



Imaobong Umoren

Sumi Madhok

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## Q&A with Imaobong Umoren and Sumi Madhok on the International Studies Book Series

*Imaobong Umoren (LSE International History) and Sumi Madhok (LSE Gender Studies) are two of the editors of **the International Studies Book Series** published by Cambridge University Press in association with LSE. In this interview with Anna D'Alton, they discuss the aim of the series, why transdisciplinary and transnational research matters and books to look out for in 2025.*

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### When was the LSE-Cambridge University Press International Studies book series founded and what is its aim?

The book series has its roots in the **Centre for International Studies at the LSE** that was established in 1967. The centre had a monograph series in international studies with Cambridge University Press that aimed to promote research in the multi-disciplinary field of international studies.

Around 2018 the series changed and became **the Cambridge University Press-LSE International Studies Book Series** and began publishing work that was both international and transdisciplinary. Being transdisciplinary, the series intends to challenge narrow disciplinary conventions and classifications to showcase work that crosses multiple scholarly fields including, but not limited to international relations, law, history, sociology, gender studies and political theory.



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Secondly, the series is keen to highlight scholarly work engaged in the growing field of transnational studies, especially innovative scholarship that brings together the theoretical with the empirical, traverses national borders and challenges methodological nationalism. As editors, we are especially interested in scholarship that critically engages with pressing contemporary issues and questions that requires interventions from the critical social sciences.

### **Transdisciplinarity is a key objective of the series (not just across the books, but within individual books). Why is this important?**

Transdisciplinary research is innovative. It takes disciplines out of their silos and allows them to speak to each other in ways that can enrich our understanding of research fields and topics like legacies of colonialism, modern-day imperialism but also anticolonial resistance, borders and migration, transnational political activism and justice movements, to name a few. We believe that no one discipline has all the answers to research questions, and that by embracing transdisciplinarity we can grapple with the complexity of our contemporary world.

### **You emphasise the international scope of the series. Are there any underrepresented regions, countries or lenses that you are particularly keen to cover?**

Our book series is a critical intervention into what we see as the over-representation of Euro-North Atlantic scholarship in academia. Through our series we want to acknowledge the depth and breadth of scholarship from and about under-published areas of the world, such as the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle-East and Africa. However, it is not enough to only increase the quantity of publishing from these areas; we must also challenge the continued influence of Eurocentric frameworks that dominate academic scholarship. To address both these forms of over-representation, we are particularly keen to highlight theoretical, historical, conceptual and methodological scholarship from “**most of the world**”.



*In the post-Covid academic landscape there are a lot of challenges for editors [...] delays in peer review feedback due to overworked academics, cyber-attacks targeting publishers, and the promises and pitfalls of AI*



**Another theme the series engages with is books that “attend critically to the legacies of colonialism”. What are some of the ways in which the books you publish undertake this?**

We decided to add this to the scope of the series last summer when we invited Associate Professor Katharine Millar from the International Relations Department and Professor Sumi Madhok from the Department of Gender onto the editorial board. Both, and the other members of the board, were keen to integrate their scholarship into the remit of the series. Our contemporary world is riddled with the legacies of colonialism and neo-colonialism, and we are interested in the manifold ways these are manifested through the global economy, militarism, gender relations, the climate crisis, to list just a few.

**What do you think are the biggest shifts or emerging concerns in academic publishing in recent years? Are there any that will impact your work editing the series?**

In the post-Covid academic landscape there are a lot of challenges for editors of book series and journals. These include delays in peer review feedback due to overworked academics, cyber-attacks targeting publishers, and the promises and pitfalls of AI, for instance. Yet despite these issues, academic publishing remains crucial, especially for attending to issues that our series promotes. Our series has a rich tradition of publishing award-winning early-career scholars’ first books, but we also attract established scholars, and the combination of the two is a real strength of our series.

**What books of interest can readers look out for in 2025?**

In 2025, there are several exciting books due to be published. They include political scientist Alena Drieschova’s *Representants and International Orders: The Staging of Political Authority*, IR scholar Kerry Goettlich’s *From Frontiers to Borders: How Colonial Technicians Created Modern Territoriality*, historian Grace Carrington’s *Global Decolonisation and Non-Sovereignty: Small Island States in the*

*Caribbean*, sociologists Anaheed Al-Hardan and Julian Go's edited collection *Anticolonialism and Social Thought* and Negar Mansouri and Daniel R Quiroga-Villamarin edited collection *Ways of Seeing International Organisations: New Perspectives of International Institutional Law*.

Please do visit the [CUP website](#) for other forthcoming books and [our submission page](#) for how to submit a proposal.

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*Note: This review gives the views of the author, not the position of the LSE Review of Books blog, or of the London School of Economics and Political Science.*

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## About the author

### Imaobong Umoren

Imaobong Umoren is an Associate Professor of International History at the London School of Economics where she specialises in histories of colonialism, racism, women, and political thought in the Caribbean, Britain, and United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### Sumi Madhok

Sumi Madhok is Professor of Political Theory and Gender Studies at the LSE. Her recent book, *Vernacular Rights Cultures: The Politics of Origins, Human Rights and Gendered Struggles for Justice* is the winner of the Susan Strange Best Book Prize and the Sussex International Theory Prize. It also received the International Studies Association's Lee Ann Fujii Book Prize 'Honorable Mention'.

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