Report of Midterm Conference

Global Cooperation: Can we build on it?

Findings and perspectives

1–3 July 2015, Duisburg/Mühlheim an der Ruhr

Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21)
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Three years after its inauguration, the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research organized its Midterm Conference on 1–3 July 2015. The Conference aimed to introduce some of the research projects the Centre has initiated over the last few years. Moreover, the Centre sought to identify new research paths addressing the pressing challenges in the area of cooperation research. The Conference was divided into five parts: keynote speech; a look into the laboratory of the Research Units; international courts and global cooperation; future trends; and synthesizing the findings.

**Good faith cooperation? Why global cooperation sometimes succeeds (and mostly not)**

In the atmospheric surroundings of the Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg, Scott Barrett, Professor of Columbia University, New York opened the Conference with the 12th Käte Hamburger Lecture on ‘Good faith cooperation? Why global cooperation sometimes succeeds (and mostly not)’. In his keynote, Barrett addressed numerous contemporary global challenges, such as global climate change, nuclear proliferation, and global efforts to fight the spread of diseases and exemplified his theories about global cooperation with a variety of sources including mathematical models, historical narratives, social experiments, and interviews with diplomats.

Barrett tackled the main challenges and opportunities for global cooperation, by focusing on factors that foster or impede the provision of so called global public goods. One of the main features of global public goods is that they are non-excludable, which means once a global public good is provided every country in the world will benefit. One of the most prominent examples of a global public good is the global effort to mitigate climate change. If global efforts for climate protection succeed, every country in the world will benefit and no country could be excluded from that benefit. However, the provision of global public goods such as the protection of the global climate requires international cooperation. The condition of the world climate is the result of every country’s behaviour (e.g. emissions). At the same time, countries that defect from cooperation (e.g. do not reduce their emissions) free-ride on the collective efforts of other countries, and may even enjoy additional gains in trade and investment that results from their non-mitigation policies. According to Barrett, these prisoner dilemma situations, which incentivize free-riding, are the key problem responsible for the lack of global cooperation and global public good provisions. Countries may pollute the air, increase their emissions and refuse to participate in any global
effort to mitigate climate change and may still enjoy the benefits of a better climate resulting from other countries' efforts and commitments.

To resolve the problem of free-riding, Barrett highlighted multiple tools that are available to the international community. Most importantly, he addressed the question of how to design successful international treaties, i.e. treaties where many countries participate. The countries’ compliance with the rules of the treaty, in turn, contributes significantly to public goods provisions. Moreover, for the provision of global public goods, **international treaties have to be self-enforcing.** Due to the anarchic nature of the international system, sovereign states cannot or will not rely on a third party that enforces compliance. Instead, the treaty has to incentivize compliance and or sanction non-compliance in a way that each of the contracting parties believes that it is better off signing and sustaining the treaty than not being a part of the treaty.

As a positive example for self-enforcement, Barrett highlighted the North Pacific Fur Seal Treaty, an international treaty signed on 7th July 1911 by the United States, United Kingdom on behalf of Canada, Japan, and Russia to manage the commercial harvest of fur bearing mammals in the Pribilof Islands of the Bering Sea. In the nineteenth century, seals were hunted so extensively that they were about to become extinct. According to Barrett, the Fur Seal treaty contained multiple design elements that determined its success, i.e. ensuring a sustainable harvest of a resource. Most importantly, the treaty created aggregate gains, which were distributed in a way that all parties benefited from the success of the treaty. Additionally, the treaty ensured that countries would lose something if they opted out of the agreement, while the other parties agreed to participate, and the treaty deterred the entry of third parties. Thus, a mixture of sticks and carrots ensured the success of the treaty.

Barrett also pointed to the **Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer** as example for an international treaty that successfully ensured public goods provision. On 16th September 1987, a total of 23 countries agreed to cut by half their production and consumption of ozone-depleting chemicals before the end of the century. Contrary to many other global environmental agreements the Montreal protocol was a success story. It entered into force on time, the signatories made the promised cuts in emissions, and further negotiations strengthened its provisions. According to Barrett, the most important reason for the success of the Montreal protocol was a trade restriction mechanism that was part of the treaty. Countries that did not join the treaty could not trade any products that contained ozone-depleting substances with countries that signed the treaty and vice versa. This mechanism essentially reduced the benefits from free-riding. While countries that were not part of the treaty would still enjoy the provision of the respective global public good
(recovery and protection of the ozone layer) they would also have to bear the cost of trade restrictions. Thereby, the Montreal protocol fostered participation and compliance with the treaty. Moreover, the trade restrictions specified in the treaty never came into effect. They turned out to be of purely strategic nature, i.e. they credibly threatened sanctions and thereby ensured compliance. As explained by Barrett, one of the reasons why the Kyoto protocol failed, which was intended to reduce greenhouse gases, was its lack of self-enforcement. The United States never ratified the treaty and Canada withdrew from it, once it failed to limit emissions in accordance with the goals of the treaty. Neither country faced any consequences for their defections. The Kyoto protocol included no measures to deter non-ratification and withdrawal.

As an example of a public good provision without the use of a treaty, Barrett referred to the eradication of smallpox in 1979, which he describes as unique achievement in the history of international cooperation. According to Barrett, cooperation succeeded because the international community faced the situation of a weakest-link coordination game. The only way to eradicate smallpox was to eradicate the disease in every country. Correspondingly, if elimination in one country failed, the other countries would remain vulnerable. Thus, although eradication of a disease is a public good, the weakest-link characteristics nullified incentives to free-ride. However, crucial for success is the capacity of all countries to eradicate the disease. Vaccination is costly and requires administrative structures and health personnel, which some countries may lack. In the case of smallpox, there was a window of opportunity in terms of capacity that ensured eradication. The country with the last smallpox outbreak was Somalia, which by that time, despite being a poor country, in collaboration with international partners had the administrative capacity to eradicate the disease. However, ten years later at the beginning of the 1990s state structures in Somalia collapsed as a result of a civil war, which would have made disease elimination impossible. By now, the eradication of polio has not succeeded, due to the fact that the respective ‘weakest link’ countries were suffering from civil war and therefore lacked the administrative capacity to eliminate the disease.

Building on these cases of success and failure of global public good provisions, Barrett reflected more generally on contemporary challenges and opportunities to address climate change by the means of international cooperation. Given that the international community agreed in the Copenhagen accord of 2009 to keep global temperature rise below 2 °C, scientist have identified the so called climate tipping points, i.e. thresholds for abrupt and irreversible change of the global climate that are associated with temperature rise. According to Barrett, these thresholds for ‘dangerous’ climate change are an opportunity for global cooperation if uncertainty about them can be reduced. The fear of crossing a dangerous threshold turns the situation into a coordination game, which favours
collective efforts over incentives to free-ride. Synthesizing his findings, Barrett argued that efforts should be made to transform prisoner dilemma situations of public goods provision into coordination games. Rather than focusing on ways to cooperate globally, consideration should be given to identifying opportunities for coordination. Accordingly, Barrett made the point that large cooperation problems such as climate change should be broken down and modified into small problems of global coordination.

