International Studies Association Catalyst Workshop

Taking Stock of the Past to Shape the Future of Norm Studies

Final Report

Part I: Workshop Objective

The workshop went fantastically well. Many participants commented how it was “fantastic”, “excellent” and “terrific” in terms of its timeliness and importance. The objective was to bring together world leading norm scholars to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Finnemore and Sikkink’s seminal publication on ‘International Norm Dynamics and Political Change’ in International Organization. We feel we achieved this. The Workshop brought together world leading academics from 5 continents and was conscious of Equality and Inclusion issues. The Workshop worked very well on the day with an in-depth discussion developing on The Future of Norm Studies. This notably attracted much interest outside of the Workshop as well as I had had a dozen academics contact me during ISA to discuss the project. As stated, in my Welcoming Comments, I did feel that the Workshop contributed to the principles of ISA as it strives to “Connect Scholars, Practitioners, and Students” from across the world. That said, two participants did choose to withdraw from the Workshop as part of the Trump protest movement. They have made their positions clear on their website. I would like it noted that they were extremely supportive and helpful throughout the process and were sorely missed in the final Workshop. This does have implications for our proposed output which is discussed in part III. Just a final point, unfortunately, ISA did not provide internet access despite this being factored into the budget and request. I did speak to two people on the day but this was not resolved. It is no major issue but maybe ISA should not be charged for this.

Part II: Conference Format

9:40. Welcome comments by Organiser, Dr. Adrian Gallagher (University of Leeds).

- Jason Ralph, ‘Constructivist Ethics?’
- Susanne Zwingle, ‘Conceptualizing de facto norm translation’.


11.30-1. Panel 2.
- Richard Price and Kathryn Sikkink, ‘Neuroscience and Global Norms’.
- Jacqui True, ‘Theorising the missing link: Interrogating agents and processes of international norm diffusion’.

1-2. Lunch

• Kai Kenkel and Cristina Stefan, ‘Changing our understanding of complex norms: the case of the Responsibility to Protect’.

• Maria Beatriz Bonna Nogueira, ‘The emergence of the norm of international protection of internally displaced persons: between human rights and pragmatic humanitarianism’.

• Sam Jarvis, ‘Contesting the Source of Moral Responsibility: Humanity and the Role of International Norms’.

3.30-4.00. Coffee break.


• Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink
• Amitav Acharya
• Phil Orchard

5.30-6.00. Dissemination discussion and closing remarks

Part III: Output The Future of Norm Studies

The intended output was a special issue of a journal in 2018 entitled, ‘The Future of Norm Studies’ in order to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Finnemore and Sikkink’s seminal publication on ‘International Norm Dynamics and Political Change’ in International Organization. Target journals include International Organization, International Theory, and European Journal of International Relations. On that note, the Workshop Coordinator did liaise with Review of International Studies regarding their Call for a Special Issue (deadline April 1st 2017). However, the papers presented at the Workshop were in very different stages of development and were too narrow in terms of empirical focus. As a result, some authors decided to pursue single authored publication in the short-term whilst committing themselves to a longer term project on The Future of Norm Studies. To facilitate the Future of Norm Studies project, we have decided to organize two panels at an international conference in 2018. The Trump debacle makes ISA a problematic choice for some participants and I am trying to resolve this issue going forward. The longer term aim therefore is to produce a special issue on The Future of Norm Studies in 2019. On that note, I contacted norm specialists at ISA to help diversify the empirical focus of the proposed special issue.

End of Report