

Abstracts

Kilian Spandler

Regional Integration through Normative Arguing

Legitimizing Legalization in ASEAN and the EU
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This article argues that the varying explanatory power of classical integration theories corresponds to regional dynamics of normative arguing. To this end, it introduces a model of regional integration that draws on theories of communicative action and the English School. Unlike the rationalist frameworks of intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, this approach puts the discursive constitution of integration front and center. Instead of treating competing integration logics as objective causal mechanisms, it conceptualizes them as frames used by regional actors in discourses about institutional change. The resonance of these frames depends on a normative context of regional primary institutions. A comparative case study of legalization processes in the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) demonstrates the varying relevance of functionalist frames for the development of regional organizations. Putting European integration theory and comparative regionalism in dialogue, the article thus helps to clarify the scope conditions of different theoretical approaches to integration processes around the world.

Keywords: regional integration, comparative regionalism, English School, European Union, ASEAN

Mathias Albert/Kerrin Langer

The history of force comparisons in international politics. Comparing power and the power of comparing

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Situated at the interface between IR and History, this contribution undertakes a historical reconstruction of practices of military force comparison. It conceptually builds upon an understanding of balance as a core observational scheme, as well as symbolically generalized medium of communication, in the construction and reproduction of world politics. The article's main part reconstructs the evolution of military force comparisons as a central observational and comparative practice of, and between, states from the late 18th century until the present. We ask about who is comparing, who is being compared, what is being compared, and how comparisons are being done. We elaborate that practices of military force comparison are places

Abstracts

of continuous negotiations about, and contestations of, the *who*, *what*, and *how*. This historical reconstruction contributes to a better understanding of how systemic properties on the macro-level of the *international system* are reflected in, and constituted through practices, and by doing so also contributes to the historical-sociological research on the evolution of the modern system of world politics.

Keywords: Military force comparison, balance of power, historical sociology, world politics, practices

Ben Christian

Suppression or avoidance?

“Criticism from within” in German development agencies
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The article analyzes the internal criticism culture of the German development organizations *Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (KfW). Based on semi-structured interviews with staff members, it is shown that while internal criticism exists among employees, it is rarely discussed openly. What are the reasons for this deficient way of dealing with the resource of “criticism from within”? One reason is the perceived impossibility of criticizing principals from the position of an *implementing organization*, fostering an internal depoliticization that generally limits dissent. The second reason is that in both *development organizations*, employees fear the outcome of a critical debate about the usefulness of their own activities. Both factors in turn weaken the organizational ability to learn and lead to cynicism among employees. Starting from these empirical observations, the article discusses the theoretical value of an explicit engagement with “criticism from within” and shows how such a perspective can contribute to a better understanding of the inner workings of International Organizations.

Keywords: Criticism from within, organizational learning, GIZ, development agencies, international organizations

Christoph Weller

Challenges of scientific ethics in International Relations

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This article discusses those ethical challenges of research in International Relations (IR) that occur even before entering the empirical field and that do not end with the finalisation of data collection and analysis. As a scientific discipline that focuses on international peace, IR have a particular ethical concern that reflect increasingly global and epistemological challenges. This contribution seeks to stimulate such a

Abstracts

debate by discussing three issues: ethically grounded theoretical decisions, the requirements for a political science that has socio-political relevance, and questions of communication of scientific insights and the ethical dimensions in this process. The article aims to outline trenchantly that the necessity of ethical reflections goes far beyond the empirical process of data generation but starts earlier and ends later as often expected.

Keywords: Scientific ethics, epistemological challenges, socio-political relevance, policy advice, reflexivity

Julia Gurol/Cita Wetterich

Field Research in Security-Sensitive Contexts – Insights from China and the Southern Mediterranean Area

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Researchers working in a security-sensitive setting face many challenges during field research. Questions of ethics, power and representation, but also different aspects of safety and possible limitations must be carefully considered if researchers are conducting fieldwork in different security-sensitive environments. This article deals with the central challenges of security-sensitive research contexts and develops possible coping strategies on the basis of two examples – China and the Southern Mediterranean Area. After an initial critical discussion, the authors discuss in which phases of the research process and in what forms security-sensitivity manifests itself. Subsequently, the authors elaborate three phases of field research: preparation, implementation and evaluation and discuss the negotiation of security-sensitivity, as well as questions of (in)security. Finally, they engage with the implications of field research in security-sensitive contexts for the research process and give general recommendations for the implementation of field research in the Social Sciences.

Keywords: Fieldwork, security, best practice, China, Mediterranean

Katharina Mann

Ethical challenges in researching violent actors: Field experiences from Medellín, Colombia

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Ethical reflections are an important part of social empirical research. It encompasses standards towards scientific rigour as well as aspects of the consequences of research projects. Scholars who collect data on different social relations must consider ethical concerns during the entire research project – from planning, data generation to the analysis and publication. Especially doing qualitative research that in-

Abstracts

vestigates the narratives of conflict realities of violent groups like gangs, researchers face particular contextualised challenges. Questions about a safe access to the field but also imperatives of do-no-harm imply situational ethical reflections that guide the researchers' interaction. Based on a study on female gang membership in the urban conflict setting of Medellín, Colombia, this article discusses these two aspects of empirical data collection in violent contexts and provides possibilities for ethically reflected field research that considers the well-being of the participants and the scholar herself.

Keywords: Applied ethics, do-no-harm, conflict settings, gangs, Medellín

Janne Mende

Expert Interviews in International Organizations: Between Standardization and Narration

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The paper discusses the ethical challenges in conducting expert interviews in international (and other) organizations, and links them with their theoretical and methodological premises. International relations studies use expert interviews in order to analyze internal perspectives from international organizations. However, these data do not simply represent objective information that can be directly incorporated into research, but they require further interpretation and analysis. This is emphasized by the dialectics between internal and external dimensions of international organizations, arising from the relationship of autonomy and dependence, which presents IR research with specific ethical challenges. The interpretive expert interview – methodologically positioned between standardized and narrative interviews – allows dealing with these ethical challenges. The paper discusses its challenges and possibilities, focusing on the four phases before, during, immediately after the interview and during its interpretation.

Keywords: Expert interviews, international organizations, qualitative research, research ethics

Anja P. Jakobi

The proliferation of data in the context of political decision-making processes: What are the limits of scientific responsibility regarding data and its effects?

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International Relations (IR) research has regularly considered ethical questions, which are today part of handbooks as well as methods training. In this context, research ethics is mainly reduced to the conduct of researchers in the research process, for instance regarding the proper production and interpretation of data. A

Abstracts

growing availability and relevance of data outside research contexts and its influence on policy processes challenge the existent relations of ethics, methods, and data. This article examines the triangular relation of quantification as a social process, data as a reasoning behind decision-making and the political consequences of data and quantification. Ethical concerns relate to each of these aspects, yet it is particularly their interplay that questions the role of researchers in a context where data is the basis of decision-making, but quality standards are not necessarily followed.

Keywords: Data, ethics, quantification, responsibility, statistics