In her comment, **Margret Thalwitz**, Senior Expert Fellow at the Centre, situated Barrett’s talk within the framework of social dilemma situations, which highlight the contradictions between rational self-interest and collective outcomes. Thalwitz drew on her practical experience as former World Bank Director of the Global Programs and Partnerships Department to argue that free-riding, enforcement and social dilemma situations in general are real phenomena and not just abstract concepts that are only useful for academic mind games. However, she also stressed that recent research in behavioural economics and cognitive psychology highlights ways of how humans can **overcome social dilemma situations**, regardless of enforcement mechanisms and/or third parties as proposed by Barrett.
A Look Into the Laboratory of the Research Units:
Negotiating Global Cooperation

Panel 1: International Negotiations, Institutions and the Human Factors

International negotiations, such as peace talks, trade debates or climate consultations, are often frustrating and do not meet the expectations of participants or external observers, let alone the public. Over recent years, they have often produced costs and have limited effect on the ground. But it would be highly dangerous to underestimate their value and meaning for global cooperation: International negotiations are in themselves an important instrument, not only politically, but also strategically. International negotiations are both instruments of power and the high art of diplomacy. When the representatives of an institution or a government enter into talks, they have different expectations, not only with respect to the results, but also how they negotiate and in which manner. Here, different factors play an important role, such as social and cultural dispositions, history, training, environment, experience and tradition. It is only recently that these factors were considered important and could affect the nature and furthermore the outcome of International negotiations.

In Panel 1, Siddharth Mallavarapu, Professor of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi and former Senior Fellow at the Centre, and Stefan Groth, Postdoc Fellow at KHK/GCR21, shed light on this important instrument of global cooperation while focussed on different elements of negotiations. Their presentations were held against the background that in recent academic discourses there is a trend to apply the term ‘negotiations’ differently. Instead of seeing it as a means of coordinating the communication between rationally acting stakeholders, it is understood as a more complex social process of culturally imbedded deliberations. Thus, in an attempt to better capture global challenges of cooperation, their analysis did not only structure the ‘objective’ positions of interest, but also included different cultural perceptions and normative expectations that are guiding the search for solutions of these challenges. The panel was chaired by Daniel Haun, Professor of Developmental Psychology, Friedrich Schiller University in Jena.

While Siddharth Mallavarapu looked at International negotiations from the perspective of neuroscience in his presentation titled ‘Cognition Studies and Institutional Design’, Stefan Groth used case studies to illustrate his approach on ‘Producing stability: On the pragmatics of multinational negotiations’. 
Neuroscience asks, in short, if the brain is key to a scientific understanding of attitudes, and how it affects decisions and practices. This approach is accompanied by an intense academic controversy: Can the study of politics be totally transformed or even revolutionized by neuroscience? Critics of this approach point out that even though neuroscience can help to understand certain phenomena in human behaviour or institutional thinking, one should not forget about evidence-based political science. In order to fully understand the interdependence of institutions and human behaviour, also in a negotiation process, the critics argue that traditional political science methods and findings should not be easily dismissed. It is even further debated that neuroscience too easily gets overrated as a resource for an effective instrument of political science.

However, when looking at the topic of international negotiations, certain issues play a role indeed: Emotions play a part, so does empathy, affect, bias, stereotyping-prejudice, culture, heritage etc. And it is important that political science considers these as factors in decision-making processes, and moves away from the total reliance on rational-choice theories. However in the debate about neuroscience, it has been pointed out, that there are other elements which shape debates and produce certain outcomes. After all, affect is mobilized and managed in large parts through a public debate, media, and the make-up of institutions. And in order to understand the outcome of lengthy negotiation processes, it is important to also look at it through a conceptual, political and institutional framework – which the traditional political science approach advocates. This is where neuroscience and political science can help to get a better understanding of the complexities or specifically of negotiation processes. Neuroscience offers very intriguing insights about political thinking and behaviour, as Mallavarapu illustrated in his contribution: He underlined that political attitudes and behaviour arise in part out of multifaceted processes of the brain. He, too, argues that it would be false to treat the brain as a separate unit, without connecting it to other functions of the human body or to consider the complexity of its psychological functions.

Mallavarapu’s research objective is to bring recent developments in the field of cognitive neurosciences into dialogue with potential institutional designs for furthering human cooperation. His particular interest is to examine what institutional arrangements are likely to be more conducive to cooperation. How can we anchor insights from cognition studies in terms of the actual design of institutions? What outcomes are likely to be generated by particular modifications of existing institutional designs? How can institutional design, drawing on insights from cognitive neurosciences help tweak outcomes both significantly and marginally in favour of facilitating human cooperation?
The panel ‘International Negotiations, Institutions and the Human Factors’ paid special attention to communicating strategies and argued that these are determined by certain factors: genetic resources or genetic material, traditional knowledge and identity or cultural expressions. These factors shape and determine how institutions and actors communicate. While the working process evolves over time, as it is often the case in International negotiations, certain additional incentives also play a part: fatigue in view of the lengthy process, and also the question of power. With this in mind, it was argued that international negotiations have to be seen in a different light. They are not a neutral instrument which helps solve a conflict. Rather, they have to be understood individually or how they are shaped by individuals. It was argued that while ‘cooperation’ can be a collective value, that actors have an interest in cooperating with each other, exchange views, work on solutions, ‘negotiations’ are not. Instead, these are shaped by the way how we look at the world or rather, how the actors involved in the negotiations process look at the world. They form the outcome of the process individually, not collectively. Both Mallavarapu and Groth underlined that we look at the world from very different perspectives and thus, communicate and negotiate quite differently. They also identified asymmetries of information in the negotiation process. Some diplomats have a better grasp of the process than others because they were provided with more or different information. They may have also been given information at separate times as a basis for their decisions.

Mallavarapu pointed out that diplomats are trained differently, come from different cultural backgrounds and use different approaches in the negotiation process. So the human factor plays an important role and needs to be considered, when trying to understand how international negotiations work. When very differently accomplished and trained diplomats negotiate – the outcome is often less concrete, produces less feasible results.

Mallavarapu also pointed out that a new generation of diplomats is emerging. They often went to the same international schools or universities, shared experiences on the internet and communicate more globally through social networks. Here, we might also meet a new generation of diplomats, he assumed, who have, despite different upbringings, culture and training, a more globally shared world-view, with a new set of norms, ideas and values.

Stefan Groth argued in his presentation that the minimal outcome and slow pace of many multilateral negotiations beg the question how relative stability of negotiations can be maintained, despite opposing positions. He asked how negotiators keep stakeholders at the table, especially if alternative negotiation venues or courses of action exist. He wanted to know how protracted negotiations processes can, with little chance for consensual outcomes, persist
over long spans of time. He also asked for economic and political factors and what role communicative strategies play.

Groth looked at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions (IGC) and monitored their negotiation behaviour.

The Committee was installed in 2000 and deals with IP rights and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (GRTKF) on the international level. It was set up as a reaction to pressures by developing countries with existing legislation, regarding the protection of GRTKF on the international level. Here, two groups of negotiators were identified. The first is countries which are interested in speeding up the process and trying to find an agreement beneficial to their own interests. The second group of countries tries to slow down the process and to prevent the adoption of legal instruments that would be a disadvantage for them. Groth argued that by shifting the frames of the negotiations from stability to instability, both parties exercise pressure on the negotiation process itself. So he asked how this was carried out. From his point of view, the different parties involved used different negotiation techniques; i.e. they left the negotiation table, prolonged sessions, did not answer requests or came up with their own proposals. In doing so, relative stability was reached because this kept the process going. In Groth’s words, ‘the switching between two referential frames thus constitutes an instability that produces stability and instability at the same time’. Referential frames, according to Groth, thus constitute a productive and progressive movement that gradually produces results. It is Groth’s point of view that it cannot fall back behind a certain stage of negotiations, as it would imply a rejection of the process. Even though no agreement was reached so far, the fact that the different factions were still involved created a stable base for further consultations. And even though, Groth argued, the shifting of frames has its limits, the inquiry into the pragmatics of multilateral negotiations can provide insights into communication patterns and strategies contributing to the stability of negotiations despite opposite positions. Groth advocated that keeping a dialogue alive is, in itself, a powerful instrument of global cooperation.

