'Chinese are drawn into the domestic power game'
Christof Hartmann on a twofold dynamic and the political turn in China-Africa relationships

'They cannot influence by remote control'
Legal and Africa scholar Katrin Seidel reflects on international rule-of-law engagement in emerging South Sudan

'Purism is racism on the level of language'
A talk with sociolinguist Florian Coulmas about languages, power and society

Andrés López Rivera Amazonia: Matters of Fact and Matters of Concern, see p. 16.
Save the date! Centre's upcoming public events in different cities are announced on p.23/24.
Editorial

This issue of Global Cooperation Quarterly takes a critical look at current developments on the African continent. Christof Hartmann explores issues of African agency in the context of Chinese development strategies. Katrin Seidel analyses the local limitations of international rule-of-law engagements in South Sudan. Other contributions combine personal impressions from fieldwork with reflections on research on struggles over land in Mozambique, international politics and the rights of LGBT people in Africa as well as the situation of African diaspora in Austria. The African Kaleidoscope concludes with a report by Martin Wolf on the recent Africa Film Festival on ‘Fundamentalism and Migration’ in Cologne.

In our conversation, Florian Coulmas, Senior Professor for Japanese Society and Sociolinguistics at the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, discusses the relationship between language and power. In this issue, we also introduce the new fellows at the Centre, including Maryam Deloffre, who writes about her current project on accountability in humanitarian governance. Finally, Andrés López Rivera explores threats to the Amazon rainforest on fire and alternatives to climate governance through the recognition of territories and contributions of indigenous people.

We are delighted that the Centre’s Global Cooperation Research Papers Series is now being continued (page 25). A list of new publications can be found at the end of this issue.

Enjoy reading!

Sigrid Quack

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Global Cooperation Research - A Quarterly Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 3 (October), 2019
ISSN 2628-5142 (print)
ISSN 2629-3080 (online)
The Political Turn in China-Africa Relationships

Christof Hartmann
Economic interests were the starting point of China’s more recent outreach into Sub-Saharan Africa, which began in the late 1990s. Chinese state companies invested and tried to conquer markets in many African countries. Trade and cooperation agreements were concluded both bilaterally, and since the early 2000s, also multilaterally within the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Both political and academic discourses were initially framed by the idea of a new ‘scramble for Africa’ (Carmody 2011), a fierce competition among different external actors for access to not only the continent’s precious mineral resources, but also land. A new scramble could only emerge because the hegemonic position of ‘Western’ powers, which had been established since the end of the Cold War, was now challenged by China. Africa became a theatre within a global competition between the Western powers (mainly the US) and China over economic power, finance and rule-making in global governance.

Within Africa, most interests converged around the question of whether China was going to be a qualitatively different development partner in comparison to the well-known Western countries. Researchers typically ended up by qualifying Chinese-Africa relationships as a manifestation of equal partnership or of neocolonialism. While assumptions about the ‘West’ often presented a highly homogenizing and distorted view of what many different bi- and multilateral actors did in the development, economic, and military spheres, China clearly offered a specific and alternative developmental approach to Africa. It denied providing development assistance along the lines of established international policy-based lending policies or joining humanitarian military interventions with robust peacemaking mandates. China claimed to offer comprehensive deals (trade, investment, development finance), which were equally beneficial to both African countries and China (win-win). Much research tried to substantiate these claims by analyzing specific deals (for example Sicomines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), but this turned out to be challenging both with regard to methodological questions and lacking access to key data and documents.

