

HERA JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMME – PUBLIC SPACES

FINAL PROGRESS REPORT 1st May 2019 – 25th November 2022

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT (CRP) DETAILS	
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CHANGES OF INSTITUTION	
Detail if there have been any PL or PI institution changes in the previous 12 months, or are expected in the next 12 months?	N/A

Declaration by the Project Leader

I, as the Project Leader of this CRP and in line with the Terms and Conditions for the HERA JRP grants, declare that:

- The attached annual report represents an accurate description of the work carried out in this CRP for this reporting period;
- The CRP (tick as appropriate):
 - has fully achieved its objectives;
 - has achieved most of its objectives with relatively minor deviations; (If box is ticked, the report should reflect these and any remedial actions taken.
 - has failed to achieve critical objectives; (If box is ticked, the report should reflect these and any remedial actions taken.
- The public website is up to date, if applicable.
- To my best knowledge, the expenditure statements which are being submitted as part of this report are in line with the actual work carried out and are consistent with the report on the resources used for the CRP.
- All partners, in particular non-profit public bodies, secondary and higher education establishments, research organisations and SMEs, have declared to have verified their legal status. Any changes have been reported under section on CRP management.

Name of the Project Leader: ...Sven Widmalm.....

Date:12...../4...../2022.....

Signature of the Project Leader:

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1.1 Summary

The Scientific Conference: A Social, Cultural and Political History ([SciConf](#)) set out in 2019 to explore the evolution of scientific conferences as public spaces where knowledge is defined and exchanged, communities are shaped, and international relations are performed.

However, when in spring 2020 the world came to a standstill because of a series of lockdowns caused by the Covid19 pandemic, we were suddenly confronted with practical problems (the closure of archives and prevention of travel, and collaboration across different time zones) and new intellectual challenges. As academics and professional organisations across the globe turned to virtual conference formats, we added a new set of objectives to our list: to understand the long history of discussions about the most effective conference formats and methods of organisation; and to examine the ways in which conferences in the past have been mediated by technology, from the nineteenth century expansions of communication and travel infrastructures to our sudden reliance on zoom and skype in 2020.

Our research has been carried out within a framework of four broad case studies, each overseen by one of the four project PIs. These sub projects focused on specialised science conferences at World's Fairs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; social and cultural aspects of chemistry conferences in the first half of the twentieth century; 'technical conferences' taking place under the umbrella of the new international organisations set up after the First World War; and elite conferences such as the Nobel Symposia in the second half of the twentieth century.

Work performed

SciConf has investigated international scientific conferences from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth. Throughout their history, conferences have served as public spaces for the dissemination of scientific knowledge and culture. Like most public spaces, they have been simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. We examined a range of conferences that involved scientists and featured scientific discussions, and asked questions about their internal organisation, the ways in which they functioned as social gatherings, and their connections with broader political agendas.

Within the sub projects, and increasingly in collaboration with each other, we worked on several themes:

Setting and place: The early history of international conferencing is intertwined with the late nineteenth century's World's Fairs that powered the massification and stabilisation of this burgeoning practice. Conceived as one of the many spectacles of World's Fairs, these conferences were designed

as public displays of science, exhibiting conference goers and their knowledge to the millions of visitors roaming the fairgrounds. The conference sessions welcomed the attendance and/or participation of non-specialists such as state civil servants and administrators, thereby promoting and performing a particular conception of nation and internationality at the intersection of science, industry and politics.

Ritual and formation of communities: Early regular scientific conferences adopted a host of rituals from other meeting formats to foster a sense of international community as well as to mitigate the tensions that were inevitably present, not least because of the standard negotiations that were part and parcel of conference programs. However, while banquets, lady programs, and toasts to universal science bridged some differences, they deepened others; they were not designed to include female scientists or practitioners outside the Western middle class. The famous Gordon Research Conferences banned spouses, fuelled informal interactions, and encouraged almost aggressive debate in the belief that such would breed creative ideas. Conferences can hence be understood as embodying implicit sociologies of knowledge: notions of what forms of sociality advance scientific understanding.

Geopolitics and international relations: A new body of ideas and a canon of texts written in the aftermath of the First World War understood international conferences as a ‘technique’ for peaceful and stable international relations, and prescribed the comprehensive application of the ‘conference method’ to a range of otherwise unsolvable technical problems. One of the practical applications of these conference manuals was the emergence of a distinct genre of so-called ‘technical conferences’, which became the hallmark of the new, post-1919 international organisations organised under the umbrella of the League of Nations, and later served as a prototype for subsequent organisations. The conference technique also served as a tool for scientists and activists to publicise their programmes with the aim of building broad public support for their aims.

Social stratification/ elitism: In the years around 1970 a multifaceted global crisis that included the nuclear threat, a perceived population explosion, and environmental degradation was perceived by many as a threat to civilization or even survival. We identified a “conference landscape” where NGOs and IGOs plus private actors sponsored international meetings where scientific specialists and policy actors discussed such issues and sometimes launched new organisations with the purpose of combating problems on a global scale. International science conferences appear as the public face of an emerging globalist agenda characterised by a technocratic approach to problem solving.

Main results achieved

We have developed a broad chronology of international conferences, and sharpened insights into the

place of scientific conferences within this chronology. International science conferences share a history with those of social movements, diplomatic conferences and summits, and even with the methods of national parliaments. The connection with trade fairs was very strong in the early period of international science conferencing and is very strong today, with some conferences functioning essentially as trade fairs. As the number of disciplinary conferences grew at the turn of the twentieth century, a format was established that is still common to this day, with sometimes thousands of participants, keynote lectures, the reading of papers in sessions, grand conference banquets, all organised by scientific committees. Subsequent developments included specialised elite meetings, issue- or policy driven conferences, and the appearance of very large, ‘mega’ conferences, often with a strong commercial element. As new formats appeared, older ones continued to be relevant so that the international science conference has with time become a many-layered phenomenon. Our focus on chronologies and timelines has illuminated that conferences should not be understood as spontaneous events, but, rather, as nodes in a longer history of collaborative activities, including their preparation and long discursive afterlives.

Our research shows that conferences are a multifaceted phenomenon which cannot be neatly filed away under a single category concerning their organisation, content or format. Because of their multiple functions, there is no single measure of the success of a conference. Nonetheless, even in their variety conferences can be understood as features of internationalism in practice. When science conferencing took off in the mid-nineteenth century, major incentives for meeting came from the desire to formulate international regulations of techniques, standards, and terminology. Throughout this history, conferences have appeared as a means of forming or reinforcing communal identities. Individuals feel themselves to be part of international communities by physically coming together. At the same time, conferences are shaped by tensions in participants’ multiple identities, as both representatives of scientific fields and national subjects.