The idea behind International negotiations is simple, but relevant: To keep stakeholders, over a long period of time, at the table. This, in itself, can be a success. To keep the discussion and the search for a compromise alive, and to bring parties, who would otherwise be at each other’s throats, or who would not be talking to each other, together in one room. International negotiations can help produce feasible results, such as, ending a conflict, developing an agreement, formulating contracts or producing other measures which, under
positive circumstances, will make the world a better place. At the very least international negotiation could produce a reference point for future actions which are more peaceful, more environmental friendly and more climate-aware.

Panel 2: Non-Western Perspectives on Governing the World

The second panel of day two addressed one of the main challenges in research on global cooperation, namely the dominance of so called Western perspectives on world politics which is the major focus of the Research Unit 3 ‘Global Governance Revisited’ of the Centre. Western bias manifests itself in at least three ways. First, most theories of international relations build upon Western philosophy (e.g. Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Clausewitz, Thucydides) and thereby neglect a plethora of history of thought in Non-Western countries (e.g. Confucianism and Islamic philosophy). This contributes to, second, a Eurocentric framing of world history and contemporary international politics. For example, events such as Napoleonic wars or the Peloponnesian War can only be considered as formative events for a couple of European countries, whereas the rest of the world was shaped by other historic events (e.g. the siege of Baghdad and its fall to the Mongols) Third, contemporary empirical research on global cooperation is largely based upon the study of so called WEIRD people. WEIRD is an acronym used in social psychology and anthropology, which highlights that subjects in empirical research are mostly from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic societies. The panellists addressed these problems by providing different perspectives on global governance beyond the confinements of East-West or North-South. The panel was chaired by Nicole Deitelhoff, Professor of International Relations, Goethe University Frankfurt.

Paulo Luiz Moreaux Lavigne Esteves, General Supervisor at BRICS Policy Center in Rio de Janeiro, gave the first presentation on ‘The BRICS and Global Order’. His findings about how BRICS influence world politics are based on extensive interviews with policymakers and business elites. Esteves challenged the common conception of the BRICS as a coherent group, but instead coined them a kaleidoscope, which creates different images for the respective club members. For Russia, BRICS is an instrument to advance multipolarity in a geopolitical sense, i.e. an opportunity to counter-balance the power of the United States. For China, BRICS is just another way to proceed its harmonious rise to world leadership. Moreover, Esteves argued that in fact, China is at the centre of the BRICS club and every other member negotiates its position within the club in relation to China. South Africa uses BRICS to foster its regional leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa while improving its domestic economic development. Finally, Brazil and India use the BRICS to create the conditions for a multipolar world order, strengthening their own voices in international affairs.
and improving domestic economic development. With regard to the impact on global politics, Esteves concluded that BRICS will lead to a decentring of a Western-led liberal international order with both the rise of new poles of power, and the challenge of core values embedded in multilateral institutions.

In the next presentation, Manjiao Chi, Professor of Law at Xiamen University and Senior Fellow at the Centre, presented research on China’s perspective on global governance. According to Chi, China has no fundamental opposition to common ‘Western’ conceptions of global governance, but has a different perspective or its own idea of how to participate. In general, Chi argued that the dominance of state centralism in Chinese legal and political culture impedes its participation in global governance. He discussed this assumption using different cases from international law. According to Chi, the politics of state centralism in China can be observed in its strong emphasis on state immunity, territorial integrity and non-interference in domestic politics. Focusing on state immunity, Chi described, how most states made a gradual transition from an absolute doctrine to a restrictive doctrine. Whereas the absolute doctrine generally gives a state the protection from being sued in the courts of other states, the restrictive doctrine only gives immunity regarding public law acts, but revokes protection of private law acts. With regard to commercial affairs, state immunity has been abandoned by most countries in the world but China, which still sticks to the absolute doctrine. Chi also reflected on Chinas approach to global public goods provision, highlighting again state centralisms as the determining factor. Chinas engagement in the negotiation of international treaties has often focused on neglecting public interest clauses, i.e. clauses that are beneficial for public goods provision, especially with regard to human rights. According to Chi, China objectifies these provisions due to fear of spillover effects from international treaties into domestic politics. Chi concluded that significant political reform in China is necessary before the negative effect of state centralism on Chinas participation in global governance can be mitigated.

In her presentation on ‘Plural Perspectives on Global Governance’, Claudia Derichs, Professor of Comparative Politics, Philipps University Marburg and Senior Fellow at the Centre, addressed the Western bias in global politics by focusing on knowledge production. Derichs argued that a large body of non-Western scholarship on international relations is largely unconnected to the ‘global discourse’ in English-language journals. To illustrate this point, Derichs reflected on how Islam has constructed its own vision of international relations and pointed out the sources within the Islamic world that are used to frame debates about international relations. According to Derichs, early accounts of Islamic international relations theory mostly deal with the question of how the Muslim world (Dār al-Islām and dār al-‘ahd) is supposed to interact
with others (Dār al-ḥarb, the non-Muslim world). However, Derichs stressed that since the end of the cold war considerable progress has been made in Islamic theorizing on international relations. She argued that the discourse evolved from a static dichotomy, which separated the world into Muslim and non-Muslim states, into a modern dynamic model of international relations. This model, although generally following the same reasoning of a bipolar separation, rejects war as the main principle of international interactions between states, fosters diplomatic reciprocity, allows alliances between Muslim and non-Muslim states and favours positive-neutrality as foreign policy framework.

In the final presentation, Bruce Gilley, Associate Professor of Political Science, Portland State University, discussed ‘The Rise of the Creative Third World and the Challenge for the West’. In his presentation, Gilley framed new non-Western perspectives of global governance as challenge to the Western leadership. His main argument is that the so called Third World, i.e. those nations separate from the dominant power blocs, has fundamentally changed. Gilley explained that central to the shared identity of Third World countries have been demands for equality and a rebalancing of power in the international system. This shared identity and the solidarity among Third World countries have remained unchanged and persisted after the end of the Cold War. What has changed, however, is the way Third World countries advance their agenda. During the time period from decolonization until the end of the Cold War, the common agenda of the Third World was a protest-oriented approach against Western colonialism and the unequal structures of the international system. Nowadays, these protest approaches have been replaced by a creative model, which demands equality by coming to terms with the Western liberal world order. According to Gilley, the creative model is characterized by three features: (1) a general acceptance of Western norms, (2) a transition to market capitalism and integration with the world economy and (3) a divide between policymaking and nationalist movements. According to Gilley, this development is good news for global cooperation, because Third World countries become more willing to cooperate with Western countries. Moreover, because of their increased economic and political capacity Third World countries nowadays often cooperate as equal partners. This leads to more hybrid and ad hoc alliances between the West and the Third World. As an example, Gilley highlighted the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants that was originally initiated by Canada, Sweden, Mexico, Ghana and Bangladesh. Gilley described this initiative as a creative approach to address environmental problems, which involved selective and flexible cooperation between a mixture of Western and Third World countries. Gilley concluded that the main challenge Western countries face is how to advance a form of pluralism in the international system that
embraces Third World creativity but maintains those norms and institutions created under Western leadership, which have proven to be effective.