The assumption that we should look at the relationships between countries as ‘beneficial’ or not was also challenged by the recognition that on both the Chinese and African sides, a multitude of actors was involved. Competition between Chinese ministries and banks for market access in Africa stood in sharp contrast to the People’s Republic of China (PRC)’s official ‘unified’ Africa strategy (Corkin 2013). There were also an estimated one million Chinese who had emigrated to Africa, mostly without official government backing. But the role of agency was emphasized even more on the African side. Within the highly generalizing and normative assessments of China’s influence, Africans had typically either been seen as beneficiaries of Chinese largesse or as victims of a new wave of ‘colonization’. African states, their governments and people seemed to matter little for understanding trends, patterns or lending decisions. The massive presence of China on the African continent and the resulting complex web of relationships between different African and Chinese actors now became, without any doubt, major drivers of the new interest in a better understanding of various forms of ‘African Agency’. Mohan and Lampert (2013) or the contributors in the volume edited by Gadzala (2015) were interested in understanding how and in what ways African actors were shaping the relations with China.

The debate about African agency had started earlier, with a broader interest in Africa’s role within global governance as a site of ‘interaction, rather than one-way domination’ by powerful external actors (Brown and Harman 2013: 2; we do not discuss here the varying definitions of the concept of agency). This strand of literature was interested in the capacity of African governments to defend their interests in multilateral institutions, and in asking how collective agency might increase the policy space within institutions shaped and dominated by global actors. From this perspective, the massive ascendancy of China clearly had influenced Africa’s collective agency vis-à-vis Western institutions, as seen, for example, in reduced conditionalities of World Bank policy-based lending (Hernandez 2017). A different understanding of agency was instead concerned with the ways in which African states leverage their assumed strategic value to major powers—mainly Western states, but also the former USSR and now China—to secure resources, influence, or favor which might otherwise be unavailable to them (Fisher 2018). In this literature, agency was focused on achieving short-term, strategic goals in a context of structural dependency (Corkin 2013). One critical aspect highlighted in these debates is the need to move beyond the earlier emphasis on states as unitary actors and to look at the agency of specific elite or non-state actors. Taking agency seriously thus requires to move beyond ‘win-win’ or ‘unequal exchange’ in analyzing Chinese-African interactions.

Over the last five years we have again witnessed a widening of China’s role on the continent. The PRC’s One Belt, One Road initiative, launched in 2013, that seeks to build a transregional transportation network – a ‘New Silk Road’ – constructs ‘Africa’ as one nodal point of Beijing’s new global network, and has increased China’s geographical outreach in the continent. Security cooperation has also moved to the forefront, as
Chinese citizens became objects of terrorist attacks, potential hostages, or victims of violent populist mobilization. In the course of civil wars, Chinese economic investments and activities had to be abandoned, as in Libya, or suspended, as in South Sudan. Political stability therefore slowly emerged as a key concern of Chinese policy-makers. In the absence of an explicit ‘stabilization policy’, China had to modify and stretch its traditional policy stance, especially as instability was increasingly perceived to emanate from transnational sources, such as terrorism, refugee flows, or piracy. Despite all intentions to keep out of domestic politics, Chinese actors became the target of populist campaigns (Zambia), were perceived to support incumbent parties in electoral campaigns (Sierra Leone), or to assist contested governments to quell domestic grievances (Zimbabwe).

We observe thus a twofold dynamic: China’s role is no longer only about securing markets or resources; Chinese actors (i.e. companies or ambassadors) are drawn into the domestic power game, as being perceived to be allies of one or the other political party, or to favor particular ethnic groups. From the perspective of African ruling elites concerned with maintaining the stability of their governments and regimes or with their own survival at the helm of the state, China has become one external actor among others who might directly affect the domestic legitimacy, resource basis and strategic interactions of ruling elites. African actors will thus try to use Chinese influence for their own political advantage even if China claims to keep a low profile in governance matters. Even within a context of structural dependency, there is thus space for agency.

The particular configurations of power and interest, which enable and restrict African agency, do not only reside in the varying insertion of African economies into the international economic system and the ensuing economic interest which China might have in investment. Agency is also shaped by the regime dynamics within Africa, and the evolution of distinct trajectories of state development over the last three decades, which offer different opportunities for China to engage or to be ‘fitted in’. While China’s rise has empowered collective African agency, the specific domestic political contexts which shape the possibilities for the exertion of agency vary in line with path-dependent trajectories of regime and state development. In a neopatrimonial variant, African elites will rely on traditional strategies of extraversion to secure short term benefits derived from Chinese infrastructure; in the democratic model, political accountability will create incentives for elected leaders to take into account legitimate or more populist grievances against Chinese living in the country, while in the authoritarian-developmental model (such as in Ethiopia or Rwanda), China will serve as a source of emulation and legitimization.

