



Knots: thinking the politics of global connectivities

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Abstract

Knots have historically been used in various cultures as systems for numbering and for keeping accounts, as ways of connecting ropes and fibres into useful instruments, as decorative objects and heraldic elements, as ways of measuring speed, and as representations of entanglement. They have performed a central role in enabling sailing in waters, in holding together building structures and supporting objects. They are, also, a central object and idea for thinking the connectivity that characterises 'global politics' and 'the international'. Knots are instruments that help us think the relationality of power in the global realm. They perform and depict connectivity between otherwise disconnected elements and domains. They refer to the capacity and possibility to connect but also, and always, to 'dis-connect'. As such, knots allow us to think the political not in terms of permanent structures but as assemblages that can always be different, and especially, creatively different. This paper explores the different forms in which knots, as object and idea, can be used to understand the complexity of the global and the international.

Workshops on Modes of Reasoning

Modes of Reasoning is a research theme of the Chair Group on History and Theory of International Relations. It aims to explore different dimensions of thought through which ideas such as power, governance, the global and the international have been approached, both historically and in current political practice.