In summary, the panellists introduced numerous creative ideas and empirical examples of why and how it is necessary to account for non-Western perspectives in global cooperation research. Moreover, all panellists avoided paternalistic reasoning but remained critical when discussing the utility of non-Western ideas for global cooperation.

Panel 3: Trees of Secret Desire: Do We Actually Want Global Democracy?

Despite having been scheduled for the notorious after-lunch slot the discussion on global cooperation gathered pace during Panel 3 ‘Is Global Democracy Desirable? Shifting Democratic Legitimacy in a World in Crisis’ which was chaired by Lothar Brock, Professor Emeritus, Goethe University Frankfurt. Former and current fellows of the Centre’s Research Unit 4 ‘Paradoxes and Perspectives of Democratization’, together with the audience, engaged in a lively debate sparked by various ideas, manifestations and shortcomings of radical forms of democracy. Ayşem Mert, former Postdoc Fellow at the Centre, provided an analysis of the Gezi park protests in Turkey in 2013 drawing on Mouffe and Laclau’s approaches to antagonistic democracy. She was followed by Shirin Saeidi, Postdoc Fellow at the Centre, who presented her work on notions of democracy among Iran’s Islamist hardliners. Olivia Rutazibwa, Lecturer in International and European Studies at University of Portsmouth and Postdoc Fellow at the Centre, called for a radicalization of international solidarity through postcolonial critiques. David Chandler, Professor of International Relations, University of Westminster and former Senior Fellow at the Centre, on the other hand, challenged the idea that those working on global democracy and global cooperation actually wanted to see these materialize. Instigated by Mert’s presentation much of the discussion began to revolve around the idea of ‘living like a tree.’

In order to give an account of the forestry terms in which debates on (global) democracy’s legitimacy were eventually couched in, it is useful to understand the panel as a complex adaptive system (CAS).

CAS is a term used in complexity science to underscore the self-causation and dynamism of systems from a holistic point of view. The reason why such complex systems are considered to be self-causing, dynamic and to an extent unpredictable, even unknowable, is due to their interlinked and fluid nature. That interconnectedness should have come to the fore in complex adaptive systems and relates to the perspectival change complexity thinking executes. At the core of CAS sits a change in perspective: rather than assuming entities it
posits relations. This means that everything relates to everything else in a constantly affecting manner; hence new adaptations are being generated causing new effects and so on. As one key feature of CAS is its open boundaries, today, the holism at the basis of complex adaptive system has also come to also include an ontological interconnectedness between humans and nature. Moreover, as open-boundary systems hardly can be said to have an outside which is not part of the system’s interrelatedness, the objective observer position is epistemologically eclipsed, thus turning us all into participants. While the resulting subjectivity of all knowledge has long been an issue in and of the ‘soft’ social sciences, this new perspective meant the end of the objectivity of the ‘hard’ natural science. In other words, regarding epistemology, the complex adaptive system undid the modern separation between science (knowledge) and philosophy (meaning). Regarding ontology, it turned the Western-modern artifice of separating man from nature into untenable misconception. Drawing the logical conclusion, a decisive UN report in 2004 on the failures of (global) cooperation to mitigate climate change proclaimed the chief problem to rest in the ‘notion of nature and culture being separate.’

‘Living like a tree’ emerged in a dynamic and self-causing manner, providing an emergent framing for the terms of debate without a central authority providing or supervising its usage. It established all sorts of relations, between panellists (both present and absent) and texts, between objects and objectives of research, between concepts and between these multiple levels. The tree became, so to speak, a relational object. It was collectively constructed through emerging relationships between the panellists, while at the same time it began to exist objectively, exerting some agential capacities in the sense of in turn establishing relationships, thereby opening the border of the system.

The conditions of possibility for the emergence of this relational object were sown in the first contribution. In presenting her recent work on democratic protests in Turkey, Mert highlighted the role the trees in Istanbul’s Gezi Park – one of the main sites of the protests – had eventually come to play. Drawing on Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau’s discourse-theoretical approach to radical democracy, Mert argued that the trees both physically and symbolically cohered diverse strands of the protesters, such as students, feminists and anti-capitalist Muslims, against the ruling party’s hyper-developmentalist agenda. While being mobilized by diverse, even incommensurable, agendas, protesters were not only united against a well-defined ‘Them’ but also through the symbolic role the trees which had taken on for the protests themselves. As Mert pointed out, they symbolized, among other things the ‘fragility of human existence’ as well as the interconnectedness between humans and nature. The trees in Gezi Park therefore functioned as empty but nevertheless material signifiers in the antagonistic struggle for more ecologically-minded democracy against the
economic policies of the Justice and Development Party. In this sense, the trees also structured – and such partook in – the terms of engagement for all parties, to the extent that the police not only burned down the tents of protesters but eventually also uprooted the trees. Mert, inspired by Bruno Latour’s work on demystifying modernity, therefore, went on to suggest that the trees were not merely constructed as an empty-but-material signifier. Rather, through the growing affinity between nature and people that were equally oppressed by the ruling party’s policies, Gezi Park and its trees also came to constitute a political subject as such.

For the following two presentations, the trees and their structuring power lay dormant at first, before fully unfolding in subsequent discussions. Saeidi presented her current research project on notions of democracy among hardliners in Iran. This project, she explained, was couched in a broader, more general curiosity about people who lead radical lifestyles. While her initial focus was on the question how members of Iran’s Hizbullah movement theorized democracy, for instance, the notion of citizenship, the use of public space, gender equality, freedom of speech as well as the limits on clerical power, her research has recently taken her to adopt a slightly different angle. Now she was interested in the question what popular engagements with Iran’s Hizbullah movement’s social engineering project tell us about living in a ‘grey zone’ – a zone between authoritarian dictatorship and liberal democracy. This, Saeidi expects, will also contribute to scholarship on transnational citizenship, because Hizbullah is a transnational organization, not only spanning the Middle East but playing an important role also in Latin America. In these cultural institutions, it is the Iranian state that sets the agenda, regulates knowledge production and provides the funding. So it is here that social engineering projects and ideas of citizenship can be extrapolated as well as evaluated through popular engagements. Her empirical research focuses on investigating the various cultural organization of Hizbullah has revolved around such topics as Islamic cinema, the localization of social sciences as well as sexuality and marriage. Saeidi’s preliminary findings suggest that the state’s refusal to engage with the plurality that exists within the movement and its neoliberal ideology of maximizing profits in all spheres of political and social life has led to the emergence of two types of citizenship. First, the apathetic citizen (majority) who reproduces and participates in state-led agendas as long as it is economically profitable but will withdraw support once this should no longer be the case. Secondly, the insurgent citizen (minority) who actively resist the top-down engineering project of the state. Here, according to Saeidi, the neoliberal narrative has had normatively desirable outcomes in the sense that it has created the space for more plurality as well as the emergence of new forms of citizenship. Furthermore, in these new forms of subjectivity lies the potential for
a type of cosmopolitanism. However, in drawing on the work of Gerard Delanty, this potential, she emphasizes, is not to be found in the abstract, universal notion of cosmopolitanism but rather the idea of cosmopolitanism as a site where negotiations can develop.

