

Abstracts

Sieglinde Gstöhl/Robert Kaiser

Networked Governance in Global Trade Policy

The Role of International Standards in the World Trade Organization

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Non-tariff barriers to trade, and in particular standards, have considerably gained in importance in global trade policy over the past few years. This article explores to what extent the World Trade Organization (WTO) goes beyond negative, market-creating integration in its dealings with standards as a form of positive, market-correcting integration and what the consequences are. The WTO does not set its own standards but »imports« standards of other international bodies and treaties either through reference in its agreements or through its dispute settlement rulings. In this new form of networked governance, the WTO member states may generally apply their national product standards to imported goods, but not their regulations of process and production methods. This »double standard« is a corollary of the WTO's institutional structure and the conflicting interests of its member states, and it is likely to remain for the foreseeable future.

Steffi Franke

Political Spaces and National Identity

The Discourse on Central Europe in the Czech Republic

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Political spaces are continuously changing. They do not only describe geographic or strategic coordinates, but create resources of legitimization as well. The article examines the intimate relationship between the development of a political culture and the politico-spatial positioning of societies. Drawing on an analysis of the discourse of the political elites in the Czech Republic on Central Europe (»Mitteleuropa«), the article demonstrates how the politico-spatial positioning of the Czech republic has changed and how this change is linked to the political culture. Contrasting the discourse in the 1980s with the current discourse on »Central Europe«, it can be shown that after the end of the Cold War, the importance of the politico-spatial concept of »Central Europe« has dramatically declined in the discourse of political elites. Instead, the current discourse links national identity to the political space of »the West« and the self-perception of a »small state«, which in turn forms the political objectives.

Heidrun Zinecker

Regime Hybridity in Developing Countries

Achievements and Limitations of New Research on Transitions

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Research on transitions has reached a crossroads. Should it be abandoned because the third wave of transitions to democracy has ended or should it be continued because so much has remained unaccounted for regarding the fate of the third wave? The article suggests that regime hybridity constitutes a widespread institutional setting resulting from incomplete transitions. Hybridity is understood as a specific regime type in which some segments of the political regime are democratic while others are non-democratic though not necessarily authoritarian. Underlying the concept is the assumption that the political regime stretches beyond the institutions of the state. It includes civil society as well. It is at this level that the research on transitions can be connected to the research on the dynamics of economic exclusion in the context of rent-economies. The article develops a check-list for identifying regime segments which constitute regime hybridity. It applies this check-list to the case of Colombia and identifies linkage points between political transition and socio-economic transformation.

Christoph Weller

Observations of Scientific Self-control

Quality, Weaknesses and the Future of Peer Review

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When the German Journal of International Relations (Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen – ZIB) was founded, its editors decided in favor of a double-blind peer-review procedure, and from then on their decisions have been guided by the verdicts of the reviewers. How valid can the ZIB's procedure claim to be? An analysis conducted for 452 reviews found no significant negative distortions for gender and qualification levels of authors and reviewers. As far as review quality is concerned, however, the analysis did find a marked correlation with reviewer qualification levels. Against this background, the article seeks to develop some quality standards for reviews and advances some proposals on improving the peer-review procedure. Apart from the assistance they provide for the editors in reaching decisions, peer reviews are above all important elements of intra-disciplinary communication, and one of the aims of improving review quality is to enhance this communication.

Volker Rittberger/Fariborz Zelli

The Internationalization of Teaching at German Universities

Challenges for Political Science and International Relations Departments

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The article links the debate about reforming the German university system to the internationalization of higher education in the country. Whereas the period before 1945 witnessed an oscillation between internationalization and re-nationalization, indicators such as the increase in academic exchange and the introduction of international programs have since revealed a clear tendency towards formal and substantial internationalization. Subsequently, German Political Science and International Relations departments face the double challenge of improving the competitiveness of both facilities and students. Regarding these problems, the authors place their proposals on two tracks: on the one hand, based on their own teaching experience, they outline how an innovative International Relations class could look like considering the resources currently at disposal; on the other hand, they make suggestions about how to expand these resources, e. g. by closing capacity gaps in student counseling and by establishing interdisciplinary centers of public and international affairs.