References

When the United Nations admitted South Sudan into the union of nations on 14 July 20111, the then Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated: ‘Like any newborn, South Sudan needs help’2. This image has become a common discourse about the emerging African state, mainly narrated by international actors and less created by South Sudanese actors. The familial and familiar metaphor of the ‘newborn’ implies one-directional care and creates the imagination of a dichotomy of the richly experienced and the poor ignorant kin in need of care. The implicit ideas of care shapes international peace and state building including rule-of-law-promotion. To reveal (unintended) consequences of those allegories of infantilization, my research critically assesses international engagement in my empirical study on (post-)conflict constitution making by taking Africa’s legal pluralities as a point of departure.

Many well-intended international legal interventions have been built on a fatal evolutionary misconception that pre-colonial Africa was devoid of law, or that customary law was a downwind on the African state3. This
ignores that local conflict resolutions are predominant throughout the continent. It ignores that throughout history, governance claims of external actors have been contested, negotiated and adapted by African elites along power relations. As is well known, most African states were constructed by the colonial powers on the assumption that the territorial state was the supreme format for organizing polities. The artificially drawn colonial borders (recognized by Organisation of African Unity in 1964) are still violent bones of contention. Accordingly, ‘[t]here is always something for international actors to fix, always a plan that the international community should contribute something to, and always something that goes wrong and needs fixing through further intervention’. Moreover, formalization of political and legal processes are expressions of legalized hegemony through which the northern hemisphere seeks to implement certain normative concepts around the world - indeed to define what constitutes a ‘civilised’ society. The civilised-uncivilised image is embedded in Eurocentric philosophical thoughts. For example, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) declared ‘the Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling’ or G.W. Friedrich Hegel’s (1770–1831) remarked that pre-colonial Africa is no historical part of the world and has no movement or development to exhibit.

Contemporarily, at the UN level, there is growing awareness of the only limited role international actors can play and of effects that those prevailing erroneous perceptions create. The 2004 UN Report on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post Conflict proclaims the re-thinking:

Too often, the emphasis has been on foreign experts, foreign models and foreign-conceived solutions to the detriment of durable improvements and sustainable capacity […] We must learn better how to respect and support local ownership, local leadership.

However, empirical evidence indicates that this international credo has not been comprehensively translated into practice. I still vividly remember a conversation I had had during my fieldwork in South Sudan in 2013 with a very experienced judge of the South Sudan Court of Appeal, who has been serving in Sudanese judiciary for decades. While we were talking about the different challenges the judiciary faces in the emerging state situation and about the necessity of creating a hybridized judiciary that integrates local dispute resolution mechanisms, a representative from the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) suddenly appeared in the judge’s office and bowed towards the judge three times; an unusual salutation in the Sudanese context. The UNMISS representative invited the judge to an officially scheduled rule-of-law meeting on the occasion of the visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS at the UN compound. After the United Nations’ representative left the office, the judge reflected on the meaninglessness of different UN measures to promote rule-of-law such as
these formal RoL stakeholder meetings. According to him, they seemed to primarily serve to justify the UN presence and their own reporting system. He finished his reflection by mentioning that they never care about his understanding of rule-of-law and what priorities he would suggest to promote RoL in South Sudan, but that he is nevertheless grateful for the UN’s material and security support.

The judge’s statement indicates that the implementation of the international credo of local ownership proved not to be comprehensively translated into practice. The chosen path of implementing this claim in projects does not seem to be grounded and reflected in the realities of local actors. Tools such as stakeholder and regular expert meetings are important, but if local expertise and recommendations are not seriously and substantially included in decisions and subsequent actions, then disappointment and lack of local acceptance of international assistance will be created over and over again.

