

Call for Papers: Foucault and Global Civil Society

Contributions are invited for a proposed panel on Foucault and Global Civil Society to be convened during the International Studies Association Annual Convention in New Orleans, February 17-20, 2010.

Issues regarding global civil society can be found at the center of many debates regarding various transformations taking place in contemporary world politics. Increasingly, scholars working from critical theoretical approaches have been interrogating the meaning of global civil society and its relationship to our political present. However, few scholars have analyzed global civil society by drawing on the social and political thought of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who in International Relations is mostly used for analysing the strategies of security. The recent publication of Foucault's 1979 lectures, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, gives new impetus to a Foucauldian analysis of global civil society. In these lectures, Foucault locates the 'invention' of civil society as a crucial moment in the development of a liberal technology or art of government.

This panel seeks to build on Foucault's analysis of civil society by interrogating contemporary discourses and practices of civil society (whether national, regional, or global) in order to better understand, and also critique or formulate alternatives to, specific forms of government that operate in the world today. Following Foucault, the panel will not take the common distinction between civil society and the state as a universal given, but commence from a starting-point that takes both as what Foucault calls "transactional realities"--that is, as "vectors in the common interplay of relations of power and that which continuously escapes their grasp." This perspective opens up a number of potential lines of investigation into the question of (global) civil society: the mutual constitution of (global) governance and (global) civil society and their impact on each other; the promotion of (global) civil society by different international organizations and non-state actors; projects that aim at constructing regional civil societies; the relationship between (global) civil society and neoliberal subjectivity; the relationship between (global) civil society and (global) economy; among others. While we are primarily seeking papers that address these or similar issues by drawing on a Foucauldian analytical framework, we are also interested in papers that with to critique such a perspective while arguing in favor of a different critical theoretical approach. Depending on the number of paper proposals, a panel series might be possible.

Please send 400 word abstracts along with information about your institutional affiliation by May 25th (final ISA deadline is June 1st) to Doerthe Rosenow, doerthe.rosenow@kcl.ac.uk, and / or Jason Weidner, jas_weidner@hotmail.com.