

Abstracts

Thorsten Benner/Stephan Mergenthaler/Philipp Rotmann

International Bureaucracies and Organizational Learning

The Contours of a Research Agenda

ZIB, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 203-236

This article sketches an agenda for furthering research on international bureaucracies, a topic neglected by IR researchers over the past decades. The first part identifies eleven topics: internal governance, leadership, interaction with principals, inter-organizational relations, roles in new forms of public-private governance, authority/influence, accountability/legitimacy, impact evaluation, institutional design, change/reform and learning. The second part uses the topic of organizational learning as an illustration and presents a framework for analyzing learning in international bureaucracies. The third part discusses challenges for better embedding research on international bureaucracies into the discipline of IR.

Martin Nonhoff/Jennifer Gronau/Frank Nullmeier/Steffen Schneider

The Politicization of International Institutions

The Case of the G8

ZIB, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 237-267

Whether, why and in what respect we are witnessing an increasing politicization of international regimes is widely discussed at the moment. Recent contributions propose that such politicization is in fact happening and that we should understand that development as an unintended consequence of the growing supra- and transnationalization of international regimes. Looking more closely at which institutions are becoming politicized the most blatant example is surely the G8. It has aroused more political protest than any other international institution during the last decade and it is also, as we show in this article, under severe discursive legitimation pressure. Yet, the G8 is neither a supra- nor a transnational, but rather a trans-governmental institution. Therefore, supra- or transnationalization cannot be understood as a sufficient condition for explaining the politicization of international regimes. Other factors, such as the symbolic character of an institution, its discursive visibility, and its proneness to assume a state-like range of responsibilities have to be taken into account.

Christian Grobe

How cheap talk really is

Communicative vs. strategic rationality in an experimental dictator game
ZIB, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 269-297

Since the onset of the »ZIB debate« the theory of communicative action has witnessed an interesting evolutionary process, with institutional explanations for argument-based changes in agent's behavior moving into focus. At the same time, behavioral game theorists – practically unnoticed by political scientists – have broadened the foundations of traditional rational choice theory. Equipped with findings from laboratory experiments, they found numerous ways to explain changes in agent's behavior as a result of strategic action. By leaving these rationalist explanations aside, the validity of commonly used counterfactual proofs of communicative action, via the institutional context, is threatened. To avoid the resulting danger of bias, the article puts forth a new definition of the relation between communicative and strategic rationality. Subsequently, it builds on this definition in order to measure the relative explanatory power of the two approaches by means of a laboratory experiment. The article thus shows how the adopted experimental method can supplement empirical field research, and therefore deserves to become an integral part of the standard toolkit used by political scientists.

Stefan A. Schirm

A Coordinated World Economy?

New Rules for More Efficient and Legitimate Markets
ZIB, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 311-324

The global financial crisis clearly shows that the current world economic order lacks efficiency as well as legitimacy. Therefore, more powerful rules for global markets must be created in form of better surveillance and regulation of financial market actors, a strengthening of international organizations, and by a more comprehensive participation of relevant countries in global economic governance. In the G20, member states accomplished a rapprochement on several reform proposals, but only reached consensus on non-binding rules. This is essentially due to the variety of societal ideas and interests towards possible reform strategies which shaped governmental positions and led to divergence in the G20. Thus, the optimistic scenario for reformed governance is a better coordinated world economy, which combines on principle openness of markets with better multilateral surveillance and regulation as basic features of a more efficient and legitimate international order.

Jens van Scherpenberg

Financial Capital, the Financial Crisis and Competition Among States

ZIB, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 325-337

Analyzing the impact of the current global financial crisis on international relations risks falling short of meaningful conclusions if the crisis is treated as a mere external shock. The current article aims at contributing to a deeper understanding of the economic forces that led to the crisis and that continue to determine states' reactions to it. First, three theses on the accumulation of financial capital are presented, based on Marx' analysis of capital. In pointing out the fundamental subsumption of all sectors of capitalist economies under the self-referential accumulation of financial capital the article does not only offer a rebuttal of the financialisation theory but also attempts to explain why there is so little willingness among states to agree on stricter regulation of the financial sector. The conclusions from the first part are then applied to a brief analysis of competition and rivalry between the major economic powers as displayed in the G20 and IMF context.

Christoph Scherrer

Finance Capital Stays Dominant Despite Crisis

ZIB, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 339-353

Finance capital enjoyed hegemony in the governance of the world economic order. The article pursues the question whether finance capital has lost its hegemonic powers. It argues with reference to accumulation and new social movement theories that crises can actually strengthen capital and contribute to the reproduction of capitalism. Previous financial crises did not curb, but enlarged the powers of finance capital. An analysis of the stages of the current crisis management reveals the staying power of finance capital, however its interest are no longer seen by many to represent the interest of all.

Rolf J. Langhammer

The Financial Crisis and the International Order

ZIB, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 355-361

This article identifies the underlying roots of the financial crisis as follows: excessive growth of global liquidity during the last two decades, deficient regulations on financial markets in the making of the crisis and during the crisis, passive monetary policies which failed to prick excessive asset bubbles, and incapability of actors to cope with unexpected shocks. Unlike in goods markets where the world trading order (WTO) sets global rules, there is no global regulatory order in financial markets which submits actors to rules discipline and supranational institutions. Instead, since the collapse of the Bretton Woods System, financial markets are characterized by a »non-

order« in which there is no longer a national hegemon acting as a guardian. The US as the largest international debtor is no longer in the position of a hegemon. In the near future, the author does not see an improvement out of this situation. The role of the dollar as the leading international currency has weakened but is still without any alternative. At least, there is room for hope that instead of a top-down setting of global explicit rules, civic society will be instrumental to gradually develop implicit rules driven by transparency and information in order to induce actors in financial markets towards more risk-conscious behaviour.