



CALL FOR PAPERS

‘THE NATURAL’ IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

8-9 September 2022

Concept: What is ‘natural’ in international law and who decides what is ‘natural’? In this workshop we will not only explore what international law represents as ‘the natural’, but also where ideas of what is natural come from, how international law naturalizes certain conditions and how it responds to changes of what social systems perceive to be ‘the natural’. We will discuss whether appeals to the natural are productive and under what circumstances they should be used, or if they should be used at all in law and legal reasoning. In tackling these questions, we will build on scholarly work exploring how international law reflects and reproduces social conditions, how it transforms historical contingencies into inevitabilities and how it solidifies social hierarchies by naturalizing them (e.g., Baxi 1998; Bianchi & Hirsch 2021; Spain-Bradley 2021; Venzke & Heller 2021). We will focus our attention on three primary subject areas, namely the environment (Escobar 1999; Bandopadhyay 2022), the economy (Pistor 2019; Tzouvala 2020), and social order (Desautels-Stein 2021; Knop 2002).

We invite contributions that explore, or relate to, some of the following questions:

- What is ‘the natural’ in international law?
- Where does ‘the natural’ in international law come from?
- Who decides what is ‘natural’ in international law?
- How are human – nature relationships ‘naturalized’ by international law?
- How do assumptions about what is ‘natural’ translate into international law responses to climate change and the ecological ‘crisis’?
- (How) does ‘silence’ affect ‘the natural’ in international law?
- How do descriptive concepts such as ‘time’ and ‘value’ inform ‘the natural’ in international law?
- What is the relationship between ‘the natural’, ‘belief’, and ‘truth’ in international law?
- How do perceptions of what is ‘natural’ in international law relate to what is ‘just’?
- What if lawyers did not ‘naturally’ distinguish between the disciplines of public and private international law?
- How do questions of what is and is not ‘natural’ influence how international law disciplines financial products?
- How do naturalizations of social order operate in international law?
- When have assumptions about ‘natural’ social order informed international law-making?

Confirmed participants include Justin Desautels-Stein, Moshe Hirsch, Emily Jones, Usha Natarajan, Anna Spain Bradley, and Ntina Tzouvala.

Logistics: This two full-day (hopefully) in-person workshop will be held on September 8th & 9th 2022 at the **University of Amsterdam** (UvA). It will bring together 30 participants to present their work-in-progress on the three primary themes of the workshop. Limited funding to cover travel and accommodation costs is available upon request and on a needs-basis.

Timeline: Submit an abstract of no more than 300 words and a bio of 200-300 words through this [form](#) by **6 May 2022**. Selected participants will be notified by **20 May 2022** and invited to submit a 3,000- to 5,000-word draft paper by **15 August 2022**.

Convenors: Kevin Crow, Eliana Cusato, & Lys Kulamadayil

Bibliography:

- Bandopadhyay, Saptarishi. *All Is Well: Catastrophe and the Making of the Normal State*. Oxford University Press, 2022.
- Baxi, Upendra. "Voices of Suffering and the Future of Human Rights." *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems* 8, no. 2 (1998): 125-70.
- Bianchi, Andrea, and Moshe Hirsch, eds. *International Law's Invisible Frames: Social Cognition and Knowledge Production in International Legal Processes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Desautels-Stein, Justin. "A Prolegomenon to the Study of Racial Ideology in the Era of International Human Rights." *UCLA Law Review* 67, no. 6 (2021): 1536-79.
- Escobar, Arturo. "Construction Nature: Elements for a Post-Structuralist Political Ecology." *Futures* 28, no. 4 (1996): 325-43.
- Knop, Karen. *Diversity and Self-Determination in International Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Pistor, Katharina. *The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.
- Spain Bradley, Anna. *Human Choice in International Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Tzouvala, Ntina. *Capitalism as Civilisation: A History of International Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Venzke, Ingo, and Kevin Heller, eds. *Contingency in International Law: On the Possibility of Different Legal Histories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.