

First Annual CEDI Conference

Veranstalter: Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence „EU in Global Dialogue“ (CEDI), University of Mainz; Technical University of Darmstadt

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Bericht von: Lukas Maximilian Müller, Universität Freiburg

Regional Organizations in the Global South have increasingly become the focus of inquiries in the field of regionalism studies. Due to the intersections of disciplinary and area studies, research on regionalism in the Global South is characterized by a great diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches. The first CEDI Annual Conference on Regionalism in the Global South highlighted diversity and similarity in an emerging field of inquiry. The conference was the first of three conferences planned as a part of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence „EU in Global Dialogue“ (CEDI) at the University of Mainz and the Technical University of Darmstadt.*

Spread out over five panels, which were primarily set apart by their regional focus, the conference managed to showcase an emerging scientific interest in several aspects of regionalism in the Global South: Organizational overlap, the question of intra-regional asymmetries, the impact of extra-regional dependencies on regional integration dynamics, as well as the purpose and effectiveness of regional rule-making in the context of thinly institutionalized regional organizations.

The first contribution in Panel 1, which focused on Africa, was that of ANDREAS VON STADEN (Hamburg) on the application of the subsidiarity principle by the regional courts of ECOWAS, EAC and SADC in their human rights rulings. Given the characteristics of these courts and the precedence of the European human rights system, it should be expected that they would espouse subsidiarity. Surprisingly, this is not the case. A possible explanation for this may be that courts prioritize establishing national obligations in order to remedy democratic shortcomings in the member states. Alternatively, courts may see regional civil society as their audience rather than deferring to member states.

JOHANNES MUNTSCHICK (Mainz) analyzed the effect of extra-regional dependencies on Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations inside the European Community following WWII as well as the SADC-EPA negotiations. In both cases, asymmetrical external dependencies appear to have a negative impact on regional integration, leading more strongly dependent actors to pursue reckless strategies vis-à-vis their regional partners. The presentation by SÖREN STAPEL (Gothenburg), in cooperation with Fredrik Söderbaum, investigated the motivation and effect of regional integration support to African Regional Organizations. The budget contributions to Sub-Saharan Regional Organizations made by the EU and other external actors pose an analytical puzzle. It seems as if contributions are quite divergent, but the outcomes remain unclear.

Lastly, the presentation by MALTE BROSIG (Witwatersrand) suggested an explanation for institutional overlap in economic integration projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. Using the presence of trade externalities, Brosig argued that ‘overlap is cheap’ for states participating in African regionalism, as they trade more with states outside their region rather than neighboring states. This sets apart Africa from other regions, where intra-regional trade is much higher. A problem with the explanation, however, is that it does not seem to apply on a sub-continental level. Therefore, externalities may be an explanatory variable for institutional overlap in Africa, but does not seem to be a ‘master variable’.

The following discussion touched upon the question of the specificity of institutional overlap. It seems as if both Asia and Africa researchers attempt to explain the issue in region-specific terms while the problem seems to appear across regions. Regarding the problem of extra-regional dependency as a variable in regional integration, one conference attendee suggested that the advent of Brexit may complicate things even further, as the UK is a major trade partner for many African countries and also the source of funds for the SADC-EAC-COMESA Tripartite Free Trade Area.

Panel 2 contrasted the African cases with examples from Asian regionalism. The pre-

sentation of JÜRGEN RÜLAND and ARNDT MICHAEL (Freiburg) took a constructivist perspective on the worldview of Asian foreign policy decision-makers and ascribed the prevalence of overlapping and competitive regional integration schemes to the survivalist discourse underpinning the foreign policy of many Asian states. The focus on sovereignty and distrust of international institutions leads to shallow commitments to regional projects and the fragmented institutional landscape overall. It appears as if regionalism in Asia is not compatible with some of the more optimistic predictions of global governance, as the slow institutional progress over the past two decades can attest.

Optimistic assessments of global governance processes were also challenged by TOBIAS HOFMANN's (Salt Lake City) contribution on Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) Design in East Asia. Having conducted a large-n analysis of Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) in Asia, several demand and supply hypotheses on the design of dispute settlement mechanism design were tested. Only the demand-driven explanations appear to apply, but the provision of DSM in Asian regional agreements remains mysterious, as most of them have gone unused since their inception.