Finally, even though one hears in the international political and media arena a lot about, but little from such seemingly benevolently cared-for children of the Global South, many South Sudanese voices have criticised the not-on-eye-level global cooperation. For instance, a practicing lawyer and prominent member of the South Sudan Bar Association, whom I interviewed during my fieldwork in 2015, fundamentally condemned the mode of international engagement:

‘The so-called international community now has become defunct in the sense they are accustomed to doing things wrong without being corrected.

They don’t know where they are going wrong.

They cannot allow somebody with a good brain, saying, no, you are missing it […]

They don’t see things from another angle […]

They don’t know where to start in Africa […]

But starting with confusion will end up in confusion.

They have forgotten that South Sudan is an independent state […]

They cannot influence by remote control bringing money here and there’.

These comments summarize the fundamentals of the postcolonial critique on the prevalent parental care and control attitude, and exposes how international assistance is perceived by the recipients. It unveils the tension between international interventions and local ownership. The ironical tone provides food for thought regarding legitimacy of international interventions that often presupposes cultural homogeneity and imposes even artificial uniformity of contexts. It allows us reflection on whether prevalent modes of international involvement in conflict-torn settings rather threaten the idea that societal consensus derives its authority from the will of the people, when not taking the specific context as well as the proclaimed ‘local ownership’ approach as points of departure in any intervention.

4) OAU Resolution on Boundary Disputes AGH/Res. 16(1), Art. 3.
8) UN Doc S/2004/616.
9) Interview, 16 May 2015, Juba.

Katrin Seidel on this topic


Katrin Seidel is a post-doctoral research fellow in the Law & Anthropology Department of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, a fellow at Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research (2015/16), and was the Academic Coordinator of the Joint Network Rule of Law support at Freie Universität Berlin, in collaboration with the German Federal Foreign Office (2017). Based on her interdisciplinary background in Law and African/Asian studies, her research is situated at the intersection of legal pluralism, heterogeneous statehood and governance. Her current research is a comparative analysis of post-conflict constitution making in South Sudan and Somaliland.

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I bought it a long time ago in a market in Bamako, Mali: a small bronze sculpture of two bearded men holding hands. They didn’t seem to be in love or anything like that, just walking down the street, carrying bundles on their heads – but together.

I was too shy to ask the trader what the sculpture represented. I wanted it for what I thought it *didn’t* depict: a same-sex couple. When people back in my country saw it in my home, they would probably interpret the sculpture as representing a couple, but it wouldn’t mean that in the market in Bamako. I liked the reminder of how much context matters, how the simple act of holding hands could change meaning as I crossed the ocean.

But did it really? Who is to say what the artist had in mind? Maybe it was meant to be subversive. The men’s ‘traditional’ attire didn’t suggest a modern gay identity, but perhaps it was intended to symbolize the diversity of sexualities that existed in precolonial times, frequently forgotten and denied. Or maybe it did represent homosexuality, but hiding in plain sight. I loved how polysemic it was. The ambiguity gave me a little tickle.

The sculpture relates to a new research project of mine on foreign aid and the rights of sexual minorities in developing countries. More specifically, I am studying what donor countries do to support the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the Global South and what effect the aid has. For instance, what is its impact on the local human rights organizations that receive it? How does it change their strategies and priorities? What types of groups and activities does it favour? How does it affect accountability?

I am only at an early stage of this research. I have interviewed some activists from around the world, but am not yet ready to tackle the big questions. I am, however, finalizing a journal article manuscript on the crackdown on homosexuality that took place in Tanzania in late 2018. It made the international news and was widely condemned. Some donors suspended aid in response, including – surprisingly – the World Bank, though not for long. Paradoxically, the donor intervention reinforced anti-Western, anti-neocolonial and faith-based homophobic discourse in Tanzania, a country that historically has been tolerant of sexual minorities. If anything, donor countries made things worse for LGBT Tanzanians. But the donors were able to signal their virtue to their constituencies, while Tanzanian officials took advantage of the situation to signal their virtue (of a different sort) to theirs. Both sides instrumentalized the crackdown, but in different ways, and the voices of actual LGBT Tanzanians get lost.

