

Race and Multilateralism: The Anatomy of a Complex Relationship (RAM)

The project “Race and Multilateralism” (RAM) studies the ways that multilateralism, an institutional form of cooperation central to the liberal international order, has been implicated in creating, recreating, or overcoming the racialized nature of that order. The project examines the relationship between race as a constructed category and multilateralism as an institutional form along three lines of inquiry: First, it examines how the structure of multilateralism as an institutional form, especially in comparison to imperialism, constructs racial exclusions and hierarchies; Second, it examines the policy output of multilateral institutions with respect to race in order to understand how multilateral institutions have governed meanings of “race” and to explain why these have changed over time; Third, it examines staff and leadership diversity policies within multilateral organizations to understand how practices of representation affect decision-making and institutional legitimacy. The project is based on an interdisciplinary and long-time horizon approach. The project is situated within a larger research agenda concerned with historicizing the design and development of multilateralism as an institutional form.