



Max Weber
Stiftung
Deutsche
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HARVARD UNIVERSITY
ASIA CENTER



Call for Proposals

**PEACE AND SECURITY IN TIMES OF TRANSITION:
The Socialist and Post-Socialist States and the development
of International Peacekeeping since 1945**

Moscow, October 29-31, 2020

Organisers:

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Description:

The interconnected histories of international organizations and the normative conceptions of international relations with their discussions about range and universality constitute one of the most promising and challenging topics of International History since 1945. Debates about the balance between state sovereignty and territorial integrity, international security, human rights, and dimensions of peace were reflected and still are reflected by international approaches to international challenges, new- and old-type crises, and problems of Cold War, decolonization as well as post-Cold War and post-colonial processes.

Consequently, a modern history of international peacekeeping – in the broader sense of peace operations - is best conceptualized as an analysis integrating national, international, and global perspectives. In doing so, it would pay attention to domestic, diplomatic, military, legal, and cultural dimensions and combine a study of the actions and the conceptual frameworks of nation-states, non-state actors, and international governmental and non-governmental organizations. All in all, it would enlarge the traditional conceptualization of peacekeeping as a question of national and collective security by including factors of hierarchy and culture with shifting conceptions of “security”. Such a differentiated, multi-dimensional and multi-perspective history of peacekeeping would enable us to understand more completely the complex interconnection between differing national agendas, regional problems, as well as an international framework that is being continuously revised and renegotiated.

While historical research in this direction in general is developing, the contribution of socialist states and their successors remains an understudied field. With regard to the Soviet Union and Russia, the main narrative describes Soviet passivity and virtual absence, a briefly more active interim period from the late 1980s until the mid/end of the 1990s and, finally, specific Russian interpretations, mistrust and Moscow's quasi-unilateralism since the end of the 1990s. According to that narrative, until 1989-90, approaches and understanding of other East European countries appear to correspond to the general politics of Soviet hegemonic power. Non-European socialist debates are barely mentioned at all.

As in the case of Russia, changes after 1989-90 are usually explained by geopolitical and realist policy considerations. As a rule, twisted and maybe contradictory decision-making processes and the complex motivations beyond official pronouncements remain unclear. The complex interactions between multiple foreign policy aims, changing ramifications of Cold War, decolonization, and world economy and corresponding transition periods remain unexplored. The different and changing significance of specific regional considerations remain neglected. Experiences on the ground and societies' reactions or visions are still untold. Indeed, changing conceptualizations of peacekeeping, corresponding terminological developments and their different framing of corresponding international operations are still ignored.

In fact, socialist/post-socialist willingness or unwillingness to participate in or even to design international peacekeeping efforts, whether organized by the United Nations or by regional organizations, provide important insights into the given states' self-conception, positions, their understanding of chances and risks of international cooperation with possible supranational expansions. They also relate to their interpretation of corresponding fundamental questions like the abovementioned balance between state sovereignty and territorial integrity, the importance of individual and collective rights in international affairs, and political, military, economic, ecologic, or cultural definitions and dimensions of peace and security in general.

Different grades of participation in as well as neglect or obstruction of peacekeeping operations reveal socialist and post-socialist fundamental understandings of and ideas about the international and global coexisting, along with preferred world order, normative foundations, and the mechanisms and instruments meant to achieve this order. At the same time, they demonstrate given capabilities and incapability for international cooperation and adaption to changing international environments. Developments that tend to broaden possible catalysts for peacekeeping operations and may restructure fundamental understandings of international relations, rights, and responsibilities, cannot but influence perspectives of all states and national approaches.

In more recent research, endeavours are being made to reintegrate spaces of Eastern Europe as well as Cold War-socialism and its successors into the emerging picture of interwoven and interconnected international histories since 1945. Our conference will extend these efforts to the important field of the history of peacekeeping since 1945. It will focus on corresponding socialist and post-socialist approaches to international peacekeeping in times of international and/or national transition to analyse range and limits of interconnection of changing international, regional and normative parameters and ramifications with changing national constellations and dynamics.

It is the **conference's aim** to discuss case studies and analyses of:

- Single contributions of socialist countries and their successors to international peacekeeping operations under or beyond the United Nations;
- The development of approaches of single states to concepts and instruments of peacekeeping during given transition periods;
- Peacekeepers' experiences and assessments and corresponding post-peacekeeping careers or difficulties;
- Public debates and assessments of/about general and single peacekeeping endeavours with or without their home-states' participation;
- Specific problems of international peacekeeping, like the role of regional organisations and the specific approaches to specific regions and states in crises regions;
- Regional and international approaches to crises and peacekeeping in post-socialist areas since the end of the Cold War;
- Importance of single aspects and conceptions of international development and questions for state actors, e.g., human rights, state sovereignty, balance of power, multipolarity.

Consequently, proposals may address, but are not limited to the following concrete **research questions**:

- Terminology:
e.g., Socialist Internationalism, Peacekeeping, Peace Operations, Peacebuilding, Conflict Resolution
- Crises:
e.g., inter-state conflict, civil war, violation of human rights
- Country studies, individual participants, experiences, evaluations
e.g., Soviet, Polish, Chinese contributions and actors
- The establishment of the post-war international order, 1945-1950/53
e.g., debates about UN-forces; Kashmir crisis; Near East; Korea

- The emergence of the Third World
e.g., Suez; Congo
- The years of détente
e.g., the Middle East
- The end of the Cold War
e.g., Namibia; Iraq
- A contested world order after 1989/90
e.g., the rise of nationalism, the multipolar world, radical Islam, new wars, the
role of INGOs

Conference Language: English

Conference Dates: October 29-31, 2020

Outcomes: Papers from the conference will be collated for a special issue of a journal or an edited volume in a specialised series.

Deadline for Proposal Submission: December 1, 2019

We will inform participants on acceptance of papers by February 1, 2020.