As I look more closely at the sculpture, I wonder if I haven’t totally misinterpreted it. Instead of holding hands, maybe they are slaves shackled together? I really should have asked the trader. Social scientists, politicians and policy makers beware; the eye sees what it wants to see.

* * *

**Two bearded men holding hands**

Stephen Brown

Alumni fellow Stephen Brown is professor at the School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa. His research focuses on the intersection of the policies and practices of Northern countries with politics in sub-Saharan Africa. His current research projects deal with foreign aid and policy coherence for development, and international efforts to defend LGBTI rights in the Global South.

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Solidarity after the cyclones in Mozambique

Laura Gerken

When I traveled to Mozambique for my fieldwork this year, I knew a couple of days before I arrived that the country was threatened by Cyclone Idai, growing into a huge tropical storm. Landfall was in Sofala province in the center of the country, one day before my arrival. I, myself was based in Maputo, the capital in the far South for the first couple of weeks of my fieldwork stay, where I conducted interviews with experts on large-scale land investments and mobilization of civil society. After a week of uncertainty, when electricity and phone networks were down in the Sofala province, the extent of the destruction slowly became clear. The United Nations labelled Idai later as ‘one of the worst weather-related disasters (…) in the Southern hemisphere’, because of the large number of fatalities and destruction (https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/1034951). I met people who told me firsthand that everything in their apartments was destroyed. They came to Maputo, to get cash, as ATMs were not working in Beira due to a lack of electricity. My whole stay was accompanied by Idai, and later the cyclone Kenneth, which made landfall one month later in the North of Mozambique. Not only were tropical storms often mentioned in everyday life, when people talked about own experiences they made with storms and floods, but also in my interviews as examples for the importance to preserve the ecological equilibrium, or when interviewees talked about adaptation strategies. This helped me to get a better understanding of the ecological, social and economic interrelations in the context of my research.

Under these circumstances, what impressed me most was the large extent of solidarity among the people in Mozambique. Donation boxes for victims of the cyclone were everywhere: In supermarkets, where lists stated what was most needed and how these items could be bought as donations, in ministries, local NGOs and international organizations. Clothes and food donations were always welcomed. Also, several charity events and concerts took place in Maputo which, instead of an entrance fee, collected donations to support the people in these areas. Especially in the immediate crisis response to Idai, support and solidarity was overwhelming. As roads were still destroyed in the center of the country, donations were gathered at the port of Maputo. To prepare the containers for shipping, volunteers were urgently needed. So many people were around that they formed human chains to pack the containers. The number of volunteers increased daily and, after three days, some of them had to be sent away, because the area of the port was too crowded. All the support and solidarity accompanied me during my stay and highly impressed me. It showed that global cooperation starts on the local level.

* * *

Laura Gerken is a PhD candidate at the International Max Planck Research School on the Social and Political Constitution of the Economy (IMPRS-SPCE) with her project ‘Multilevel Dynamics of Social Movements in the Global South’ (Project duration: October 2017 to March 2021).

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Africa is not far from here

Martina Kopf

Africa is not far from here, I encounter her every day. This starts in the morning when I meet the neighbour with the fancy clothes. She is Nigerian. The kids, who she directs with great care and determination, go to school in Vienna. On the way, I get a message from a Kenyan friend on Whatsapp. She has taught English at secondary schools in Kenya, worked as senior trainer in Austria and completed her doctorate in education through distance learning at Open University. We met two years ago, when we had the world-famous writer and intellectual Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o as a guest at the Department of African Studies, where I work. Esther attended his lecture, the workshop and the reading. As it turned out, she had read all his novels. In the meantime, she has written and self-published three books on her own. In one she tells stories about African immigrants in Vienna, as she herself probably experienced every day in the restaurant she used to run (1). They are warm-hearted portraits of people who find some shelter in the restaurant from the strain and struggles to build a life here.

