

RESEARCH MAPPING - GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES: INTERNATIONAL GENEVA THROUGH THE LENSE OF ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

Academic research makes an important contribution to the work of the United Nations. Through thought leadership, it broadens our understanding of the functioning of the U.N. and other International Organizations, and the role they play in addressing global challenges. Academic research provides a pool of knowledge for policy-makers and non-governmental groups to draw upon; a valuable resource which can contribute to the resolution of today's global issues. Geneva is a resource gateway to academic communities with particular research interest in the areas of work related to the United Nations. With over 50 United Nations entities and a number of International Organizations, International Geneva works actively to combat global challenges in the areas of trade, health, intellectual property, labour, migration, environment, human rights, and Internet governance, among others. The city provides a unique backdrop for academic researchers to observe and analyze the inner workings, and outputs of global governance across a variety of topics.

To facilitate open access to the information produced by actors in Geneva, the United Nations Office at Geneva, working together with other Geneva-based organizations, has compiled GVADATA – an electronic catalogue of data produced by each organization. The site pools together tremendous resources within the United Nations system and other International Organizations, creating a powerful hub of ideas and research materials.

Academic research cooperation between the Graduate Institute's Programme for the Study of International Governance, the United Nations and Academic Council of the United Nations System (ACUNS) and the Perception Change Project of the United Nations Office at Geneva was also initiated. Aiming to provide an insightful research experience for academics, the group undertook a review of existing research showing International Geneva's role in global governance, and its impact on combating global issues. This process also identified academic research on topics, related to international entities based in Geneva and their work, and research "gaps."

The review revealed that the bulk of existing academic research on International Geneva focused on its innovation, standard-setting, thematic expertise and complementarities between Organizations. The past years have seen an increase in research related to disarmament, north-south relations, trade, human rights and the environment.

AREAS OF EXISTING RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL GENEVA INCLUDE:

1. TREATIES, AGREEMENTS AND GLOBAL STANDARDS

Research examining global standards established or administered from Geneva such as: 1994 TRIPS agreement administered by the World Trade Organization; 2005 Framework Convention on Tobacco Convention, administered by the World Health Organization.

2. POLICY INNOVATION AND REFORM

Research examining the policy innovation and reform of global governance based in Geneva, on topics related to human rights and health

3. THE BREAKDOWN OF ORGANIZATIONAL SILOS

Research examining breaking down silos enhancing collaboration between Geneva-based organizations, in the areas of migration, environment, humanitarian relief and human rights

4. INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF GENEVA-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Research related to the organizational history, programmes, work and outputs of organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Labour Organization

5. RESEARCH RELATED TO GENEVA'S EXPERTISE

Research related to thematic domains administered by Geneva based organizations such as Internet governance, trade, health, human rights and humanitarian affairs.

EXAMPLES OF "GAPS" AND UNEXPLORED RESEARCH AREAS, INCLUDE:

1. NON-JUDICIAL MECHANISMS TO MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION & COMPLIANCE

- Several Geneva-based entities are responsible for establishing and monitoring the implementation of, and compliance with, international agreements, such as:
- The independent civil society-led, Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, which monitors the implementation of the Landmine and Cluster Munitions Conventions.
- The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, which monitors Private Military and Security Companies' compliances with the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers.
- The Human Rights Council's monitoring mechanism is the Universal Period Review, a State-driven process, which requires States to declare actions taken to fulfill their human rights obligations.

Despite the fundamental role these mechanisms play in the policy implementation and enforcement of international agreements, little research has been conducted to analyze the different types of monitoring mechanisms that exist, and their

relative effectiveness.

2. NEW FORMS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE – HUBS, PLATFORMS AND FUNDS

While a lot has been written on public-private partnerships and emerging actors in global governance, little analysis has been done to assess the newer forms of emerging governance.

Geneva is home to a number of “hubs” and “platforms,” such as the Geneva Internet Platform and the Water Hub. Unlike public-private partnerships, these hubs and platforms are informal, yet highly organized networks that share knowledge and expertise with one another without the formalities and limitations of public-private partnerships.

The review identified that despite their influence in combating global challenges, no published research on the activities or impacts of these innovative forms of governance exists. There is also very little research on the governance and operation of the global funds that are managed from Geneva.

3. U.N. REFORM

While several articles have been published on the need for U.N. Security Council reform, very little research has been done on the substantive reforms already made by other U.N. bodies, like the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Human Rights Council, and the International Labour Organization. This charts a wide scope for academic research on topics related to the types of U.N. reforms, their effectiveness, legitimacy, and their relevance to the different International Organizations and U.N. agencies today.

GVADATA portal will serve researchers as an easy-to-access knowledge sharing guide to complement existing and future academic research. The goal is to assist scholars in their research endeavours and to help unearth innovative research topics on areas related to International Geneva’s Expertise.