Rutazibwa’s broader project, in turn, seeks to think through possibilities of international solidarity through decolonizing both the idea and practice of international assistance as well as notions of democracy. Concretely, her current research focuses on the UN-led Responsibility to Protect (R2P) agenda in which she critically explores the continuation of conventional practices of intervention despite their repeated failures to achieve their declared goals. Rutazibwa criticized in particular the lack of democracy on the level of epistemology. For critically rethinking (global) democracy in terms of genuine international solidarity and self-determination, it was necessary to start decolonizing knowledge production. The problem, for her, rests in the power hierarchies hidden in questions such as who gets to ask what kind of questions and whose voice is being heard and recognized. To exemplify she referred to a recent conference on R2P in London which sought to bring together the critics of this agenda. However, according to Rutazibwa, even the critical mainstream was quick in sidestepping the more intricate question regarding the ethics of intervention and focused instead on implementation issues. Moreover, certain types of knowledge as well as critiques, raised by many leaders and politicians of postcolonial states were a priori considered illegitimate and often criminalized. As persistent power imbalances and inequalities are not necessarily produced in politics but in epistemology, continuous colonialism can and does happen without intentionality. Hence, the normative question for her is how it is possible to make room for alternatives.

Having remained silent, the relational tree object in its debate-framing power reappeared in Chandler’s contribution. Chandler referred to the paper written by Jan Aart Scholte, well-known expert on global democracy, former Senior Fellow of the Centre. Chandler’s main argument was that, in fact, the answer that most advocates of global democracy would give to the question of whether global democracy was desirable would actually be ‘no.’ Despite the claim in favour of cosmopolitanism and global democracy, behind this sits an unspoken rejection of such grand ideas, precisely because they imply a global and cosmopolitan dimension. Instead what was being proposed in contemporary understandings of global democracy and global cooperation – in all their ambiguity – was, according to Chandler, the desire to ‘live like a tree’.

Exemplified in Scholte’s paper on a postmodern global democracy is the wish to undo or overcome modern dualisms, such as the artifice of separating humans from nature. Mirrored in this desire was the crisis of representation. There was
no real wish for global cooperation or global democracy in this postmodern understanding because working towards such a goal, Chandler argued, can only be meaningful as a modern-universal project. This can be seen in the correlation between the continuous failure of international governance and the constant, elusive desire for an unspelled-out alternative. Here, the often expressed wish to ‘rethink’ or ‘thinking differently' speaks about this problem without ever defining what it is concretely that one seeks to rethink. To highlight the limitations of such post-cosmopolitan understandings of cosmopolitanism, Chandler critically asked what else cosmopolitan citizenship could possibly be but abstract and universal.

The reluctance to actually define and spell out this different form of global democracy was precisely, Chandler argued, the secret wish to become, ‘to live like’, a tree. Becoming a tree referred to the idea of doing no harm: of never saying – and consequently never doing – anything that might actually reveal a particular, concrete notion of global cooperation/ democracy for fear of inadvertently, being exclusionary of things, beings and differences not represented by such a fixed, prospective framework. Unsurprisingly, the new advocates of democracy as becoming tree emphasized fluidity instead of structure and relational sensitivities instead of prospective thinking. Global democracy, in the sense of living like a tree and including the trees, described the normative demand for sensitivities to attachments and interactions which always unfold in the presence and in the particularity of context. The idea of such relational sensitivities of the deep interconnectedness of the world was to raise awareness of the lurking exclusions that is necessarily executed as soon as there is an attempt to conceptualise and pin down phenomena – a way of being in which a separation is always introduced and a particular, abstract version of the world is represented.

The relational object ‘tree’ then began to extend bringing new interlocutors into a debate it crucially shaped. During the Q&A session, for instance, it was highlighted that the trees in Lord of the Rings also disposed of considerable agency – linking to Mert’s use – while not being passive at all, even going to war – against Chandler’s understanding. So there still was the idea of international assistance and perhaps solidarity, as suggested by Rutazibwa, even in the post-representative paradigm of living like a tree. In a similar line, but from the opposing political perspective, the tree also brought Saeidi into the debate when she highlighted that indeed, a lot of people in the world were living like trees, with limited interference in others’ lives, until the Western interventionists came to uproot them from their lives, as it happened in Afghanistan or Iraq.
In the complex, open and adaptive system of the panel, modern binaries of representation versus relational ontology were thus undermined in the session itself. Instead of exclusionary binaries, the panel moved into the realm of co-existence: some used the notion of being a tree in an ontological fashion, that is, in a way that took the state of living a tree life seriously, whereas others took the notion to constitute a metaphor, abstracting and representing (but not actually being) a phenomenon – i.e. the problem of global cooperation – in the world. Nevertheless, as complex adaptive system, the panel was continuously co-constituted and re-shaped by the tree. The tree was thus both concept and object at the same time. In its ‘objective character’ such a concept appears in the world and as such also exerts world-making power, where usage, engagement or non-engagement is no longer fully voluntaristic or anthropocentric.

Paradigmatic for the self-causing, dynamic power of the tree was that it was eventually hard to tell where the forestry terminology had originated. But it was used still in after-panel conversations and even extended into the following session where it was decried as ‘kitschy.’ Irrespective of the judgments of tree-life, the thing was in the world. Not only had it made itself a reality but it also shaped other concepts (such as global democracy) and established a fluid network of people (panellists, audience) who were now part of this – objective – reality. As such it also transcended contexts, having travelled from Gezi Park and the protests the trees were involved in the Midterm Conference on the proceedings of a research centre on global cooperation. Although, at this point the relational object and the post-representalist paradigm it belongs to may reveal their banality.

Panel 4: Gift and Reciprocity in International Society

The fourth panel, organized by the Centre’s Research Unit 2 ‘Global Cultural Conflicts and Transcultural Cooperation’, was moderated by Michael Zürn, Professor of International Relations, Free University of Berlin. The panel dealt with the potential of Marcel Mauss’ Essay on the Gift to rethink international society and global cooperation. Each of the four panellists explored different vantage points from where Mauss’ famous study on the gift and reciprocity as well as diverse interpretations of it could be made fruitful for an understanding of current global threats such as climate change, sovereign debt crises, the so-called ‘refugee problem’ or global poverty on the one hand, but also for a refinement of our analytical vocabulary on the other.

In his presentation ‘Gifting, Indigenous Peoples, and International Relations Scholarship’ the first panellist, Morgan Brigg, Senior Lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland, and former Senior Fellow at the
Centre, scrutinized the theoretical question how an analysis of radically different epistemological perspectives such as the one of Australian Aboriginal groups can change our own conceptualization of the ‘political’. Brigg thereby asked how can our scholarly engagement with the worldviews of different cultures, of ‘different political ontologies’ and our own Western one foster ‘creative’ thinking that helps us **move beyond the ‘logic of empires, races and states’**. Comparing how the category of space is conceptualized in Western ‘logocentric and essentialist’ ontologies and how Aboriginal ‘relational and pluralistic’ ontologies understand space and humans’ relation to it, he exemplified that thinking with Mauss’ *Essay on the Gift* means more than looking at residues of gift exchange in modern societies. It means taking seriously Mauss’ epistemological interest in foreign societies and ethnographic reports which helped him and several of his followers such as, for instance, Marilyn Strathern, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Claude Lévi-Strauss to offer novel perspectives on sociality. Such an emulation of Mauss’ open-mindedness would, as Brigg suggested in the discussion, help both scientists and experts to understand and consequently solve global problems better.

