

Survival politics

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Propositions

1. In existential crisis, IOs behave in surprising and extraordinary ways compared to contexts of normal policymaking. This IO Survival Politics occurs across a range of diverse IOs in face of diverse threats.
2. Not all existential crises cause IO Survival Politics to the same extent. The variation is explained by a combination of the IO's powers and leadership, member state preferences, the acuteness of the threat, and whether the addressee is a state or another IO.
3. The cases of the Brexit negotiations and Trump's threats to NATO were contingent and could have ended differently. IO Survival Politics was instrumental in shaping these history-making episodes.
4. IOs are more resilient than assumed. It is too early to sound the death knell for the multilateral order.
5. The dominance of structural explanations of IO crises outcomes warrants revision. Agency matters.
6. IOs will continue to face existential threats from parochial nationalists in the West, emerging powers, and civil society actors. IO Survival Politics will be a necessary form of behaviour in the foreseeable future.
7. IO Survival Politics is more a painkiller than remedy for the crisis of multilateralism. The multilateral order needs to attract greater ownership from across the globe to survive in the long term.
8. The outsized power on display by appointed officials is normatively problematic and exacerbates the democratic deficit of current global governance.
9. Virtual conferences and field work are less fun than workshops in Barcelona and interviews in Viennese Kaffeehäusern.
10. PhD students are well-equipped to deal with the solitude of pandemics, however miserable.