Stigma in World Politics

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In an era marked by shifting global power dynamics and identity struggles, understanding the role of stigma in international politics has never been more crucial. Recent years have witnessed exponential growth in research on stigma and its implications in International Relations (IR). Drawing inspiration from Erving Goffman's seminal work and contemporary sociological debates, scholars have demonstrated how stigmatization—the marking of certain attributes of states, societies and individuals as 'abnormal' compared to some standard of 'normality'—is intricately intertwined with socialization and norm promotion, leading to a hierarchical ordering of international society into 'normals' and 'deviants' (Goffman 1963; Adler-Nissen 2014b; Zarakol 2011; 2014).

Stigma is not confined to any particular geographical or thematic domain in IR. From 19th-century Siam to modern-day European Union, Russia, South Africa, and Israel (Zarakol 2014; Adler-Nissen 2014a; 2014b; Kurowska and Reshetnikov 2021; Rogstad 2022a; 2022b; Hatuel-Radoshitzky and Jamal 2022); and from nuclear weapons (Tannenwald 2005; Shamai 2015; Sauer and Reveraert 2018; Smetana 2019; 2020; Saha 2022) to shaming practices (Koschut 2022, 2023), the concept's theoretical relevance and analytical value have been demonstrated across a wide range of areas central to contemporary international relations.

The aim of this workshop is to consolidate, systematize, and advance the burgeoning research on stigma and stigmatization in IR. The time is now to take stigma research in IR to the next level. While it has flourished over the past decade, it has been dispersed. We lack a coherent conversation about the theory and dynamics of stigma processes, explicitly linking and combining different conceptualizations, methodological approaches, and empirical and normative insights. We invite contributions by scholars that delve into the theoretical foundations and the methodological and normative disagreements in the study of stigma in IR. Prospective contributions should explore and engage with at least one of the following questions:

- *Theoretically*, how should we conceptualize and theorize stigma for IR research?
- *Methodologically*, depending on our conceptualization of stigma, how do we identify and study it, demonstrating its existence or effects?
- *Empirically*, how does stigma operate similarly or differently across different domains and historical periods of international politics?
- *Normatively*, what are the consequences of deploying the concept to analyze international relations?