In the second talk ‘The Gift of Hospitality’, **Elena Pulcini**, Professor of Social Philosophy, University of Florence, and former Senior Fellow of the Centre, explored a different trajectory the reception of the *Essay on the Gift* had taken in recent years. Taking up a moral philosophical perspective influenced by Marcel Hénaff, Axel Honneth and Jacques Derrida, Pulcini addressed how the urgent refugee problem that the European Union is facing can be better understood by taking into account gift theories on the one hand and Honneth’s theory of recognition on the other. She argued that the omnipresence of two negative emotions, fear on the side of the host countries and resentment on the side of the refugees, prevents us from finding a solution. According to Pulcini any feasible solution has to recognize the important and constitutive role of emotions for the establishment and maintenance of social relations which was also explored by Mauss. This would help us to conceptualize why the negative emotions i.e. **fear and resentment can only be countered with empathy and hospitality** from the hosts for the refugees and recognition from the refugees for the hosts. The main Maussian influence on her talk, however, was to transfer Mauss’ understanding of the gift as (1) unconditional but (2) not unilateral to the problem of the European Union’s lacking hospitality towards refugees. Hospitality, in Pulcini’s perspective, is neither a free gift that the morally superior hosts give to the refugees although they do not have to, nor is it a duty that a legally obliged party has to fulfil. In contrast hereto, offering and accepting hospitality is a risky attempt to begin a relationship of reciprocal recognition.
In his talk ‘Beyond the Idea of Contract: Analyzing International Reciprocity with Marcel Mauss’ Frédéric Ramel, Professor of Political Science, Sciences Po Paris, analyzed how an in-depth study of Mauss’ political ideas can change our perspective on the institutional aspects of international society. He argued that Mauss’ theory of the gift offers an alternative to game-theory approaches on the one hand and neo-liberal approaches on the other. In Ramel’s opinion both approaches share (1) an unjustified focus on the legal dimension and (2) an equally unjustified stress on the importance of equality. Offering three different empirical examples, Ramel, tying in with Elena Pulcini’s talk, showed that Mauss, in contrast thereto, offers a sociological and symbolic theory of international alliances and relations. In his conclusion, Ramel pointed out that (1) Mauss offers a symbolic instead of a utilitarian perspective on reciprocity, that he (2) understands reciprocity as both obligatory and voluntary and (3) that reciprocity in international relations must be understood as a delayed and indirect exchange instead of an immediately bilateral tit-for-tat.

In his open politically engaged presentation ‘Reflections on Gift and Reciprocity in International Society’ Claus Leggewie, Co-Director of KHK/GCR21 and Director of Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in Essen, offered a Maussian perspective on the Greek debt crisis. His talk depicted inspiration from Mauss’ Political Writings and John Maynard Keynes’ The Economic Consequences of the Peace both of which dealt with Germany’s debt burden after the First World War as well as David Graeber’s Debt: The First 5000 Years. Leggewie examined how the wide-spread analytical amalgamation of moral debt or guilt with economic debt or liability influences the political dealing and overall discussion of the Euro crisis and especially Germany’s and Greece’s role in it. Leggewie, however, also pointed out that any historical comparison between past debt restructuring and current situations has its faults and instead argued for the necessity to discuss impartially and unbiased about debt relief and war reparations. He thereby suggested a way of dealing with political problems on a case-to-case basis that resembles Mauss’ Socratic understanding of problem-solving.

In summary, the four presentations exemplified the sheer inexhaustible potential of Marcel Mauss’ Essay on the Gift and his other writings. His oeuvre’s polyphonic and provocative character still can and should provide a vantage point to ponder about the main questions that interest the Centre and especially the Research Unit 2. The diverse perspectives on Mauss taken by the panellists (epistemological, moral philosophical, institutional and politically engaged) also show that Mauss’ writings can be used to bring together different disciplines and standpoints.
International Courts and Global Cooperation: The Rulings of the ECHR: Lessons for the Concept of Universality

International treaties, which are agreed upon by states to set a common standard in a specific area, are one form of global cooperation. Their viability and effectiveness depend on the states’ commitment to comply with them. In general, judicial dispute settlement through adjudication is one way to adhere compliance. Although this instrument is known for more than 100 years in international law, the use of courts is rather the exception than the rule in public international law at a global level. Especially in the context of human rights, ensuring compliance relies preferably on reporting mechanisms and state / individual complaints. However, human rights courts do operate to different degrees at a regional level. Probably the most successful of those courts is the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) adjudicating cases under the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms that had been ratified by all 47 members of the Council of Europe. Lacking coercive enforcement mechanisms, the ECHR’s effectivity relies on the member states’ commitment to comply with its binding judgements. Thus, a high degree of legitimacy among the relevant national institutions and the citizens is key to preserve its role as the guarantor of human rights in Europe. And indeed, the very fact that the ECHR operates in some states de facto as a court of last instance on human rights issues highlights its reputation. The ECHR must therefore pay careful attention to national sensitivities and differences and in particular to Europe’s constitutional and cultural pluralism. One way in doing so is by developing ‘margin of appreciation’ doctrine that provides national governments under specific circumstances a certain flexibility to interpret and apply the convention’s provision.

Against this background, the roundtable discussed whether this doctrine is rather a success of human rights’ protection or a necessary tool to enhance compliance. Can the ECHR and the ‘margin of appreciation’ doctrine be considered a success story that would serve as a model for other areas of the world or as a reasonable approach to introduce a human rights court at a global level?

The roundtable, which was moderated by Markus Böckenförde, Executive Director of KHK/ GCR21, featured Marie Claire Foblets, Director of the Max-Planck-Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle and Thilo Marauhn, Professor of Public Law and International Law at the University of Gießen and Director of the Centre of International Development and Environment Research.
Different standpoints were taken by the discussants. At the onset of the discussion, three criteria that inform the doctrine were briefly introduced: i.e. the existence or lack of ‘common ground’; the presumption that member states are occasionally in a better position to assess the necessity, the suitability or the overall reasonableness of a limitation of rights; the importance of the affected right (core rights / the core of a right). Afterwards, one discussant emphasized the high relevance of the doctrine for the ECHR’s legitimacy. Though not yet applied very coherently, the **doctrine serves as a viable instrument to negotiate between the court’s task to protect human rights as effectively as possible, and its need to respect national sovereignty** and to make its judgments acceptable for national authorities. It provides the Court with a variety of push- and pull-factors, carrots and sticks, while not putting its own legitimacy at risk.

On the downside, however, as another discussant pointed out, a rather worrisome phenomenon is gaining ground on the basis of the doctrine: an **increased unpredictability of decisions that result in a vagueness of human rights standard** depending on the specific situation on the ground. It no longer reflects the ideal of ‘Justitia’ that is blind towards certain local particularities when applying human rights standards. This becomes extremely evident if religious issues are at stake. In some cases, the ECHR turns out to be overprotective of some religious claims made by the majority religion. For example in Italy, which considers itself a secular state, public schools are permitted to put up crucifixes in classrooms. According to the court, the parents’ right to educate their children in a non-religious environment and the children’s right to freedom of religion have to back down.

At the other end of the spectrum, the ECHR confirmed a provision that refused adult Turkish women to enter into lectures and examination rooms if they chose to wear a headscarf, arguing that denying her access is based on the principles of secularism and equality (Turkey). In a similar case, the ECHR also dealt with the cases of Muslim girls who were expelled from their schools for covering their head during classes. Here, the Court found no violation of the right to religion saying the girls had made an ‘ostentatious’ display. Furthermore, the ECHR also backed the radicalisation of a secular reaction against minority religion by confirming a French law that prohibits the wearing of a full body veil in the public space.

