



Universität Hamburg
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UHH · Economics and Social Sciences – Political Sciences
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CGG Research Area 4 Workshop

Norms and Practice at a Critical Juncture: Taken-for-Grantedness under Stress

November 17-18, 2016

Location:

Room 2.18, [Welckerstraße 8, 20354 HH](#)

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FAKULTÄT
FÜR WIRTSCHAFTS- UND
SOZIALWISSENSCHAFTEN

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A Hamburg Symposium at the Centre for Globalisation and Governance

The concepts of norms and practices share a normative dimension. To be and to remain valid, norms must be enacted through an ongoing practice. Yet, what often remains overlooked is that practice is also deeply normative in that it prescribes what is to be 'taken-for-granted'. In light of a growing range of normative crises, the symposium addresses this connection between norms and practices. Conventional constructivists often misconceive the societal function of norms by conceptualising them as the repetitive application of established scripts through norm-followers. However, as critical research on norms has demonstrated, during processes of norm 'application' norms appear as being contested, instrumentalized and/or productively misunderstood. Thus, norms are subjected to decisive shifts in meaning. In order to reconstruct normative meaning, we hold that research needs to examine the practices of norm application at various stages of the implementation process. We expect these normative processes to particularly emerge in situations when the taken-for-grantedness of norms is put under stress. This means that these processes become methodologically accessible in times of normative crisis. We now hold that taking into account the practice dimension of norms and the normative dimension of practice alike will significantly further insights into the everyday reproduction of global order in times of crisis.

This symposium seeks to explore the range of norms research and practice theory in International Relations (IR) theory. As a growing research area, norms research has achieved much attention as a field that keeps generating cutting edge conceptual and methodological innovation. Some 20 years after the first publications on norms in IR, however, norms research faces a welcome challenge by an emerging strand of practice theory, partly relocating emphasis from norms to everyday practice. We hold that this can hardly be an either/or type of choice. The seemingly 'neutral' application of norms in a formal environment; the individual reliance on expert knowledge, while drafting a diplomatic statement; the contestation of an established norm interpretation or the application of a norm for ends not originally envisaged; the cultural validation of norms under conditions of diversity; or the reconstruction of borders in the course

of everyday personal interactions – all these practices are ‘normative’ in that they affect the meaning of certain norms and thus contribute to the production or reproduction of order.

What do norms research and practice theories have to offer when it comes to addressing normative issues in current international relations which are practiced in an increasingly diverse and conflict-laden global context? As experts on practice theory and normativity alike, the contributors are therefore invited to critically discuss research at the interface of IR norms research and practice theory, asking whether an interlinked body of theoretical work is sufficiently well-equipped to ‘deal’ with international relations in times of crisis.

Organisers: CGG Research Area 4 (Antje Wiener, Philip Liste, Maren Hofius, Jan Wilkens)

Format: One-day workshop + Young Researchers Workshop

17. November 2016 (evening lecture by Ole Jacob Sending (NUPI, Oslo))

Participants:

1. Anna Geis (HSU, Hamburg)
2. Geoff Gordon (Asser Institute, The Hague)
3. Maren Hofius (UHH)
4. Silvija Lechner (King’s College London)
5. Philip Liste (UHH)
6. Holger Niemann (Leuphana Universität, Lüneburg)
7. Gabi Schlag (HSU, Hamburg)
8. Ole Jacob Sending (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo)
9. Stefan Wallaschek (BIGSSS, Bremen)
10. Antje Wiener (UHH & Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge)
11. Jan Wilkens (UHH)