The growing importance and visibility of conferences has given rise, since the early twentieth century, to a body of literature on conferences as a technique for achieving consensus, taking diplomatic meetings as a model but applicable to a range of subjects, including science. By the mid-twentieth century, studies of conference methods also drew on the behavioural sciences, including group psychology and anthropology, and highlighted how social bonds were created with the help of rituals (borrowed from outside of the scientific community), and how creativity was engineered at smaller meetings through psycho-social techniques.

Finally, working with a variety of primary sources we were able to demonstrate that the published proceedings of a conference alone do not constitute ‘the conference’. Proceedings were by nature performative, and often served to create idealised versions of discussions and interactions. If

specific conferences or the wider conference phenomenon are to be understood, it requires combining textual analysis of proceedings with tools from sociology, anthropology, political science or social history. We have shown that conferences are also shaped by the complex material infrastructures of communication and travel, and the buildings, spaces and locations in which they take place.

Outputs and impacts

These analyses of the culture and politics of international conferences have informed the publications and outreach of SciConf. We have written a series of peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and presented our research at conferences, workshops and seminars. Some of our articles are gathered in a forthcoming special issue of the *British Journal for the History of Science*. Our introduction to the special issue attempts to map out a broad chronology and thematic overview of scientific conferencing which has been sorely missing in the literature to date.

Results have been further disseminated through the project [website](#) and [blog](#), through collaboration with stakeholders, and through a series of four broadly themed [podcasts](#), launched in November 2022 at a public performance at the Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image, Birkbeck College London. We have written two op-eds (for *Viewpoint* and *Times Higher Education*) with more to follow, and are preparing a policy paper on the future of conferences. We are also collaborating with a group of international scientists (who formed a group on [The Future of Meetings](#)) in search of environmentally-sustainable methods of conferencing. We have organised a semi-public workshop at the Lorentz Centre, one of our Associate Partners, while tapping their experience in the behind-the-scenes engineering of gatherings. Finally, we have presented our joint findings to the wider public in a lecture at the Science History Institute (another AP) which is available on [YouTube](#).

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1.2 CPR objectives

The overall objectives of SciConf are:

1. To increase our understanding of international scientific culture – i.e. the crucial ways in which conferences served to articulate common concerns, aspirations of integration, and the formation and maintenance of expert communities.
2. To deepen our insight into international relations – i.e. the formal and informal ways in which conferences involving scientific and technical matters reflected and shaped geopolitics, both between experts and for global policy makers.
3. To encourage a range of organisations today to actively reflect on their use of the conference format, and to help them to understand and address their opportunities, consequences and shortcomings.

1.3 Achievements of the CRP

Despite their omnipresence in modern scientific life, conferences have not been systematically studied in the existing literature. This is all the more surprising since conferences speak to several questions of current historiographical interest.

Some of the most prominent studies in the history of science over the last two decades have dealt with communication. Leading scholars have scrutinised past cultures of print publication and knowledge circulation, reading and writing practices, and the rise of scientific journals as the standard format for knowledge claims. Yet all this work has focussed on *written* exchanges, while it has long been known that oral or nonverbal communication is at least as crucial for the functioning of science. This CRP has studied such exchanges in their most concentrated form: conferences.

Similarly, in the historiography of international relations, the emphasis has long been on formal statements and written correspondence, with only recently a number of scholars turning to political conferences as occasions where international relations were *performed*. This CRP builds on that work, moving beyond the explicitly political to technical and scientific gatherings, where geopolitics was enacted too. Historical actors have often seen science as being *by nature* international. Hence conferences can be regarded as events where science's own universality was supposed to be manifest.

Opening up a new historical understanding of international science conferencing between science and politics

The CRP has drawn upon, cross-fertilized and contributed to these literatures by producing results of two kinds: detailed historical case studies spanning the period from the late nineteenth century to the 1970s, and broader conclusions concerning the development of international conferencing during this period. As our subject constitutes a fundamental aspect of international scientific culture and communication that has never been systematically studied, the broader conclusions should be seen as opening up a new historical understanding of science conferencing and hopefully leading to more research projects. One important contribution of our CRP is that we have studied science and science diplomacy squarely in the same historical context as other conferences, to think about a broad conferencing phenomenon and to illuminate where and how science conferences differed. While the science diplomacy literature is mostly concerned with the Cold War period, our conclusion is that international conferences show science diplomacy to have been an established phenomenon from the early decades of the nineteenth century. The first recurring international meetings were established in the German lands and in Scandinavia as part of cultural-political movements towards unification.

There are examples of crossovers between science and politics in all our case studies. We suggest that international science conferences are inherently political, as they constitute an important part of practical and often also ideological internationalism. The sub projects of the CRP exemplify the ambitions as well as limitations of science conferences as international endeavours.

Conferences as inclusive and exclusive spaces

International conferences have been a practice signalling not only aspirations of internationalism but also of “universalism”, i.e. that science should be the same everywhere, blind to matters of ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender and class, and that its results therefore have universal applicability. According to this logic they should constitute public spaces at least in the sense that they are open to all who have the required scientific credentials. Our case studies demonstrate that this has never really been the case. Since it became systematically institutionalised in the nineteenth century, science has always been hierarchically structured according to meritocratic principles, in addition to the exclusions and privileges at play in the societies in which it operates. Conferences have always reflected this; they have been exclusive in the same sense that scientific institutions have been. Disadvantaged groups like women did not gain a solid foothold in scientific institutions such as universities and research institutes until after the Second World War; in some disciplines women are severely underrepresented until this day. Imbalances in geographic, national or ethnic representation, which are especially revealing in purportedly international meetings, have likewise remained strong in some areas. We suggest that as conferencing became a norm in science, with conference participation affecting career possibilities of young researchers, they did not only mirror inherent imbalances in science but reinforced them, as there has been a discrepancy between the scientific culture among organisers of prestigious meetings and the realities of a changing demographic among active researchers.

Conferences as cultural phenomena

Scholarship on science conferences has so far focused on the famous meetings that have established new fields or made groundbreaking contributions. Examples include the Solvay conferences in physics and chemistry, the Macy conferences in cybernetics, the Wenner-Gren symposia in anthropology, and the Pugwash conferences on nuclear policy. Books have been dedicated to these meetings, for good reasons. Our approach has not only been more political than the existing scholarship on some particularly important conferences but also more socially and culturally oriented. The idea that science is inherently universal is flawed but conferences are one, perhaps the most, important site for studying the culture that underlies such claims. As the professional scientific

enterprise has vastly expanded, so its culture has been transformed. We have interrogated our sources with the question of what “international” meant to them, in their professional scientific careers and in the world they lived in, at different points in time. Our case studies give striking examples of this over time and in different areas: in fin-de-siècle chemistry and geology, in interwar activist sexology, in the literature on techniques of international conferencing in the same period, in a series of elite chemistry conferences and in problem-oriented, cross-disciplinary meetings during the Cold War. We have studied these conferences as cultural phenomena which fostered a sense of community but also allowed for the kind of aggressive exchanges that are sometimes both conflictual and constructive. Throughout the period under investigation, international cultures of science have relied on face-to-face interaction to such a large degree that we cannot predict what the consequences would be if most conferences migrated fully to the web in the future. A future hybrid situation will perhaps be more likely, where most conferences will continue to have a face-to-face element, but also allow many more participants to join online, but how hybrid *communities* will function requires more research.

