

## Abstracts

*Christian Kreuder-Sonnen/Bernhard Zangl*

### **Between hope and fear: On the relationship between authority, politicization, and democratization in international organizations**

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The standard narrative of the politicization literature regards the growing authority of international organizations (IOs) as the main driver of their politicization (authority-politicization nexus) which then drives their democratization (politicization-democratization nexus). While we agree with the authority-politicization nexus, we disagree with the politicization-democratization nexus. We argue that, due to the deficient democratic legitimation of IO authority, the politicization of their *policies* often translates into the politicization of their *polity*. This politicization comes with the rise of both cosmopolitan and communitarian demands for IO democratization. However, communitarian demands enjoy a systematic mobilization advantage over cosmopolitan demands, thus increasing the *constraining dissensus* on IO authority. Consequently, to realize authority transfers, decisionmakers often revert to non-democratic backdoors. This, in turn, reinforces the communitarian critique of illegitimate IO authority. In the short run, this vicious cycle brings a de-democratization of IO authority; in the long run, it may even lead to its renationalization.

**Keywords:** authority, contestation, democracy, international organizations, politicization

*Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt*

### **How and why do international organizations communicate? On the problematic relationship between politicization and public communication**

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The need for the legitimation of international authority is the central credo of the research program on the politicization of international organizations (IOs). However, the common practice of treating IOs as passive addressees of politicization remains problematic. The professionalization of public communication represents an important dimension of IO institutional change driven by politicization. By public communication, IOs may increasingly intervene powerfully in public interpretation and evaluation processes of global governance. The article illustrates this with a focus on the United Nations' (UN) communication of the international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) negotiations and sexual exploitation and abuse in the context of peacekeeping (SEA). In both cases, the UN public communication bore clear traits

of strategic communication – in the ATT-case in an advocacy sense, in the SEA-case in terms of self-legitimation. This is remarkable as it is also shown that this communication had a substantial impact on the global news flow.

**Keywords:** international organizations, politicization, public communication, public diplomacy, United Nations

*Gisela Hirschmann*

**To be or not to be? International organizations between authority and national sovereignty**

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Current research on international organizations (IOs) is facing a new research agenda. Originally dealing with questions regarding the evolution and design of IOs, researchers are now confronted with Brexit and the threat of various states to leave the International Criminal Court. Withdrawals, however, are only one form of action through which member states challenge IOs. This article demonstrates that member states reassert their sovereignty in various ways, including through membership withdrawals, budget cuts, staff obstruction, the limitation of mandates and systematic non-compliance with core values. How do IOs react to those sovereignty challenges? And what factors explain the different ways in which IOs respond to them? Existing literature has focused primarily on explaining why states reclaim their sovereignty; however, we know little about how IOs themselves deal with these challenges. Combining theories of multilateralism with organization theory, this article proposes four types of responses: inertia, hunkering, adaptation, or resilience. I illustrate this typology with historical examples from the League of Nations and conclude by suggesting some hypotheses that might explain the variation in IO responses.

**Keywords:** international organizations, authority, sovereignty, multilateralism, resilience

*Andrea Liese*

**Authority in International Relations – Reflections on reflexive authority in the works of Michael Zürn**

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This article pays tribute to and critically engages with the works of Michael Zürn on international authority. His potentially authoritative concept of reflexive authority contains multiple advantages: First, it explains the paradox of why sovereign states should recognize or even defer to external advice. Second, it adds nuance to Hannah Arendt's idea of unquestioned recognition, by including the capabilities of

the authority takers to examine the quality of authority (holders). Third, it decouples legitimacy and authority without, however, sacrificing the necessity of authority to be legitimized. In light of these important contributions, this article argues that the analysis of legitimation demands should not be reduced to formal, institutionalized relationships of authority. Instead, it calls for a continued inclusion of informal, practice-based recognition and deference. Furthermore, while the reason-based social foundation of authority is convincing, it should not result in overlooking processes of socialization in authority relationships.

**Keywords:** international authority, legitimacy, legitimation, socialization

*Tine Hanrieder*

**Stratified Global Governance: The Construction of a Global Medical South in the United States**

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This contribution discusses ideas about globality in the theory and practice of global governance. Problematising the cosmopolitan view of a global community that dominates the literatures on global governance and International Relations, I advance a social geography perspective on spatial differentiation through global governance. Using the example of health policy and, more specifically, the rise of a global health field in the United States, I show how so-called global health spaces transcend national boundaries and integrate the peripheries of industrialized states. This post-national periphery is global not by being universal or cosmopolitan, but by being poor and in need of frugal, low-tech solutions.

**Keywords:** globalization, global health, political geography, global community, United States

*Alexandros Tokhi*

**International Authority and National Dictatorship**

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According to Zürn's *A Theory of Global Governance* states subordinate themselves to international authorities because they acknowledge their own epistemic and political limitations. Zürn's theory of reflexive authority makes no explicit distinction between national democracy and dictatorship and is general enough to encompass both regime types. Yet, it is difficult to imagine dictators as enlightened and critical leaders that could ever admit their limitations and accept authoritative International Organizations (IO) to – even partly – govern in their stead. Does that mean that Michael Zürn's theory is only applicable to mature states that have the means to critically engage with themselves? This contribution brings together Zürn's theory

of international authority with recent insights from comparative autocracy research. The theoretical discussion results in two expectations about dictatorships' possible motivations to (not) join IOs. Survival analysis is used to test these expectations on a novel data set.

**Keywords:** international authority, regime type, international organizations, survival analysis, democracy and dictatorship

*Ulrich Schneckener*

**“A Europe that protects”. On the relationship of securitization and politicization regarding European security**  
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Based on recent empirical observations in the area of European security policy, the article discusses the conceptual relationship between securitization and politicization approaches in order to work out differences and similarities between the two explanatory theories. First, both perspectives are set against each other: securitization of European politics versus the politicization of European security. Second, from this comparison, it becomes clear that securitization studies underestimate or do not grasp important trends in European security because they primarily understand securitization as a variant of depoliticization. The politicization concept seems to be more promising here, but has so far hardly been used for analyzing EU security policy. In addition, it remains relatively abstract in order to be able to investigate specific politicization processes. The article refers third to the intersections of both theories, which can be used particularly for the further development and application of the politicization approach.

**Keywords:** european security, securitization, politicization, depoliticization

*Benjamin Faude*

**Global Governance as Polycentric Governance**  
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In his “*Theory of Global Governance*,” Michael Zürn claims that contemporary states are embedded in a global political system that accommodates a multitude of international institutions. This contribution seeks to sketch the specific shape of the global political system identified by Zürn. It suggests to conceptualize global governance as a polycentric system that consists of many decision-making centers which formally operate independently, but actually influence each other in various ways. In a first step, the contribution identifies the central features of polycentric global governance. Subsequently, it sketches how the polycentric structure of the global political system affects state behavior and how it accentuates the problem of

creating political order beyond the nation state. In a last step, the contribution points to the specific strengths of polycentric global governance against the backdrop of contemporary challenges for inter-state cooperation.

**Keywords:** global governance, polycentrism, institutional interaction, political order beyond the nation-state, resilience