

Call for Papers

Breaking Bad/Making Good: Fostering ethical leadership out of political crises.

7th European Workshops in International Studies, Brussels, 1-4 July 2020.

Organisers:

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Some of the most vicious debates in diplomacy in the last decade have focused on the way the international community reacts to human rights abuses. Policymakers have argued over how far responsible leaders should be estranged and ostracised from international society, using measures such as sanctions, censure, prosecution or even targeted killing. Many of these actions impose costs on innocent parties and their record of success is mixed. They also contribute to estrangement between states, with those opposing them demonised as appeasers with “blood on their hands” and their advocates derided as neo-imperialists or warmongers.

It is our aim to transcend such binary debates and consider what is really driving human rights abuses, why counter measures rarely succeed, and which responses might be more effective at transforming negative human rights situations. Thus, the goal is to arrive at a better understanding of the serious problem of large scale human rights violations and to posit better ways of preventing them, ameliorating their effects, and bringing them to an end.

To do so, the workshop will encourage participants to engage in theoretical and/or empirical analysis of political leadership, decisionmaking, the emergence and conduct of human rights abuses and the management of humanitarian crises. We welcome proposals utilising qualitative and quantitative approaches, from across disciplinary boundaries, and from scholars at all levels of career.

Key questions it will consider are:

- What factors drive human rights transgressions and how do individual leaders contribute to these?
- What ethical reasoning do leaders employ to justify or explain their behaviour? (Including consideration of how leaders make decisions).
- What influence attempts do external actors employ to dissuade, prevent or inhibit leaders from transgressing human rights?
- What are the relative merits and successes of external actors’ attempts to address human rights abuses?
- What positive inducements does international society offer for leaders to be good?
- What obstacles stand in the way of leaders reforming their ways and acting to stop abuses?
- To what extent is ‘the best the enemy of the good’ when it comes to justice and reconciliation?
- What influence does cultural difference have on responses to human rights violations?
- Why do some leaders attract more criticism than others for contributing to negative human rights outcomes?