In fact, Africa has been here for a long time. The historian Walter Sauer begins his ‘expeditions into the African Austria’ (2) in the book of the same name with the authorities and troops from the African provinces who came to the Alps and Danube region at the time of the Roman Empire. In the video installation ‘The Letter’ Belinda Kazeem speaks of the exhibition of about 60 West Africans - women, men and children – who in 1896 attracted almost 200,000 visitors to the Prater, Vienna’s famous leisure park, in one month alone. (3) Her work’s title refers to an open letter then written by Yaaborley Domeï, one of the exposed, which the artist returned to the Viennese public from a contemporary perspective of black, feminist resistance.

At one of the monthly meetings of the Vienna African Writers Club (VAW) at our department, Victor Okundaye reads from his memories about his father, a successful entrepreneur and dignitary at the royal court of Benin, who recently died at the age of over 100. In the chapter, he remembers how his father mourned the death of his mother, Victor’s grandmother. When the author comes to the song, his father sang for his mother, he starts to sing the words in Edo, in a low voice first, getting stronger. For a moment, we are there, with him, in Nigeria in the mid-1970s.

The women who board the bus in the evening, one stop ahead of the block of flats where I live, speak Somali. Their clothes have not adapted to the dark, restrained colours many Viennese people wear.


* * *

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A few years ago a group of researchers at the Centre started focusing on political storytelling and the role of narratives for the propagation and legitimation of content across the political spectrum, across borders in discourses about identity, norms and values. In her contribution to the volume that she co-edited, Martina Kopf analyses ‘Hyènes’, a feature film by Djibril Diop Mambety who based his quite influential work on Friedrich Dürrenmatts ‘Der Besuch der alten Dame’ (‘The Visit’, 1956). Paying tribute to Mambety’s film, Lemohang J. Mosese, a unique talent of new African cinema, presented Hyènes at the Festival in Cologne (see report on the following pages). Download of ‘Political Storytelling’ is available from the Centre’s website.
Fundamentalism and migration

Film festival provides unparalleled insight into the African contemporary

(MW) | Who makes the films about Africa and what is, after all, an African film? Not a few filmmakers, as quickly becomes clear at the Afrika Filmfestival in Cologne, have come to film through their own experience of migration, to films as an art that, to say it in the words of Arnold Schönberg, does not come from ‘being able’ but from ‘having to’. Documentary filmmakers have their own practice theory. They also have their tools and move in the marketplaces of the film industry, be it commercially, culturally or publicly funded.

‘Why do you want to go to Europe?’ Adam Mensah came from Ghana to Belgium at the age of fourteen to live with his father. When he asks this question in his family’s place of origin, a multi-layered picture emerges and yes, he also meets people there who don’t want to go to Europe at all. But they notice that the Africans from Europe are always so generous. Those who can’t do that don’t even come (Ghana for You, Ghana/Belgium 2018).

It’s amazing how the filmmakers, who grew up and were trained in the West, manage to build trust with the protagonists. This also has to do with the fact that they get involved for years, that they help, mediate, advise. Participating observation? Objectivity? Where, one wonders, is the problem?

Nasib Farah came to Europe unaccompanied and without papers at the age of eleven on the run from the civil war in Somalia. In his first documentary he showed young Somalis recruited by Al-Shabaab in Denmark. In his new film (Lost Warrior, Denmark/Somalia 2018) Farah accompanies an unequal couple: the eloquent, practical Fathi from London meets the young Mohammed, who had just freed himself by fleeing from the clutches of A-Shabaab, in Mogadishu. At the request of his parents, Mohammed himself had been sent to London at the age of three and found himself in the wrong circles. His entry to Europe was repeatedly refused on the basis of his previous history. Both meet in Nairobi. Mohammed, it becomes clear, is a prisoner on the loose. Fathi considers separation. The film until its conclusion prevents this. 120 hours of film across five years: London, Mogadishu, Nairobi. He wants to give something back to his country, Farah says in the discussion. Films that want to give something back, a different kind of remittances.