Conferences as material, technological objects

Our research also touches on infrastructures, including communication and travel conduits alongside a more general materiality. We conclude that conferences are a ripe area for research on a material culture of science that goes far beyond that of instrument technology or laboratory design.

1.3.2 Relevance to the call

The HERA JRP call’s stated aim was to “mobilize the wide range of multi-disciplinary perspectives necessary to understanding the relationships between ‘public space’, culture and other phenomena, such as European integration. The research is expected to give new insights that promote the full potential of citizens’ engagement with European public and cultural spaces; to stimulate public, political and scholarly debate about the future prospects of European integration, and to study new modes of interactive and reciprocal engagement between academics and various types of stakeholders including those working in the media, creative industries, and heritage sectors”.

Our research has shown that the international scientific conference, a term that covers both strictly scientific meetings as well as conferences of a more political nature involving technical and scientific matters, has been a central cultural form through which public spaces and cultural integration have been conceptualised, discussed and performed. From the turn of the 19th century, when the conference format emerged in diplomatic and scientific contexts, and until the turn of the 20th century when it became truly global, conferencing has been an activity almost exclusively

practised in Europe before being exported elsewhere. We have explored the ways in which it has been shaped by European practices and spaces of sociability (e.g. gentlemen's clubs, festive occasions, tourism, Christian rituals) but also by European political cultures (trade union assemblies, parliamentary culture, diplomatic negotiation). We established that conferences partook in the emergence both of nations and of internationality, e.g. as fora for discussing and agreeing on standards essential for the smooth flow of information, goods, and persons, thus foreshadowing some of the work now done by the European Union. In the twentieth century, especially in the wake of the great crises of the first and second world wars, international conferences were considered as a privileged technique for fostering international collaboration and cooperation, and have remained so to this day, as the large climate meetings of today attest.

But international scientific conferences have also, paradoxically, been regularly criticised, calls for their reform have frequently made, giving rise to a body of literature that this project has contributed to unearth and study: manuals on good conferencing. How can conferences have been both so successful and so criticised? Our research into the management of inclusion and exclusion (including of non-European actors, but also women and other often disenfranchised groups), the material and social mechanisms put into place for enabling discussion, negotiation, communication at international scientific conferences suggests that these were important fora for establishing in the first place, and regularly re-negotiating, what counted as a legitimate individual or community, what counted as legitimate rules for discussing issues involving scientific, technical and political matters.

Through our historical work on the phenomenon of international scientific conferencing we have therefore sought to provide a much needed historical background to current debates about what the public sphere is, who belongs to it and how it should work; while encouraging a reflexive engagement regarding seemingly self-evident fora such as conferences as the means to thrash out issues of public concern. Our analyses have proven to be especially relevant in the wake of the current debate, begun in the late 2010s on environmental grounds, and heightened by the Covid pandemic, about the opportunities and risks of moving international meetings online. Our historical perspective has been valued as communities reflect on what international scientific meetings do, what kinds of communities they bind/create/bring together/leave out and what kinds of public spaces they constitute or help to shape.

Part of this work has spoken to or was produced together with stakeholders within academia, science policy, the creative arts and journalism.

1.3.3

TABLE 1. ALL COMPLETED CRP OUTPUTS (add more rows if required)						
Output no.	Output name	Lead partner	Delivery date	Delivered Yes/No	Actual / Forecast delivery date	Comments
1	contribution to joint monograph by all researchers involved	all PIs	Y2S2	yes	2023	the joint monograph has been turned into a special issue, a proposal for which has been accepted by the <i>British Journal for the History of Science</i>
	introduction to (monograph turned into) special issue by the four PIs	all PIs	Y3S2	yes	2023	
2	op-eds	all PIs	Y2S2	yes	Y4S1	two op-eds published in <i>Viewpoint</i> and <i>Times Higher Education</i>
3	policy paper	all PIs	Y3S2	no	2023	in progress

4	PI1 article	PI1	Y3S2	Yes	Y4S1	article published as book chapter
5	article 1 by postdoc 1	PI1	Y2S1	no	Y4S1	Submitted to BJHS, passed first round of reviews, revised
6	article 2 by postdoc 1	PI1	Y2S1	no	Y4S1	Late because of sick leave and archival lockdown; presented at workshop in March
7	PI1 article 2	PI1				Submitted to BJHS, passed first round of reviews, revised

8	article 1 by postdoc 2	PI2	Y2S1	no	Y4S1	Submitted to BJHS, passed first round, revised
9	article 2 by postdoc 2	PI2	Y2S1	no		Late because of archival lockdown
10	article 1 by PI2	PI2				submitted to BJHS, passed first round of reviews, revised
11	book review by PI2	PI2			2023	accepted, scheduled for publication in the <i>American Historical Review</i> , January 2023
12	roundtable contribution by PI2	PI2			2023	under review for publication in <i>Past & Present</i>
13	article 2 by PI2	PI2			2023	in progress
14	article 1 by postdoc 3	PI3	Y1S2	no		submitted to <i>ISIS</i> , rejected, being revised for resubmission to <i>HOPOS</i>
15	article 2 by postdoc 3	PI3	Y2S2	no		submitted to <i>Nuncius</i> , under review
16	article 3 by postdoc 3	PI3				submitted to <i>BJHS</i> , passed first round of reviews, revised
17	monograph by postdoc 3	PI3	Y3S2	no		recast as a series of book chapters, one submitted, one in preparation
18	walking tour and edited anthology by artist	PI3	Y2S1	yes	Y4S1	has been recast into ambitious podcasts with artists, in collaboration with all lead partners
19	article 1 by PI3				2023	unplanned. submitted to

						BJHS, passed first round of reviews, revised
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20	article 1 by PI4	PI4	Y3S2	yes	Y2S2	Published in <i>History of Science</i>
21	article 1 by PhD student	PI4	Y3S1	yes	Y4S1	submitted to BJHS, passed first round of reviews, revised
22	article 2 by PI4	PI4	Y3S1	yes	Y4S1	submitted to BJHS, passed first round of reviews, revised
23	article 3 by PhD student and PI4	PI4	Y3S1	no	Y4S2	to be submitted to <i>Ambix</i>
24	PI4 book review	PI4		yes	Y3S2	Published in <i>Isis</i>
25	PI4 Afterword to special issue	PI4		yes	Y3S2	Published in <i>History of Science</i>

1.4 Achievements of the Individual Projects

Case study 1. Scientific summits: The Nobel Symposia during the Cold War

PI 1 (Sven Widmalm) and postdoc 1 (Jenny Beckman) have collaborated on a study on the Nobel Symposia from their origins in the mid-1960s to the 1970s. They have however not co-authored publications, and their work will be presented separately here.