The discussion focused on how institutional overlap and shallow institutionalization in Asia may be explained. It was suggested that the African argument of trade externalities might be extended to Asia, where intra-regional trade is higher but still significantly below European levels. Regarding the persistence of DSM in Asia, the question may be whether their analysis is relevant, given the fact that they have never been invoked. One conference attendee quoted Barbara Koremenos, who asked, „[I]f half of organizations have a DSM, which half needs explaining?“

Panel 3 again covered regionalism in Africa, this time focusing on peacekeeping as a policy field. GORM RYE OLSEN (Roskilde) analyzed the peacekeeping cooperation between the EU, the AU and the UN as a market-based demand-and-supply triangle. Looking at the peacekeeping mission in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic, Olsen sees the

EU as the main supplier of money and the main demander of security, while the AU is the main supplier of troops as well as legitimacy for the EU intervention as well as demanding money in return.

FRIEDRICH PLANK (Mainz) provided an inter-organizational explanation of the effectiveness of interregional capacity building between the EU and the African Union (AU) with a focus on the African Peace Facility. With resource dependency and mission scope as the independent variables, Plank explained the effectiveness of the relationship, disaggregating it into an internal dimension (goal attainment) as well as an external dimension (reduction of violence). Goal attainment by both actors can be identified, which may be explained by their mutual resource dependency. External effectiveness can also be clearly observed in the case of the Central African Republic.

A pertinent question in the following discussion was the meaning of the peacekeeping case studies for the political coherence of African regions, given that military intervention occurs so easily between neighboring countries. The inter-organizational and market-based theoretical approaches of the presentations were applauded, as it transpired that interregionalism and international organization studies may have considerable interdisciplinary potential.

The keynote speech, by ANJA JETSCHKE (Göttingen) focused on her current research project on comparative regionalism, in which she is analyzing diffusion processes in the area of institutional design and language, ideas, and legal characteristics. Her research has yielded a range of interesting conclusions, one notable one being the modular design of regional organizations and North-South as well as South-South diffusion processes of distinct and particular organizational features.

The following discussion centered on methodological points and, interestingly, on the possibility of South-North diffusion and the modular design of the EU along the lines of other organizations. It appears that the flourishing field of comparative regionalism may yield some very interesting conclusions in the years to come.

Panel 4, on Latin American regionalism, again presented the audience with an eclectic set of approaches. MAYTE ANAIS DONGO SUIERO (Berlin) talked about the contradictions in the EC discourses on regional integration promotion in Latin America in the 1980s. The European Community (EC) created two seemingly unrelated discourses, one centering on engagement of Latin American interlocutors, one regarding the Latin American debt crisis. Overly strong focus of the EC on the former, while neglecting the latter, had negative consequences on Latin American regional integration, which highlights the risks of weak policy coherence in interregionalism.

WOLFGANG MUNO (Mainz) gave a theory-led assessment of regional integration in Latin America with a particular focus on institutional proliferation and overlap. Using the grand theories of International Relations, the Latin American case may be explained by the presence of US hegemony, and the lack of a clear Latin American hegemon. Initiatives by Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico may be seen as attempts to claim hegemony. Constructivism highlights the norm-divide in Latin America between left wing and right wing governments, as well as Latin American identities vis-à-vis the US. Lastly, Liberalism provides only weak explanations due to the lack of influence of societal groups and the overwhelming centering of Latin American regionalism on the executive level.

ALLAN TATHAM (Madrid) gave an actor-centric analysis of institutional cooperation between Latin American sub-regional parliaments amongst one another as well as with the European Parliament (EP). Focusing on legal nature and degree of institutionalization of these relationships, Tatham concludes that parliamentary cooperation in Latin America has undergone significant changes in the past decades but remains relatively powerless, making parliamentary networking an attractive option to boost legitimacy. Connections with the EP may also boost the credibility of Latin American parliamentary assemblies.

Instead of focusing on particular actors, KAREN SIEGEL's (Glasgow) contribution focused on the field of environmental policy in Latin America. Noting that this policy

field has been neglected at a regional level, her presentation convincingly made the point that this has been due to a marginalization of civil society stakeholders in the process of regionalism. The overly strong executive focus of Latin American regionalism has therefore been an obstacle to effective environmental policy-making.

Panel 5 finally focused on processes of diffusion and agency of regional organizations. LUKAS MAXIMILIAN MÜLLER (Freiburg) delivered a critique of actorness as a determinant of interregional effectiveness and put forward an inter-organizational approach as an alternative. Resource dependency and transaction cost were suggested as two principles governing the capacity building between the EU, ASEAN and ECOWAS, resulting in two divergent outcomes due to varying dependencies on the EU.

