

FACTS & NORMS WORKSHOP IV

REALISM: COMMON GROUND FOR NATURALISTS AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISTS?

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 23 AUGUST 2018

8pm	Workshop dinner
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FRIDAY 24 AUGUST 2018

8.30-9am	Coffee and tea
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SESSION I	SCIENCE AND POLITICS
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9-9.30am	Theresa Scavenius <i>Science, politics and populism</i>
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9.30-10am	Lars Tønder <i>Vital Politics: Rethinking Normativity in the Anthropocene</i>
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10-10.15am	Coffee & tea
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10.15-10.45am	Henrik Bach Mortensen <i>The False Trilemma: The risk of incumbent interests becoming common fact in energy policy</i>
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10.45-11.15am	Tom Børsen, Lars Botin & Christian Baron <i>Techno-Anthropology in Action: Peace-making in the Science Wars?</i>
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11.15-11.30pm	Coffee & tea
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SESSION II	SCIENCE AND REALITIES
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11.30-12pm	Joakim Juhl <i>Innovation Science and the Matter of Realities</i>
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12-12.30pm	Ask Greve Jørgensen <i>Situated Facts: On the reality of ongoing constructions</i>
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12.30-1.30pm	Lunch
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SESSION III:	CASES OF CONSTRUCTIVISM AND NATURALISM
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1.30-2pm	Somogy Varga <i>Naturalism, Constructivism and Psychiatric Classification</i>
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2-2.30pm	Szymon Mazurkiewicz <i>Can human rights be grounded in the discoveries of natural science?</i>
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2.30-3pm	Maëlle Caussarieu, Susse Georg, Jens Stissing Jensen & Peter Karnøe <i>The epistemic work of transforming an object from bio-mess to legitimate bio-mass: Making facts and norms to make burning biomass actionable and legitimate</i>
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3-3.30pm	Cake & Goodbye
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FACTS & NORMS WORKSHOP SERIES

FACTS & NORMS IV

Scientific inquiry aims at comprehending correlations and relationships in the physical and social world. Different methodologies and methods are used to detect, examine and scrutinize layers of historical, discursive and social content. There is a common agreement across disciplines that self-critical reflection on the use of methods and fundamental theoretical assumptions are key to scientific enterprises. This critical and systematic use of methodologies and methods is what distinguishes scientific knowledge production from other types of knowledge production. Science wars have been fought. Naturalists have disagreed with social constructionists about the ontology of nature and about the epistemologies useful for scientific knowledge production. The wars have drawn clear demarcation lines between schools of thoughts and scientific disciplines.

The purpose of the Facts & Norms workshop IV: Realism – common ground for naturalists and social constructivists? is move beyond the metaphysical discussion to the benefit of discussing whether proponents of naturalism and social constructivism share a common Erkenntnisinteresse: the scientific ambition of obtaining knowledge about the world. The science wars have not been about the objectives of science but rather about the mutual criticism of useful methodologies and ontological assumptions. This cross-disciplinary Erkenntnisinteresse may be coined as realism. The social constructivists may find it harder to obtain knowledge about the real world compared to naturalists and “neo-positivists”. Nonetheless, the ambition of constructivists’ scientific inquiry might as well be knowledge production about physical or social realities in the world.

EARLIER FACTS & NORMS WORKSHOPS

The Facts & Norms Workshops I and II held in August 2013 and August 2015 discussed what role facts may play in the normative theorising. The result was a collection of papers espousing different views on how facts bear on political theory/philosophy. (These papers are accepted for publication in CRISPP in 2017). According to some of these contributors, political theory is unavoidably sensitive to various facts. Other contributors hold more conventional views on the pertinent relationship between facts and norms, while being open to the possibility that while facts bear on how fundamental normative principles apply to the world, these principles themselves make no factual assumptions.

Facts & Norms Workshop III took the debate one step further by examining the essentially contested relationship between factual and normative judgements. We tend to assume that concepts, theories and facts have something important to say to each other. We talk about 'applying principles on political cases', 'justifying practices by referring to norms' and 'deriving implications of norms on facts'. However, how these relationships are constructed and determined remains under-theorised. What does it mean to say that 'one justifies a politics by normative principles' or that 'one applies normative principles to politics'?

The Facts & Norms Workshop III questioned the relevance of theorising the relationship between factual and normative judgements by referring to 'justifying', 'applying' and 'deriving'. Instead, the workshop will examine the possibility of a fundamental indeterminacy between factual and normative judgements. On the basis of this, the workshop will propose alternative ways to comprehend the interlinkages between facts and norms. One such way may be fact-sensitive normative principles that theorise normative principles in light of factual concerns. Another way may be a pre-suppositional relationship where facts select relevant sets of normative principles. Yet another way may be questions related to the argument that 'can' constraints have a bearing on normative principles: does 'can' imply 'ought'? To what extent may 'can' constraints constitute a third type of judgements that draws on both factual and normative judgements but nonetheless appreciates that factual and normative judgement do not determine each other? Papers presented at the workshop are will soon be submitted for review for publication in a symposium in Res Publica.

The Facts & Norms Workshop IV will continue the work accomplished at the three previous workshops by advancing the conversation on the political relevance of meta-theoretical discussion in urgent time of political polarization and de-democratisation.

ORGANIZER:

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