Widmalm has worked on interdisciplinary and problem-oriented Nobel Symposia with a particular emphasis on Nobel Symposium 14 on “The place of value in a world of facts” (1969). He has published one peer-reviewed paper with a second under revision and a third in preparation. Most Nobel symposia were discipline oriented and catered to the scientific elites. Some were however broader and more problem oriented. Nobel Symposium 14 was described as “cross-cultural” as it included participants representing all Nobel Prize categories. It received massive international attention (not all positive) and led to several spin-off conferences; it contributed directly or indirectly to the creation of several new globally oriented organisations. Widmalm’s work has focused on three aspects of this symposium and the cluster of similar meetings to which it belonged.

In one paper, the idea of combining science (physics, chemistry, medicine) with politics (associated with the Peace Prize), and the humanities (associated with the prize in literature) is discussed from the perspective of the dwindling status of the humanities from the 1960s onwards. The symposium’s agenda was to discuss “world problems”, like the “population explosion”, associated with a general crisis that threatened civilization. The humanities were described as part of the solution as far as they could underpin more technical and technocratic ambitions of scientists, social scientists, and policy makers. To give this high-profile meeting impact some sessions were public, and international media were mobilized to disseminate the results of the discussions. Under these circumstances the impact of the humanities even on the issue of human values was overshadowed by some scientists. The symposium hence exemplified yet another contemporary problem in this period: the soon to become proverbial “crisis of the humanities”.

A second paper deals with Nobel Symposium 14 and spin-off meetings and projects from the perspective of several other organizations and meetings with a similar agenda: problem-solving on a scientific basis in the face of a global crisis. The paper maps the international networks of individuals and organizations that the Nobel Foundation made use of and helped shape. It is shown that meetings like those organized by the Nobel Foundation must be understood as nodes in a broader movement involving NGOs and IGOs who all organised conferences that in turn sometimes spawned new organizations and conferences (as Nobel Symposium 14 did). A third paper in preparation focuses on media representations of science as a problem-solver more or less successfully staged by organizers of

Nobel Symposia. This is an important aspect of how meetings like these functioned as public spaces: the general public was usually not much invited; media constituted a public space instead.

Beckman's research has focused on international scientific conferences and organizations as mutually constitutive – particularly in the volatile organizational landscape of the 1960s and 1970s. The meetings, assemblies, and conferences of international organizations, such as UN, UNESCO, and ICTP, provided an infrastructure for the conception and development of new organizations. In this landscape, The Nobel Foundation with its symposia and festivities provided an organizational structure but, even more importantly, scientific credibility that could be translated into concrete geographical capital by other Swedish organizations. Stockholm was promoted as a hub of conferences and organizations associated with science and development.

Beckman has conducted a case study on the genesis of the International Foundation for Science, under the aegis of primarily Swedish and American academies of science, and with the background support of the Nobel Foundation. The study highlights the interplay between NGOs such as Pugwash – itself constituted by conferences – and international organizations such as UNESCO, and the attempts by traditional organizations such as academies and scientific societies to reimagine themselves as international NGOs in this context. For Swedish academies, the Nobel Foundation and Sweden as a country of political neutrality and scientific excellence, proved crucial in establishing their role in the International Foundation for Science, and its eventual Stockholm location. Beckman is working on a further study, which analyzes how this reimagining involved new initiatives in information and international relations of academies, where conferences were cast as both networking tools and PR opportunities.

In the course of this collaboration, Widmalm and Beckman have used the archives of the Nobel Foundation, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, the International Foundation for Science, the UN library deposited at Uppsala University Library, as well as the personal archives of several central actors.

Case study 2. Laboratories of Cooperation: Scientific and Medical Experts at the Conferences of International Organisations

Jessica Reinisch (PI2) led the research into the conferences of interwar and war-time international organisations, and found that they were closely shaped by publications by a generation of scholars, teachers and practitioners of political science, international law and international relations at British or American institutions. They wrote about conferences as a new, regulated, standardised and teachable 'technique' of modern statecraft in a series of manuals and handbooks on conferences. Although in most cases not scientists themselves, they were motivated by a sense of science as the rational force of

progress in the world. The authors of these textbooks insisted on the need for systematic, objective study and regulated processes as the only way that knowledge could be brought to and mobilised at the conference table. To them this was a scientific, objective process – very different from the irrational world of politics.

These publications presented conferences as tools to teach a particular notion of how to conduct international affairs, and prescribed a ‘technique’ of successful conferencing, which, they claimed, was applicable regardless of the subject matter under discussion. They did not claim this technique would remove all sources of controversy: disagreements about memberships, language, and different interpretations of the doctrine of equality of states would continue to play a role. But to them the conference technique minimised conflict by structuring and regulating interactions. By designating potential disagreements as ‘problems of organisation and procedure’, they were deemed ultimately solvable. The assumptions underlying these interwar conference studies proved to be remarkably flexible and durable. Ultimately, the ‘technique’ of conferences was so flexible that it could serve a variety of purposes. Even as international organisations or political systems became discredited by war, economic depression or collapse, conferences as a process or technique did not. This had been the case in 1919, and was true again in 1945. Each crisis was not so much evidence of the failure of the conference technique, as, rather, that it was needed more than ever.

Informed by these conference studies, the new League of Nations did not just seek to reform the international sphere via conferences, but also to standardise the conference format itself. Where the textbook authors argued that the subject matter of conferences was secondary to the format and rules at play, League thinkers went further and cemented a division between ‘political’ and ‘technical’/scientific problems. So-called ‘technical conferences’ became the hallmark of the League of Nations and served as a prototype for subsequent organisations. Technical conferences differed from conferences of scientists that set out to define disciplinary models and practices. Instead, they brought together practitioners from different fields so as to find concrete problems and find practical applications of their knowledge. Building on a tradition of scientists’ employment by local and national governments, and increasingly also in international organisations, technical conferences relied on two things: politicians’ recognition of ‘experts’ as carriers of specialist knowledge who could communicate with others via shared approaches; and experts’ willingness to identify supposedly scientific, technical problems as distinct from their political applications. These findings of the project challenge strands of the historiography which have tended to see scientific and political conferences as entirely separate phenomena. They also modify our understanding of the timeline of the history of conferences, and add the early decades of the twentieth century as foundational moments.

As Laura Forster (who was a postdoc in Year 1) uncovered, interwar technical conferences

overlapped with networks of intellectuals who were also political activists and reformers. She examined the scientific conference as a means by which the organisers of the World League for Sexual Reform's 1929 London conference attempted to marshal the 'scientific spirit' in order to build progressive social reform on concrete scientific insights. The 1929 conference was carefully designed to make the sex reform movement look serious, legitimate, and most importantly, scientific.