ANTONIA WITT (Frankfurt am Main) focused on the actorness question in a different way: Acknowledging that most research on regional organizations sees them as outcomes of regional integration, Witt asks how regional organizations become actors and behave as such. In the case of the Indian Ocean Commission (COI), it is a combination of internal strategies as well as external funding that has allowed the organization to lay legitimate claim to regional governance of its designated region, which may be traced in their regional rhetoric and their external legitimacy.

DANIELA VINTILA (Leicester) closed the conference in cooperation with Carlos Closa by presenting research on the diffusion of electoral rights from the EU to supranational parliaments, with a particular focus on enfranchisement. Adopting a diffusion framework, Vintila argues for a process of networked diffusion, which means an environment of constant adoption and redefinition of the connected organizations. Regional parliaments that most closely resemble the EU model are geographically clustered in Latin America, which suggests that adoption occurs not just for functional reasons. Differences in adoption of electoral rights may be explained by strong adherence to sovereignty, material capabilities and efficacy considerations.

The following discussion addressed questions of conceptual complexity as well as

significance of cases. Regarding the Indian Ocean Rim Commission, the question was asked how to judge the relevance of these marginal organizations on global governance. The concept of actorness and how to connect it to the effectiveness of objectives and strategies was also questioned.

The CEDI conference ultimately highlighted the vitality of the field that is Regional Organizations of the Global South. The exchange between area study experts as well as the methodological diversity present at the conference managed to enlighten many approaches. One thing that remains to be seen is whether we will see an increase in cross-continental comparison in the field.

*The report originally appeared at the website of the University of Freiburg.

Conference Overview:

Introduction and Welcome

Johannes Muntschick (University of Mainz)

Panel 1: Regionalism and ambivalent Influence of Extra-Regional Actors – Insights from Africa

Andreas von Staden (University of Hamburg): Lost in Translation: The EU's Supranational Governance Model, Diffusion, and the Institutional Design of African Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

Johannes Muntschick (University of Mainz): Regionalism and External Influence: A Situation-structural Approach

Sören Stapel (University of Gothenburg): Promoting regional economic cooperation and integration in Africa from the outside (with Fredrik Söderbaum)

Malte Brosig (University of the Witwatersrand): Externalities and Organizational Overlap: The Example of African Trade Regimes

Panel 2: Regionalism in Asia and Europe – Organisational Overlap and External Influence

Jürgen Rüländ / Arndt Michael (University of Freiburg): Competitive and Overlapping Regionalism in Asia: Paving the Way towards a "Diminished Multilateralism"

Tobias Hofmann (University of Utah): The Politics of Dispute Settlement Design. Credible Commitment in Asia's Regional Integra-

tion Agreements

Panel 3: Regionalism in Africa – The AU, Security Integration and the Impact of the EU

Gorm Rye Olsen (Roskilde University): The African Union in peacekeeping – between the UN and the European Union

Friedrich Plank (University of Mainz): Interregionalism as Driver of Integration? Assessing the Effectiveness of AU-EU Capacity Building within African Peace Facility

Key Note Speech

Anja Jetschke (University of Göttingen)

Panel 4: Regionalism in Latin America: Driven by powerful regional and external actors

Mayte Anais Dongo Suiero (Free University of Berlin): EC contradictory discourses and external behaviour promoting regional integration in Latin America in the late 1980s

Wolfgang Munro (University of Mainz): In the Shadow of the Hegemon: Regional Cooperation in Latin America

Allan F. Tatham (CEU San Pablo University): Interactive Learning? Mapping Regional Inter-Parliamentary Networks in Latin America, and the External Role of the European Parliament

Karen Siegel (University of Glasgow): Regional integration and regional environmental cooperation in South America: two separate processes

Panel 5: Regional Actorness, Interregionalism and Diffusion

Lukas Maximilian Müller (University of Freiburg): „A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma“ – How the concept of actorness clouds our understanding of interregionalism and how inter-organization theory can help

Antonia Witt (Goethe University Frankfurt am Main): Becoming a regional actor: the COI between regional and extra-regional forces

Daniele Vintila (University of Leicester): The diffusion of the EU model of electoral rights for the direct election of members of supranational parliaments

Conclusions and Final Discussion

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