Two aspects became relevant in the discussion with the audience. First, the argument was made that the delicate balancing in politically controversial situations, as often required in the application of the doctrine, should not be the task of court and the least of an international court, but rather the one of the national legislatures. But national legislatures are rather reluctant when it
comes to the protection of minority rights that run counter to the interest of the majority of citizens. For minorities (of different groups) the ECHR often serves as a resort of last hope to protect their rights. Yet, the ‘margin of appreciation’ doctrine allows the court to return the case back to the respective countries by arguing that the national level should have better knowledge on the matters. From this perspective, however, the doctrine cannot be regarded as a success story.

Second, reasons for the perceived lack of predictability were addressed in more detail. Though this shortcoming is often associated with court decisions (according to a German proverb: In court and on the high seas, a person’s fate lies in god’s hands), two issues are of specific relevance: Cases of multipolar human rights protection and the usual political based appointments to the ECHR. The former issue highlighted the emerging challenge of human rights discourses that no longer concerns a bipolar relation of an individual who asks for a minimum protection against governmental interference. The challenge entails a rather multipolar dimension: two individuals demand the protection of their relevant overlapping rights at the European level (freedom of speech vs. protection of religious belief / integrity). Here, the ECHR is overburdened with tasks that it hardly can resolve. The latter issue refers to the qualification of some judges at the ECHR. Some countries have preferred to nominate their candidates for political reasons. Since legal certainty requires judges to share a common understanding of basic methodological parameters, lack of solid and profound legal qualification at the court makes judgments even more unpredictable, even for lawyers or legal experts.

By way of conclusion, the margin of appreciation doctrine may not offer the most effective protection technically available. But it probably serves as a means for a level of protection currently achievable in the context of implementing human rights standards.

Future Trends in Global Cooperation Research and Analysis

The panel ‘Future Trends in Global Cooperation Research and Analysis’, moderated by Dirk Messner, Co-Director of KHK/GCR21 and Director of the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), took a rather self-reflective perspective and asked how the research at the Centre could change in form and content to incorporate suggestions made during the Keynote lecture, the four panels and the roundtable. The Main questions tackled were the following: How should the Centre’s research agenda
be adjusted in the face of shifts in global power structures? Which kind of newly emerging research questions should the Centre focus on? Which of its methodological and institutional strengths should be further intensified and which of its weaknesses most urgently tackled?

From a methodological and rather self-critical perspective Daniel Haun, Professor of Developmental Psychology, Friedrich Schiller University Jena questioned the applicability of experimental methods that do not embrace or at least account for cultural diversity. Using one of the simplest experiments as his example (the presumably universal Müller-Lyer illusion), Haun proved that even testing the perception of the length of two lines leads to completely different results with W.E.I.R.D. (Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) and Non-W.E.I.R.D. participants. Reminding the audience of the positive side of experimental methods, first and foremost comparability, Haun consequently demanded a refinement of psychological experiments and argued to increase the experiments’ proximity to real situations and the life-worlds of living actors. His main request for the Centre was thus to find a new balance between the applied methodology, rather non-complex and uniform in Game Theory and Developmental Psychology, and the actual constitution of a culturally diverse and more and more complex reality.

Answering the call for methodological diversity, Siddharth Mallavarapu, Professor of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi and former Senior Fellow at the Centre, focused on the question of knowledge production by scientists and actors from different parts of the world and the observable asymmetries that, in his opinion, should be eliminated. Demanding to take into account the questions where knowledge is actually produced and how it can be translated and transferred to other places, he urged the Centre to keep an eye on local ‘micro-narratives’ and ‘micro-places’ and thereby linked back to the questions explored in panel 2 ‘Non-Western Perspectives on Governing the World’ and panel 4 ‘Gift and Reciprocity in International Relations’. Such rather ethnographic and micro-sociological narratives would, from Mallavarapu’s perspective, increase the potential of the Centre to engage in and offer solutions to current debates and global problems.

Paulo Luiz Moreaux Lavigne Esteves, General Supervisor at BRICS Policy Center in Rio de Janeiro, focused on two main changes in the global power structure that should analytically be tackled by the centre: (1) The paralysation of multilateral institutions, of the accompanying liberal order and of the latter’s claim to possess universal legitimacy, are accompanied by a simultaneous emergence of plurilateral institutions that question this universal legitimacy and substitute it with ‘relational rules’. He further (2) recognized an increasing ‘denial of power’ and an associated ‘rise of horizontality’ in international
relations that neglect the asymmetrical nature of many so-called ‘equal’ partnerships. The challenge posed by Esteves was thus how we can understand global cooperation after multilateralism in a relational world that many people believe to be devoid of power. He therefore referred to the questions explored in panel 3 ‘Is Global Democracy Desirable? Shifting Democratic Legitimacy in a World in Crisis’.

The main contribution of the presentation of Thomas Hale, Associate Professor in Public Policy, University of Oxford, was his demand, already raised by him during Scott Barret’s Keynote lecture, to take into account the omnipresence and success of actions that aim to solve global problems such as climate change. He especially urged scholars to recognize types of actions that largely remain unnoticed by political and social scientists who overly focus on international and national contracts, summits and resolutions. From Hale’s perspective focusing on actions undertaken (1) at a subnational level by cities or regions as well as on (2) those of the private sector would largely strengthen the research profile of an institution that explores the potentials and obstacles of global cooperation such as the KHK/GCR21.

Conclusively one can say that all four panellists applauded the Centre’s attempt to diversify their research beyond disciplinary, racial, gender, methodological and geographical borders. However, they all equally agreed that a further intensification of diversity regarded as a resource is obligatory for an understanding of a future which, as Messner who followed up on Esteve’s diagnosis of a ‘vanishing of multilateralism’, prophesized in his summary, will be beyond a doubt, ‘polycentric’.

Synthesizing the Findings of the Conference – The Way Ahead
Power, Knowledge and Global Cooperation: Is Diversity the Solution?

In this last session two leading experts, Jan Aart Scholte, Professor at Gothenburg University, and Michael Zürn, Professor of International Relations, Free University of Berlin, offered their views on where research on global cooperation at the centre is or should be heading for the coming years. Two intersecting issues that characterized suggestions and discussions were the need for genuine diversity in knowledge production and the problem of underlying power imbalances. The last session was chaired by Tobias Debiel, Co-Director of KHK/GCR21 and Director of the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF).
Again, as in the previous panel, the question of the desire for and actual advances made on global cooperation was critically raised. This time it was Zürn who invited the audience to follow him on a thought experiment: If someone entered the conference without any prior knowledge about global cooperation and tried to answer the conference question whether it was possible to build on it, what would the answer be? Zürn stated, the answer would be negative. However, with prior knowledge, he reminded the audience, ‘no’ was simply not a desirable answer.

Pre-empting the response to this issue Scholte pointed out that there is a research value beyond the normative question of the desirability of global cooperation in analyzing and evaluating various discourses on global cooperation. In addition to this point on values, he raised four more topics regarding the research agenda on global cooperation, reaching from purpose to substance and method through to theory. With regard to purpose he called for more self-reflexivity and genuine diversity. More self-reflexivity meant greater awareness of who is or is not doing research on global cooperation and which questions are being asked and which ones not. Self-reflexivity, in other words, linked directly to diversity, which, according to Scholte, was often reduced to regional diversity and thus missed out on such dimensions as gender, race and age. Similarly, methodological reflections should focus on rethinking the notion of the ‘global’ because it often collapsed and was reduced to the idea of something akin to ‘universal’ or ‘liberal.’ Scholte therefore suggests the Centre to start working with the notion of ‘transplanetary’ to avoid Western-centric reductionism. Working through the notion ‘transplanetary’ logically also implied a different methodological tool set that goes beyond interdisciplinarity towards transdisciplinarity. When asked to clarify Scholte explained that transdisciplinarity meant the inclusion of non-academic knowledge. These methodological innovations required novel theoretical approaches. What was needed is a theory of institutional polycentrism that would enable us to conceptually engage with trans-scalar and trans-sectoral governance, diffuse, fluid and overlapping locales as well as ambiguity.

