
Unilateralism in International Law: A United States–European Symposium

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It was a special privilege for the University of Michigan Law School's Center for International and Comparative Law to host the conference whose work is reflected in this issue of the *EJIL*. The challenge of unilateralism is profound. The term, in its pejorative sense, evokes an intuition of concern. Yet a moment's reflection summons up competing intuitions, and we can often find ourselves uncertain about what we should think, for example, when one country attempts to prevent genocide within the borders of another.

During the two-day conference, an exceptional group of scholars worked with creativity, rigour and insight to deepen our understanding of the dilemmas of unilateralism. Their work product, reflected in the pages that follow, marks an extremely important contribution to the world's understanding of this issue. We congratulate the editors of the *EJIL* for their inspired effort in bringing this project to fruition.

In supporting this conference, we at the University of Michigan Law School continued an internationalist and comparativist tradition that dates back 140 years to our founding. While one may describe that tradition in many ways, I believe it is best perceived through a fundamentally humanistic lens. Even as we respect the legal importance of state borders, we also identify deeply with a 'community' that includes all human beings. We are excited whenever we recognize ourselves in people from different cultures. And that spark of recognition draws us to study foreign laws and international institutions, to understand the norms that shape the behaviour of nations, to want to know how other countries regulate marriage, pollution and the press.

That is, I believe, why the original charter of the University of Michigan called for the employment of a professor with expertise in international law. During the intervening century and a half, the University has enjoyed an exalted tradition of scholarship in fields that look across America's borders. The list of emeritus faculty members who contributed to that tradition includes such familiar names as William Bishop, Alfred Conard, John Jackson, Eric Stein and Hessel Yntema.

Today the University of Michigan Law School has institutionalized such commitments through our Center for International and Comparative Law. The Center supports the research efforts of a large number of faculty members whose work includes significant international, comparative, or foreign elements: Reuven Avi-Yonah, David Chambers, Christine Chinkin, Merritt Fox, Daniel Halberstam, Peter Hammer, James Hathaway, Michael Heller, Robert Howse, Tom Kauper, Catharine MacKinnon, Christopher McCrudden, Mathias Reimann, Bruno Simma, Brian Simpson and Mark West. We all look forward to exploring further opportunities for collaboration with the *EJIL*.

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