



**Sociedad Latinoamericana de Derecho Internacional/Latin American Society of
International Law**

2025 Pre-Conference Workshop

Call for Papers

Narratives in International Courts and Tribunals

The Latin American Society of International Law (SLADI/LASIL) Interest Group on International Courts and Tribunals is pleased to invite submissions for a **pre-conference workshop** on ‘Narratives in International Courts and Tribunals’. The workshop will take place online on **25 June 2025**, 2pm (CET) /10am (GMT-3).

CONTEXT

International law transcends a mere *corpus iuris* governing the conduct of legal subjects – it provides a framework and a shared vocabulary for international political discourse. Operating in an intrinsically legal-political context, international courts and tribunals (ICTs) are multifunctional bodies, equipped to protect, express, and shape values that reflect ‘community interests’ by the power granted in international treaties. Both contentious and advisory proceedings constitute *fora* wherein state and non-state actors articulate legal arguments which are reflective of their broader political demands and interests. Thus, these subjects engage in narrative construction, shaping their preferred interpretations of international law by participating in judicial proceedings. The legal argument is presented to support one’s interests and thereby outlines the contour of its narrative.

The intersection of law and narratives has sparked growing interest in international legal scholarship. Providing a means to grasp complex legal and social phenomena, narratives can serve as instruments that organise knowledge and experiences into a compelling story – in legal proceedings, the selection and framing of arguments, precise wording, and chosen examples and case law all contribute to the strategic narrative state and non-state actors intend to project. Indeed, practitioners commonly employ narrative forms to describe the law, recounting its meaning and grounding it in a chosen factual setting. Nevertheless, to fully grasp the dimensions of narrativity, it is necessary to examine not only the narratives formally presented in ICTs, but also broader considerations on what influences their structural design and framing. Accordingly, attention must be directed at understanding the underlying political motivations that shape a subject’s decisions regarding participation in legal proceedings, the content of written documents, the conduct in public hearings, and strategic efforts to influence the outcome of a case.



The decision whether to participate in ICTs is in itself often driven by broader political considerations, which may themselves be strategic. Beyond this, the selection of a particular ICT can influence the narratives that are most easily advanced. In choosing to participate, State and non-state actors can advance their interests by leveraging the procedural and substantive tools of international adjudication. Legal arguments are manifested procedural instruments like third-party intervention, provisional measures, and counterclaims in contentious cases. In advisory proceedings, written and oral statements, along with the particular framing of questions in requests, play a significant role. Furthermore, substantive legal concepts such as *jus cogens* and obligations *erga omnes* serve as vehicles for narrative expression in legal arguments before courts.

Regional perspectives offer a compelling case study for the analysis of diverse narrative strategies within international legal proceedings. This line of investigation leads to several key questions: To what extent do participants articulate a cohesive regional perspective on international law? How do foreign policy stances correlate with positions adopted before international courts? Are discernible patterns, articulations, or deviations evident in their engagement? Do non-state actors advance agendas that diverge from those of their respective national states? How do geopolitical factors shape or influence positions within international legal proceedings? While the Latin American and Caribbean region provides a natural starting point, a comparative regional approach also offers significant analytical advantages.

From the diverse linguistic, geographical, political, and legal cultures of state and non-state actors participating in international legal proceedings, a rich mix of narratives thus emerges, creating an opportunity to unearth patterns of cohesiveness, fragmentation, and explore the shifting dynamics of power and influence within the international legal system. Therefore, an avenue for inquiry opens to investigate the formation and mobilization of narratives in international law.

SCOPE AND TOPICS

Recognizing the complex interplay of factors shaping narratives in international law, additional areas of research become apparent. We encourage submissions on, but not limited to, the following:

- **Narratives in International Courts and Tribunals:** Analysis of narratives presented before the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, regional human rights courts, the World Trade Organization Dispute Settlement Body, international criminal courts, international arbitration, and other treaty-based adjudicative bodies.
- **Narratives of and in International Law:** Exploring how narratives shape the public understanding of international law and how they are used within legal proceedings.





- **Narrative Construction and Power:** Examining how states and non-state actors construct narratives to advance broader geopolitical interests.
- **Comparative Regional Perspectives:** While SLADI is clearly focused on the Latin American and Caribbean context, we are also interested in drawing from other regional backgrounds to amplify the scope and allow for comparative effects.
- The **interplay of Law and Linguistics:** Exploring the relationship between legal discourse and everyday language.
- An analysis of **litigation strategies and legal outcomes** requires examination of the decision-making processes of states and non-state actors regarding participation in international adjudication, to identify the factors driving strategic choices and their legal consequences.
- **Foreign legal policy**, the concept of states using international legal institutions to advance their foreign policy objectives, is a critical factor in shaping state-centered narratives. This underscores the ongoing negotiation within international law between legal obligations and the practical interests of states.
- The **role of non-state actors** in the construction of narratives warrants closer scrutiny. Beyond traditional state-centric analyses, we seek to explore how NGOs, corporations, and other non-governmental entities contribute to, challenge, and reshape legal narratives within international fora.
- Incorporating **critical approaches**, including Second and Third World perspectives, recognizes the diverse experiences shaping international law. These non-hegemonic viewpoints provide crucial tools for analyzing power dynamics in narrative construction and uncovering broader critiques within the international legal system.
- **Interdisciplinary methodologies** are essential for enriching the analysis of narratives. Utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including, but not limited to, discourse analysis, network analysis, or categorical content analysis, reveals deeper insights into the framing and impact of legal narratives.
- The **role of legal experts** in shaping narratives deserves attention. Practitioners, including judges, lawyers, and state representatives, play a crucial role in selecting, interpreting, and disseminating legal arguments, thereby influencing the construction and reception of narratives. Understanding their influence is essential for a comprehensive analysis of narrativity within international law.
- The **integration of social sciences**, including anthropology, sociology, political science, international relations, **and history** offers valuable analytical tools to



reveal the nuanced dynamics of narratives and their complex relationship with international law.

- The use of specific **procedural mechanisms** may facilitate the dissemination of narratives. These mechanisms include, but are not limited to, third-party interventions, *amicus curiae* submissions, requests for provisional measures, counterclaims, rules governing the presentation of evidence, and incidental proceedings concerning questions of jurisdiction and admissibility.

APPLICATION

Applicants are requested to submit an **abstract, not exceeding 300 words**, and a **résumé (CV) of no more than two pages** to cejm.direitorio@fgv.br.

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is **April 30th**. Applicants will be notified of the selection results on **May 9th**. Selected participants will be required to submit discussion papers of no longer than 3000 words by **June 9th**.

Papers of exceptional quality may be considered for publication in a 2026 Special Issue of the *Latin American and Caribbean Journal of International Law* (LACJIL).

Please be advised that this is an **online workshop**, and no expenses will be covered.

The event is supported by the Centre for Global Law and the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence (co-funded by the European Union), both from FGV Rio Law, the Institut de recherche en droit international et européen de la Sorbonne (IREDIÉS), the Société française pour le droit international (SFDI) and the Manchester International Law Centre (University of Manchester).

CONVENOR

The convenor for the pre-conference workshop is Professor Paula Wojcikiewicz Almeida (Chair of the SLADI/LASIL Interest Group on International Courts and Tribunals, Director of the FGV Centre for Global Law).

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

The organizing committee is composed of Professor Paula Wojcikiewicz Almeida, Professor Justina Uriburu (University of Manchester), Professor Jean-Marc Sorel (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), Professor Mikael Madsen (iCourts, University of Copenhagen), Lucas Vollers (FGV Centre for Global Law) and Vitor de Melo (FGV Centre for Global Law).