The problem Scholte saw was that research often stopped at stating such a need whereas explorations into possibilities and challenges were still wanting. Moreover, such methodological and theoretical work needed to be put in the context of power structures since behind complexity there often was a hierarchical order at play. Taking power structures analytically into account meant the combination of discourse analysis with material factors.

Working through similar topics in his presentation, Zürn saw analogous problems regarding power and knowledge in the research agenda on global cooperation while wishing to see them addressed slightly differently.
While he agreed with Scholte that diversity was desirable, he also saw the need to base such diversity on conceptual clarity and common understandings that would form the common ground of diversity in order to build more just forms of global governance. In juxtaposition to Scholte, Zürn also criticized the tendency to look at actors and their understandings at the expense of narrative structures. Unearthing these was necessary for understanding diversity in the first place. In the same vein – and disagreeing with Scholte – he regretted the lack of ideas about the design and structure of global institutions. With regard to conceptual understandings he also emphasized the need to reflect on the way power was inscribed in the concepts we use, such as in gift or reciprocity. This meant, he pointed out, that power could not simply be the additional element one gets to once the conceptual work is done. Instead the concern for power imbalances must begin at the very basis of our thinking and knowledge of the world. Yet, when pressed on the additional need for reflecting on one’s own positionality in the concept-power nexus, Zürn riposted that what is required is a form of double self-reflexivity, in which we reflect on the consequences of self-reflexivity. This was because otherwise we get caught up in the eternal regress of reflecting on our own position and end up paralyzed, unable to do anything.

Zürn was also asked to address the question of how both diversity and the deep structures of narratives can be operationalized and used for researching on global cooperation. Here Zürn brought into play the way science is governed, and often governed by buzzwords. The danger here was that buzzwords, empty of content, take on a value in themselves. The goal should always be to question how good work gets done. Further clarifying his idea of understanding deep narratives he replied it was important, first, to understand how actors are influenced by their understanding of order and, secondly, to separate the deep narrative structures from strategic behaviours.

During the Q&A, further differences in perspective emerged with regard to more general understandings of what it meant to have a research agenda on global cooperation and the Centre’s role in it, which also tapped into the issue of diversity. It was criticized that throughout the conference the different research projects were not adding up to a collective research agenda. This was due to a reluctance to address conceptual issues as well as a due to a lack of collective research questions regarding political order and political authority. Scholte, on the other hand, saw the Centre’s advantage precisely in the absence of such constraining definitions. Rather than being characterized by a lack of coherence, he saw the Centre’s rationale in providing a constantly emerging space of contention that was able to engage a wide range of people and was thus also able to change people’s perspective and their intellectual work. He argued that this was more desirable than following a pre-set research agenda.
If previous observations regarding the notion of tree life are hypothetically extended to include this panel, then the debate is paradigmatic for the desire of wanting to live like a tree. Scholte with his post-representative idea of global cooperation positively embraces this idea and seeks to theorize through it. Here the idea to theorize through fluidity, transdisciplinarity and radical diversity is, ultimately, an attempt to turn the desire to not say anything into theory. It is the attempt to make words have no impact and no permanence so as to not let them build worlds. Even Zürn’s slightly more modern (rather than postmodern) ideas in their focus on power and self-reflexivity, provided only a negative demand for what not to do and hence do not offer an alternative to the constant awareness and sensitivities of tree life.

In this sense, the synthesis of findings and the current state of research on global cooperation correspond very closely with the policy paradigm of resilience through which global problems like climate change are currently being addressed. This idea of resilience has come to play a central role in recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the World Bank or the OECD refers to the capacity to cope with and adapt to changes. Resilience thinking, as it has even been called, therefore embraces change and sees the infliction of change as a positive value. What can be achieved through this infliction of unpredictable change is precisely the radical and post-representative openness of living like a tree. Looking for constant change through the yet-unknown diversity of transdisciplinarity combined with relentless self-reflexivity epistemologically replicates and legitimizes what is already in operation in the current policy world. In contrast to an intervention from the audience that warned of increasing policy irrelevance of post-positivist approaches, if the Centre was to follow the recommendations of this panel it would, in fact, be doing global governance (rather than advising, which is actually what has become irrelevant in a complex world).
Programme Midterm Conference

1 July 2015

Keynote: 12th Käte Hamburger Lecture by Scott Barrett
‘Good Faith Cooperation? Why Global Cooperation Sometimes Succeeds (and mostly Not)’
Discussant: Margret Thalwitz
Moderation: Dirk Messner

2 July 2015

A Look Into the Laboratory of the Research Units: Negotiating Global Cooperation

Panel 1: International Negotiations, Institutions and the Human Factors (Research Unit 1)
Producing Stability: On the Pragmatics of Multilateral Negotiations
Stefan Groth
Cognition Studies and Institutional Design
Siddharth Mallavarapu
Moderation: Daniel Haun

Panel 2: Non-Western Perspectives on Governing the World (Research Unit 3)
The BRICS and Global Order
Paulo Luiz Moreaux Lavigne Esteves
China and Global Governance: A Perspective of Chinese Legal Culture
Manjiao Chi
Plural Perspectives on Global Governance
Claudia Derichs
The Rise of the Creative Third World and the Challenge for the West
Bruce Gilley
Moderation: Nicole Deitelhoff
Panel 3: Is Global Democracy Desirable? Shifting Democratic Legitimacy in a World in Crisis (Research Unit 4)

Citizens without Conscience: Iran’s Hardliners and the Neoliberal Turn in the Islamic Republic
Shirin Saeidi

Thinking Ethical Retreat: Radical Democracy and International Solidarity
Olivia Rutazibwa

The Trees in Gezi Park: Environmental Policy as the Focus of Democratic Protests
Ayşem Mert

Processes, Publics and Decisions: rethinking ‘Global Democracy’ after the Crisis of Representation
David Chandler

Moderation: Lothar Brock

Panel 4: Gift and Reciprocity in International Society (Research Unit 2)

Gifting, Indigenous Peoples, and International Relations Scholarship
Morgan Brigg

The Gift of Hospitality
Elena Pulcini

Beyond the Idea of Contract: Analyzing International Reciprocity with Marcel Mauss
Frédéric Ramel

Reflections on Gift and Reciprocity in International Society
Claus Leggewie

Moderation: Michael Zürn

Roundtable: International Courts and Global Cooperation – The Rulings of the ECHR: Lessons for the Concept of Universality

Discussants: Marie-Claire Foblets & Thilo Marauhn
Moderation: Markus Böckenförde
3 July 2015

Future Trends in Global Cooperation Research and Analysis

Discussants: Siddharth Mallavarapu, Thomas Hale, Paulo Luiz Moreaux Lavigne Esteves, Daniel Haun
Moderation: Dirk Messner

Synthesizing the Findings of the Conference – The Way Ahead

Discussants: Jan Aart Scholte & Michael Zürn
Moderation: Tobias Debiel