Even as the League was frozen and eventually dismantled shortly after the Second World War, and its legacy written off, Jane Mumby (who joined the project for 5 months in the final year of the CRP), demonstrated that League officials went to great lengths to record their unique knowledge of the 'science of international administration' in a series of informal conferences convened by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. These war-time conferences generated a series of key studies, handbooks and training manuals for international administrators in the United Nations apparatus. Public declarations about the League's evident failure to safeguard peace were accompanied by officials' recognition that any future organisation would have to build on the League's experience, even incorporate parts of it. Conferences appeared as perhaps the most resilient of the interwar advances in international relations.

Reinisch went on to trace the significance of the interwar conference studies and genre of technical conferences on one international organisation in particular, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), as a hub of experts, technicians and scientists. UNRRA routinised the use of conferences as an administrative tool and as a means for exchanging and branding technical knowledge. The body's conferences were an advert of a technocratically-minded liberal internationalism which expanded interwar arrangements. They served a number of functions: to bring together dispersed professional groups, to pass down instructions from headquarters to the relief teams, to report on ongoing work, to identify 'technical' solutions and scientific approaches, and to celebrate expertise.

Case study 3. Scientific conferences at universal and international exhibitions

Thomas Mougey (postdoc 3) studied how conferencing was organised and performed at the largest World's Fairs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Paris (1878, 1889, 1900), Chicago (1893), Saint-Louis (1904) and Brussels (1910). This large-scale comparative study yielded four key insights:

First, this work helped unearth the labour that goes into organising a conference and how exposition administrators mobilised the opportunities of the fair ground to mitigate the social and material constraints to international knowledge exchange; thereby correcting the widespread treatment of conferences as dematerialized meetings of the minds. It showed that a lot of social engineering was

deployed to select and gather international participants, design workable agendas, maintain cohesion and togetherness and emulate specific forms of exchange. It demonstrated that far from being spontaneous, the exchange of knowledge at conferences was a highly mediated process. In so doing this project challenged a dominant tendency of the existing historiography to neglect the enabling and/or constraining role of conference infrastructure by treating conferences as meetings of the minds.

Second, late nineteenth century exposition congresses were shown to be public spaces of particular kinds that were explicitly engineered and negotiated. Organisers drew from the surrounding fair to include a more or less broad audience. The 1893 Chicago's World's Congresses were the most inclusive and mobilised a scenography inspired by fair spectacles and church rituals to convey to a lay audience the teachings of the most eminent learned knowledge of the time. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the Saint-Louis' International Congress of Arts and Science stands out as a highly elitist gathering. Assembled and engineered using psychological techniques to revive the unity of science, this congress was reserved to the finest scholars of the time. And yet, each exposition encompassed ambitious publication strategies and disseminated in print the teachings of the conference to schools, libraries, museums and universities around the world. International conferences were often considered by fair organisers as living encyclopaedias, as opportunities for popular education and as mental exhibits to enlighten the masses with the latest rational scientific knowledge.

Third, scientific exhibitions were an integral part of conference practice, a dimension the historiography has neglected. Whether on the fair ground or in the conference venue itself, exhibitions were widely used to mediate social interactions, the exchange of ideas or the reaching of consensus on disputed matters such as the adoption of international standards. In Saint-Louis, the organisers used the spectacles of the fairground to cultivate informal contact among the scientifically diverse attendees. Informal exchange was conceived as the necessary stepping stone to overcome disciplinary divide and begin the work of re-unifying science. A number of disciplines such as geology but also botany had organised their own exhibitions, building on the rich collections gathered on the occasion of the World's Fair. These small exhibitions were essential mediating tools in the difficult task of agreeing on common visual and terminological standards. In geology, organisers designed map exhibitions to materialise the problems related to cartographic standards and bring participants to practically work out the material as well as political constraints impeding agreement through collective map-making.

Fourth, universal expositions heralded competing conference models with which they sought to give a stable and standardised function to the then burgeoning practice of international conferencing in science and international affairs. Between 1889 and 1900, the organising committee of the Paris Expositions crafted the international conference as an instrument to organise the comparative conditions of nations and standardise best practices in all spheres of society. The Parisian model was made

reproducible. The organising committee built upon its knowledge and expertise to issue a series of specific organisational guidelines which the committee's director promoted in various international organisations throughout the 1900s and 1910s. Although less elaborate, similar standardising efforts could be found in Chicago, Saint-Louis, and Brussels. This norm-setting practice lived on throughout the twentieth century with conference professionals but also diplomats and social scientists producing textbooks, guidelines, and checklists with which they both problematized and re-defined the function and practice of international conferencing.

Another, unplanned, strand of research was developed by Charlotte Bigg (PI3) in response to the effects of the Covid crisis on contemporary conferences, as was witnessed in the course of this project. The worldwide lockdowns imposed in 2020-2021 interrupted international scientific conferencing on a scale not seen since the world wars, leading to widespread soul-searching on its functions and value. Discussions often revolved around the opportunities and downsides of moving conferences online, generalising a debate that had emerged in the late 2010s about the carbon footprint of conferencing. An analysis of these debates was carried out and put into perspective through an historical investigation of the technological dimensions of conferencing. The rise and massification of international scientific conferencing was thus correlated with the spread of increasingly quick communication and travel from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (postal services, train networks, steamships, aeroplanes). Simultaneously it was shown that conference organisers have often been fascinated by communication technologies (sound and image amplification, telecommunication..) considering them to contribute to better interpersonal exchange, establishing a now widespread discourse.

Case study 4. Convention Conventions: Rituals of Participation in Regular Chemistry Conferences

The fourth strand of the SciConf project analysed conference culture and its role in fostering community, channelling international politics, and communicating knowledge. Research focussed on routines and rituals in regular conferences in the discipline of chemistry. Material came from two kinds of typical international meetings: the large, recurring gatherings of the International Congress of Applied Chemistry (ICAC, 1893-1914) and its successor the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC, 1919-1960) and the problem-focussed expert meetings of the Gordon Research Conferences (GRC, 1931-1980). Both Geert Somsen (PI4) and Georgiana Kotsou (the PhD student) analysed archival records of conference organisations, conference proceedings and press reports, oral histories, and conference criticism in journals as well as evaluation forms. They also examined conference photographs and memorabilia.

This work has yielded the following outcomes:

1. Early conferences acted, and were often represented (in reports as well as fiction literature), as a kind of parliament: issues were discussed, proposals voted on, and resolutions adopted and made known to governments around the world. Standardizations of nomenclature, experimental procedures, atomic weights, etc. were considered the most important functions of conferences – research presentations, on the other hand, were often criticised as non-essential and in fact replaceable by printed communication. The routines and rituals that guided conference work were largely adopted from contemporary parliaments as well as diplomatic summits. Many conference meetings and receptions actually took place in government buildings (the German *Reichstag*, city halls, the White House) and in the presence of ministers and heads of state who also frequently sponsored the congress. International conferences hence modelled their operations on political gatherings.

