researchers. Please direct any queries regarding the workshop to lawyersinIR@gmail.com.