



## « HISTORICAL CAPITALISM AND INTERNATIONAL LAW »

### CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUNG SCHOLARS' CONFERENCE

*Sciences Po Law School, Paris, 18 and 19 January 2018*

From the refugee crisis to climate change, from international terrorism to the ascent of extreme right governments, from increasing inequalities to new identity-based conflicts: the promises of liberal economic globalisation seem to be under attack all over. As a result, reflections on the relations between economy and society are increasingly present in the public debate, notably from the perspective of a more radical critique of the very basis of the capitalist system. This renewed interest is echoed for example in (yet another) return to Karl Marx's writings, particularly in the German, French and Anglo-American press, in response to the now famous critiques of economic inequalities in liberal-democratic and market-driven societies, such as those raised by Thomas Piketty.

In the academic debate, although an increasing number of international lawyers have recently made historical interventions in their discipline in search of new possible futures, from a legal perspective in-depth analyses of the origins and functioning of the capitalist system remain limited. On the contrary, many historians have been focusing on the subject of capitalism and have developed analytical tools to critically analyse it, without however giving full importance to the constitutive role of law in the functioning of the capitalist system.

The young scholars' conference which will take place on 18 and 19 of January 2018 at Sciences Po Law School, Paris, as part of CIERA's *programme colloques juniors* will explore the topic "Historical Capitalism and International Law" and try to fill some of these gaps. We borrow the notion of historical capitalism from Immanuel Wallerstein (*Le Capitalisme historique, La Découverte, 2011*) who points towards an analysis of the capitalist system as a specific historical process based on the principle of the continuous accumulation of capital. Originally historical, this definition underlines the particularities of capitalism as a social construction embedding several

economic, social, political and cultural dimensions, all of which can be further articulated through analysing the legal dimension. Hence, this kind of analysis allows the elaboration of interdisciplinary perspectives, which depart from the material reality of capitalism to analyse its origins, functioning, current challenges and the prospect of its potential future developments. This conference will focus on the nature and evolution of economic and social institutions, their role in the exchanges and movement of peoples, ideas and commodities, as well as the way through which encounters, confrontations and interactions have shaped them in turn.

An interest in this particular dialogue lies principally in the perception of law as a social product which enjoys a relative autonomy in relation to other economic, social and cultural disciplines. Since law itself produces its own concrete realities and at the same time is an instrument around which various social actors struggle, it should not be analysed in complete isolation from other social processes. The interplay of voices coming from different disciplines is therefore central to grasping the specificity of law in the production of historical capitalism; particularly if one wants to avoid falling into analytical traps, such as the tendency to reduce law to a superstructure or on the other hand the reduction of histories and analysis of law to elements separated from the functioning of society. The conference will hence gather lawyers and historians, as well as social science scholars, appealing to the diverse and complementary approaches of each discipline in order to understand the forms of organisation which capitalism has taken in different times, in different places and at different scales. Each session will involve discussions between lawyers and historians working on related topics.

Contributions to the conference should explore one of the three following subject areas: 1) international law and the histories of capitalist expansion; 2) the history of international law and political conflicts in capitalism; 3) histories of international law and narratives of capitalist modernity. The publications being considered and would include certain contributions from the conference.

Abstracts (maximum 151(300) words) to 151(5)9(00) Tm(wor)5(ds)-150(shall) contribution, along with a CV by **15 October 2017** to [capitalismehistorique.di@gmail.com](mailto:capitalismehistorique.di@gmail.com). Successful applicants will be notified by **5 November 2017 at the latest**. English will be the main working language during the conference.

We encourage applications from the members of the HeiParisMax network, of the *Collège doctoral franco-allemand en droit public comparé européen* and of scholars affiliated to history centres connected to CIERA. There will be an equal number of contributions from both men and women, participants from French and German institutions, and those proposing historical or legal

approaches. Applications from other areas of the world are also accepted and encouraged. A portion of the travel and accommodation expenses of selected participants will be covered by the conference.

Scientific Committee:

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Claire Lemerrier (Centre de Sociologie des Organisations de Sciences Po)

Anne Peters (Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht)

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