2. The most conspicuous conference rituals, openings speeches and banquet toasts, invariably celebrated the universal nature of science as well as the sacredness (sometimes literally) of its pursuit. They hence served to instil senses of community and dedication among conference participants that could help mitigate the conflict and loss that often came with standards negotiations. Conference proclamations cultivated notions of “brotherhood” and “love” so as to make participants’ strife and defeat (and hard, often unpaid work) seem like worthy sacrifices for a higher cause. Expressions of scientific internationalism hence should be regarded as celebrations and impositions of the collective. These insights draw on Emile Durkheim’s (contemporary) studies of collective gatherings and sacralisation, which he himself already deemed applicable to non-religious settings.

3. More recent work on the sociology of rituals has allowed us to further analyse their functions and impacts. While conference routines and symbolic gestures served to create senses of international community, they at the same time alienated parts of the collective. IUPAC organisers in the 1950s, for example, put together lavish social programs which were meant to integrate conference attendants from widely different nationalities, classes, and even professions (both industrial and academic chemists attended). Steps were taken, for instance, to unify participants’ appearance by imposing dress-codes and making the right attire available to all. At the same time, the types of social activities (luxury receptions, *haute cuisine* banquets, organ recitals) were geared predominantly (if not exclusively) toward the tastes and consumption patterns familiar to the Western middle class. Similarly, conference lady programs were designed for scientists’ wives, not female scientists, nor their husbands. The GRCs were even explicitly exclusive: while much informal interaction was built into the programs, it was restricted to the proper experts, leaving out not only their families, but initially also chemists of colour or Jewish lineage.

4. Conference formats reflected implicit sociologies of knowledge. Standardisation committee meetings were modelled after diplomatic gatherings because their forms of interaction were deemed

most conducive to the production of agreed upon scientific units etc. The GRCs display this relation even more strongly. Both organisers and participants were constantly evaluating the activities in terms of their effectiveness to advance new knowledge. Frank and almost aggressive debate were highly regarded as productive forms of interaction, as was an abundance of informal activities and an openness to speak one's mind. The presence of wives, slackers, and arrogant or thin-skinned participants, on the other hand, was frowned upon as distractive or obstructive to knowledge creation. Social activity, in other words, was predicated on scientific productivity, and participants related particular forms of sociability to the generation of knowledge

1.5 CPR Management

1.5.1. List of participants in the SciConf sub projects

Sub project 1

Sven Widmalm, Professor. Contract started 05.31.19 and ended 11.25.22. Estimated percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 38.

Jenny Beckman, Associated Professor. Contract started 05.31.19 and ended 11.25.22. Estimated percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 25 (lower than expected due to sick leave, somewhat compensated for by higher percentage than expected for PI1).

Sebastian Hanold, administrator. Contract started 01.01.22 and ended 11.25.22. Estimated percentage of salaried work time in the programme during contract period: 10.

Sub project 2

Jessica Reinisch, Professor. Contract started 05.31.19 and ended 5.31.22 (with maternity leave between 02.19.20 and 09.01.20). Average percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 33.

Laura Forster, Postdoc. Contract started 10.09.19 and ended 08.31.20. Percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 100. Forster left the project early due to employment at Durham University.

Jane Mumby, Postdoc. Contract started 05.02.22 and ended 10.31.22. Estimated percentage of salaried work time in the programme during contract period: 60. Mumby was employed as a late replacement for Forster.

Sub project 3

Charlotte Bigg, Dr. Contract started 05.31.19 and ended 11.25.22. Estimated percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 10.

Thomas Mougey, Postdoc. Contract started 05.31.19 and ended 08.31.22. Percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 100.

Robin Michalon, Research assistant (PhD Student). Contract started: 05.01.21 and ended 06.30.22. Percentage of work time during contract period: 50. Michalon was recruited on unused travel monies for archival work.

Mariana Castillo Deball, Nils Reinke-Dieker, Matthias Schubert, artists. Collaboration started 05.31.19 and ended 11.25.22. Estimated percentage of work time each in the programme: 5-15.

Sub project 4

Geert Somsen, Associate professor. Contract started 05.31.19 and ended 05.31.22. Estimated percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 33.

Georgiana Kotsou, PhD candidate. Contract started 06.30.19 and ended 06.30.22 (Kotsou started one month later and was allowed to add a month at the end – both changes approved by HERA after Requests for Changes). Percentage of salaried work time in the programme: 100. Kotsou is due to finish her PhD in June 2023.

For all PIs, actual (and unsalaried) work extended beyond employment periods and hours. The CRP benefited from additional funds brought in from a Wellcome Trust Small grant, leftover resources from a Wellcome Trust Investigator Award, and from various institutional funds.

1.5.2 Collaboration

Communication among the partners has been virtual during the periods of Covid-related shutdown. Early on meetings on zoom were held as needed. From early spring 2021 we have held zoom meetings for all scientific participants (including collaborative partner Waqar Zaidi and the two Paris interns and research assistant) on the first Monday of every month, and scheduled extra meetings with the PIs as needed. These meetings have worked very well. They have functioned as an informal forum that has provided the CRP with continuous input on every conceivable aspect of our work in a way that would not have been possible had we only had recourse to (less frequent, and none during the pandemic lockdowns) face-to-face meetings. At the same time, the face-to-face meetings we had early on and again in 2022 have been more intense and productive. The pandemic has taught us that virtual small-group meetings are an excellent complement to face-to-face meetings but not a replacement. These observations have fed into our research where one ambition was to analyse the importance of face-to-face meetings historically, when correspondence or reading printed papers were the alternatives rather than virtual meetings. This question affected our outreach activities as the pandemic (along with the climate crisis) has given rise to much debate concerning the pros and cons of virtual meetings.

We conceived each sub project as a stand-alone research undertaking. At the same time, we planned the CRP itself as a collaborative project that would explore the meaning of conferences over a longer period. Hence, discussions about a common framework has been a recurring theme at our meetings and in our email correspondence. This was true from the start, since our plans included collaborative writing. We first considered writing a co-authored book but then transformed our ambitions into a special issue in a reputable history-of-science journal. Much time during our meetings has therefore been devoted to discussions on how to present the broad

phenomenon of international science conferences from the mid-19th century onwards in such a format. These discussions were connected to collaborative writing of outreach texts, conference session designs, and special issue proposals. The special issue is currently under review at the *British Journal for History of Science*, where it has passed the first round of refereeing.

Knowledge exchange work has also been carried out collectively together with artists and other partners online, and in person.

