

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Special Section: Disruption by design

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This Special Section is first in a series of forums launched by the editorial team at the *Review of International Studies*. The objective of these special sections is to showcase scholarly work that is recasting what counts as the study of international politics. In an effort to broach new terrain, these special sections intend to cultivate novel ways to think through traditional domains of security, political economy, and governance, while at the same time generating attention to emerging issues and their consequences, both theoretical and empirical.

Each forum has been led by a scholar whose work is exemplary in its ability to forge new ways of linking different concepts, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies. Curating this inaugural special section is Nicole Sunday Grove, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Through the theme of 'Disruption by Design', Grove asks us to consider trends in which international politics is no longer defined through traditional understandings of governance and what is governable. In her provocative opening essay, she asks what happens when politics, increasingly conducted on a planetary scale, has become a series of unending beta-tests where disruption rather than good governance or sustainability are the metrics of institutional success. The articles published here are interventions – even provocations – on this theme, each casting attention to processes and practices that call for different ways to study and experience governance, marginalisation, and resistance in an evolving geopolitical context marked by a fascination with both perpetual innovation and failure. Extending the lines of inquiry prompted by Grove, Professor Louise Amoore (Geography, Durham University) and Dr Charmaine Chua (Global Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara) interrogate how and whether global politics today has indeed become ripe for disruption. Developing different 'disruptive' genealogies, as a logic of invention, engineering, control, and even resistance, the essays reflect on evolving structures of power that embed new means or ends of rule. Against an emphasis on order in political thought and policy, each of these articles asks: what are the consequences for politics as practised globally when disruption is not the exception but the norm? What are the possibilities and prospects for resistance, for whom do they matter and can they be mobilised effectively? Taken together, this Special Section provides an opening to reflect on how and why forms of statecraft, sources of authority, and principles of legitimacy are being refashioned, even when they seemingly fail. As a whole, the articles published here more broadly force scholars to ask and address larger questions about the short and longer-term implications of broader global transformations that can be identified in the swell of new forms of world making.

Disruption being the theme, the crisis and circumstances of the COVID-19 global pandemic had a direct and material impact on the publication of this forum. What was intended as a keynote lecture and plenary panel to be held at the annual BISA conference in June 2020, was soon revised to virtual presentations and an online plenary held in November 2020. These presentations remain available and can be viewed here: {<https://www.bisa.ac.uk/articles/disruption-design-planetary-programming-aftermath-geopolitics>}. Followed by a series of online workshops

focused on the themes raised by each author, this Special Section reflects a series of rich debates and discussions on questions that have uprooted conventional assumptions about the rules and dynamics of international politics, drawing attention (and caution) to the effects and consequences of emerging systems of politics invoking the rule of disruption. The editors thank the authors for their thoughtful engagement with this theme, and the time and effort to produce these incisive essays. We would also like to thank the many participants that have contributed to the discussions by generously offering their time and comments.