1.5.3 European added value

European collaboration has been a prerequisite for the kind of research that SciConf has aimed to do. This is because the phenomenon that we investigate – international meetings – in itself is international. International science meetings first began in Western Europe, before expanding to include all of Europe (to some extent also its colonies) and the US, and later to become a global phenomenon. Our team includes members from Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, France, Greece, and Pakistan (affiliated through Wellcome funding). Our cases concern science meetings organised by intergovernmental (the UN) and non-governmental (e.g. Pugwash and the Nobel Foundation) organisations as well as private initiatives, all with an international constituency. The combined international outlook that we represent has greatly helped us understand a phenomenon that originally was essentially European but, with time, has helped integrate Europe with an increasingly global community.

1.5.4 Management tasks and achievements.

The pandemic raised managerial problems as a number of activities and goals had to be reconsidered. The first two workshops with Associated Partners, for example, had to be carried out online, which was not what we had wanted; they involved a number of participants that we desired to engage in our activities and where face-to-face communication and networking had been desirable. From autumn 2021 onwards, face-to-face meetings have been more frequent, with a minor hiccup in connection with the outbreak of the omicron variant of Covid. The larger workshops from October 2021 onwards (see 1.5.5) have been organised by the local PIs in ways that have left nothing to be desired.

1.5.5 Meetings, dates and venues.

Unless otherwise specified, meetings online and face-to-face involved all project members who could attend. Face-to-face and hybrid meetings are rendered in **bold**.

2019

20-21 June 2019, upstart meeting, London, UK

23rd October 2019, online project meeting
3rd December 2019, online project meeting
2020
9-10 January 2020, project meeting, Paris
3rd March 2020, online project meeting
7th July 2020, online project meeting
1st October 2020: online Workshop hosted by London
2nd November 2020, online project meeting
7th December, online project meeting
2021
4th January 2021, online project meeting
18th January 2021, online project meeting
1st February 2021, online project meeting
1st March 2021, online project meeting
5th April 2021, online project meeting
12th April 2021, online project meeting
3rd May 2021, online project meeting
5th May 2021, meeting of PI3 with AP Mariana Deball and Team (podcast planning), Berlin, Germany
21st May 2021, online website content finalisation meeting (PIs)
28th May 2021, online meeting for selected members (podcast planning)
1st June 2021, online meeting to work on joint publication (journal special issue) (PIs)
7th June 2021, online project meeting
17th June 2021, online workshop hosted by the Royal Academy of Sciences, Stockholm
25th June 2021, online meeting for selected members (podcast planning)
5th July 2021, online project meeting
2nd August 2021, online project meeting
6th September 2021, online project meeting
4th October 2021, online project meeting
18-22 October 2021, hybrid Leiden workshop including internal meetings (Netherlands)
1st November 2021, online project meeting
19th November 2021, PI3 meeting with Mariana Deball and team (podcast planning), Berlin, Germany
6th December 2021, online project meeting
2022
4th January 2022, online project meeting
7th January 2022, online meeting to finalise the article for Viewpoint
13th January 2022, online meeting for podcast planning
25-27th January 2022, hybrid project meeting in Paris and artists
7th February 2022, online project meeting
21st February 2022, online meeting for PIs (BJHS submission preparation)
25th February 2022, online meeting for PIs (finalisation of Hera reports)
7th March 2022, online project meeting
4th April 2022, online project meeting
3rd May 2022, online project meeting
9th-12th May 2022, project meetings and conference, London
6th June 2022, online project meeting
22nd June 2022, online project meeting for PIs (application finalisation)
4th July 2022, online project meeting
1st August 2022, online project meeting
4th August 2022, online meeting for PIs (finalisation of op-ed)

12th August 2022, online meeting for PIs (finalisation of op-ed)

5th September 2022, online project meeting

7th-9th September 2022, project meetings and HERA conference, Wroclaw

3rd October, 2022, online project meeting

19th October, 2022, online meeting to plan the launch of the podcasts

28th October 2022, online meeting to work on publication for PIs

7th November 2022, online project meeting

**17th-18th November 2022, project wrap-up meeting for all members and associated artists,
launch of the podcasts, London**

1.6 Dissemination, Networking and Knowledge Exchange

1.6.1. Networking

Networking activities have been unexpectedly wide-ranging, stimulated by a sudden and rapid interest in the conferencing phenomenon during the pandemic.

- At the start, the PIs made contact with a group of historical geographers organised around Professor Legg at Nottingham University, who had just completed a 5-year AHRC project entitled ‘Conferencing the International: a cultural and historical geography of the origins of internationalism (1919-1939)’. The group’s research interests overlapped with ours, but also helped us to focus on unique features and timelines of scientific conferences, as distinguished from other kinds of meetings. Legg joined the CRP’s advisory board and contributed to a number of our events.
- The CRP’s own network has expanded with the help of additional funding from the Wellcome Trust, which has enabled Dr Waqar Zaidi, based at Lahore University of Management Science, to contribute his insights into the Pugwash conferences and Cold War scientific expertise. He has participated in the majority of project meetings and workshops.
- We have also been in intense discussion with a group of concerned scientists (mainly astronomers) actively reflecting on The Future of Conferences, or TFOM as the group has named itself, and devising better ways of meeting online. A joint session at the 2024 annual meeting of the International Astronomical Union is in preparation.
- In March 2022 project leader Sven Widmalm and Massimiano Bucchi (Trento) organised a workshop at the Royal Academy of Sciences (Associated Partner 5) on “Scientists speaking in the name of science” and with participation of project members Jenny Beckman and Geert Somsen. A proposal is underway to publish some of the papers given there as a special issue of the Notes and Records of the Royal Society. Widmalm and Beckman contribute papers founded on their work in SciConf.
- In April 2022, Dr Waqar Zaidi was invited to speak on internationalism at a joint meeting of the STS and Global Studies research programs at Maastricht University.
- Daniel Laqua, a prominent historian of internationalism at Northumbria University who made a very valuable contribution to the CRP conference in London in May 2022 has accepted an invitation by the Uppsala participants in the CRP to a week-long stay at their department in May 2023.
- Several PIs have been asked to report on the CRP in colloquia at various European universities: Charlotte Bigg at UCL (2021), Geert Somsen at Valencia (2020), Barcelona, and the University

of Amsterdam (2022). On account of his work in this CRP, Sven Widmalm has been invited to a conference at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna in June 2023: “Developing Science Policy in occupied and liberated Europe, ca. 1930s-1960s”.

- Jane Mumby has been invited to present her research to and take part in a working group led by Dr. Haakon Ikonou and others based at the University of Copenhagen to write new League of Nations research guides for the UNOG (United Nations Office in Geneva) website.
- On the basis of our work, we were invited to organise a session on conferences at the International Conference on the History of Chemistry in Vilnius, 2023.
- The Wellcome Trust’s new Research Environment unit in May 2022 invited all PIs in May 2022 to present their findings and reflect on how they can inform Wellcome’s current policy of promoting inclusivity and international dissemination in scientific research.
- In May 2022 the project collaborated with Birkbeck’s Centre for the Study of Internationalism to host a book launch for four monographs directly related to the history of internationalism and international conferences.

1.6.5 Main dissemination and knowledge exchange activities undertaken by the CRP.

The project’s main knowledge exchange undertaking has been a collaboration with artists Mariana Castillo Deball and Nils Reinke-Dieker throughout the duration of the project. Initially, an exhibition was planned along the lines of an imagined poster session, reflecting upon and creatively engaging with a central practice of international scientific conferencing. With the onset of the pandemic, lockdowns and the interruption of conferences, as well as the ongoing uncertainty about the possibility, during the lifetime of the project, of staging on-site public events led the artists to revise their initial proposal and to devise a series of four podcasts. Entitled *Conference Round the Clock*, they showcase for a broad public four running themes of the project: Conferencing on Conferences; Public Space; Community; Inclusion/Exclusion. These professionally-produced, high-quality podcasts use archival materials, both written and oral sources, as well as recordings from the project’s conferences and interviews with project researchers to provide a vivid impression of both what it means to conference, and what it means to research conference within an European project.

Our final project event, the public performance launching the knowledge exchange collaboration with artists Mariana Castillo Deball and Nils Reinke-Dieker with the assistance of Matthias Schubert, took place at the Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image, London, on November 18th, 2022. It attracted a diverse audience of students, academics from different fields, artists and the general public. The podcasts have been made available for free on [Spotify](#) and

[Soundcloud](#) and the project website, and publicised via social media.

The most important dissemination initiative has been the project website that presents our research and activities that are then relayed via social media, including a project's own Twitter (@HistSciConf) and Mastodon (@[SciConf@zirk.us](#)) accounts. The team has worked hard to create and feed the project blog as well as an upcoming online exhibition of conference objects, both accessible via the [website](#).

We have taken particular care to address a wide range of audiences within and beyond academia through the publication of op-eds in the magazine *Viewpoint* as well as *Times Higher Education*. A policy paper is in preparation that will be aimed at higher research institutions, conference organisers, and conference goers.

All project members have spoken at and been invited to present their work at conferences and seminars that have sometimes attracted large audiences, and continue to do so via their recording and publication on, e.g. [youtube](#).

1.6.6 The most useful training activities undertaken

Supervision by PI3 and postdoc3 of two Masters' students (former interns funded by the related Wellcome grant) researching topics related to SciConf for their Master's thesis; supervision of one student's 3 month internship funded by Wellcome and who has since undertaken a Master's thesis on a topic related to SciConf. Another master's student was missioned to write a report on her first scientific conference (Society for the History of Technology, Bologna, 2019). A PhD student was employed for one month to research conferencing in Alzheimer's research. All students and interns were invited to participate in the project meetings and discussions, giving them an insight into a European research project, and to contribute to the project blog.

PI4 and PhD student4 have given a PhD training seminar on "attending conferences" for the Maastricht Graduate School of Arts and Social Science. PI4 has given a similar training on international science at the [Limes](#) multi-PhD project at Maastricht University.

1.6.7 Contribution to the HERA JRP visibility

The HERA JRP has consistently been highlighted in all of our public presentations. We also regularly refer to our website, which showcases our own research and the debates we partake in via its blog section. These and other activities are regularly tweeted about by project members (a.o. through project twitter and mastodon accounts) and their followers. Unfortunately we have not gathered statistics concerning this. We have written blogs elsewhere, had two op-ed articles published and have several others in the making. Several of us have presented the project as a

whole in academic and open public lectures. Our APs have also helped us to generate wider visibility. All these activities and our workshops have generated steady attention, reactions, and invitations for further talks and sometimes collaborations within the academic community and beyond.

Our main knowledge exchange product, the podcasts are available on a number of open access platforms contributing to disseminate the HERA JRP across space and time.

1.6.8 Key contribution of this CRP to the HERA JRP Programme

The HERA JRP programme promotes humanities research from a European perspective and it organises conferences on such themes in connection with its sponsorship of research programmes. We hope that SciConf has helped broaden the view of such activities through our research on international science conferences from a cultural and political perspective. We demonstrate that historically science has helped shape a culture of internationalism which to some extent has become a model also in the humanities. The importance of conferences for promoting globally relevant causes became noticeable in many sciences during the 20th century but has not been cultivated to the same extent in the humanities that for a long time rather retreated from taking on such responsibilities. HERA has however been an active promoter of such ambitions and we hope our work will be of some use in that endeavour. This was the gist of the panel talk SciConf PL Sven Widmalm gave at the recent HERA JRP Programme Conference in Wroclaw.

1.6.9 Key contribution of the Programme to this CRP

Our participation in the programme about public spaces has influenced our research in the sense that it has supported our aim to divert focus on international science conferences from the internal goings on among disciplinary specialists to a much broader context where science is performed publicly, from early displays of scientific elites and their work at international expositions to late 20th-century media management to promote science as a main solution to “world problems”. Likewise, it has encouraged us to engage with science conferences as part of the semi/public sphere of international relations. As these have become main themes of our project, the participation in the public spaces programme has been of fundamental importance to it.

1.6.10 The most important new initiatives developed as a result of the collaboration of this CRP and the HERA JRP

New initiatives have been forthcoming throughout the life span of the CRP. These are especially promising:

- Networking activities will be continued, in particular with the TFOM group, with whom we have applied for a co-organised panel at the annual congress of the International Astronomical Union, 2024
- The submission of a proposal to edit a special issue of Notes and Records of the Royal Society is in preparation. It will contain papers deriving from a workshop with and at the premises of the Swedish Academy of Science (SciConf AP5), and with the participation of PI1, postdoc1, and PI4. In part it will be founded on research from the CRP.
- A research proposal is being prepared by PI1, staff from the Swedish Academy of Sciences (AP5) and others concerning the use of digitized archives at the academy and digitized parliamentary records (in Sweden) to investigate e.g. science and international relations, including conferencing, from the early 19th century to the early 20th century.
- We are investigating follow-up project possibilities through the Wellcome Trust (unlike at the start of our CRP, ERC funding now excludes British participation).

1. Financial report

Financial report due before December 7

Total costs have to be coherent with the costs claimed in the expenditure statement

Table 3: Major Cost Items for Principal Investigator (insert name and institution)		
Item description	Amount	Explanation
Employment costs		
Dissemination		
Travel		
Major cost item 1		
Major cost item 2		
Remaining costs (total of all other expenditure)		
**TOTAL COSTS		
Total Awarded to Principal Investigator		
Difference		

2. Expenditure Statements

Expenditure statement due before December 7

PLEASE NOTE DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL REPORT IS 25th November 2022