The festival in Cologne initially developed out of an interest in southern Africa almost two decades ago and, like so many of these early platforms for African cinema in Europe, was motivated by the charisma of the festival in Ougadougou. But the inclusive understanding of the continent was established after a few years, according to festival director Sebastian Fischer, under whose direction a complex platform with a broad spectrum and a knowledgeable audience has grown. This review focuses on documentary films that were shown in the festival’s competition.

It is noteworthy that the festival’s chosen theme of ‘Fundamentalism and Migration’ can be tracked in a variety of ways across the diversity of African political and cultural entities. The films also scrutinize the causes, the dependencies, the power gap behind the obvious. The paradox of cinema: that the visible in the end is not what it is all about.

Jawad Rhalib became well known for his remarkable films about the slavery-like situation of North African migrant workers in Spanish mega-greenhouses and about local fishing communities in North Africa, for whom different rights apply than for the fishing fleet of international corporations (namely none). In Arabs used to Dance (Morocco, France and others 2018) Jawad Rhalib invokes the freedom and creativity in Arab culture (‘pour vous expliquer jusqu’ou on a été’) both historically and regionally. With a lot of wit and at the same
time great empathy for his protagonists, dancers, actors and transsexuals he shows the dangers of contemporary cultural productions (Houllebq, ‘Submission’), the older generation’s lack of understanding for the new purism and the much different atmosphere of the 1950s, when Egyptian President Nasser joked about the introduction of the hijab in an almost cabaret-like speech surrounded by the laughter of an upscale society (excerpts from this video on Youtube). Arab studies scholar Thomas Bauer has pointed out this compulsion to the ‘unambiguosness of the world’ (‘Vereindeutichung der Welt’, a German neologism created by Bauer) and sees the colonial dominance of Western rationality as an essential cause for the emergence of fundamentalist movements in the Arab world.

The battle for narratives is consciously waged. And the false narratives, the collective brainwashes, are the problem. That one cannot speak openly; that the much more false narratives, the collective brainwashes, are the problem. To understand that issue we have to start that dialogue and it starts with an open heart and open eyes and ears to hear what people’s stories are. I hope you enjoy the screening.

Yara Costa (video message to the audience)

The imperative of an unambiguous life, as represented by fundamentalism of every colour, is often questioned and exposed in the films. But this perspective behind the apparent also exposes the imperative in the eye of the beholder. These film’s work is ‘prudent’ and undermines the short-circuit of narratives on both sides of the camera.

Yara Costa, who has already lived in half a dozen countries, creates a horizon by entering, coming closer and staying. By doing so in the case of the Chinese workers she tracks down in Mozambique, Lesotho and Ghana, Africa seems to be absent for long stretches. Costa knew Karen, the protagonist of her new film, since the latter’s childhood. She lets herself in, steps up, lingers. In the opening scene, Karen lies in a lake, her arms spread wide, and is held on the water surface by the air bubbles that form in her wide robe. In the last scene of the film, she will slip a burkha over herself. Under each burkha it is actually people and humans and ‘they are going through their own in-coherences and complexities’ (Entre Eu e Deus, ‘Between God and I’, Mozambique 2018).

Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese goes another way. It’s not easy to talk about this movie but it’s impossible not to talk about it. In the search for that which brings movement into things, the documentary, and not unlike the social sciences in this regard, looks for patterns of movements, typical courses, connections and continuations. The description of a sequence, however, is not yet what one wants from an explanation. With this film Mosese, it seems, lives through what happens when you leave something behind (Mother I am Suffocating, This Is My Last Film About You, Germany, Lesotho, Qatar 2019). The black-and-white film, shot by a LGBTQI team, succeeds in creating a unique aesthetic and narration in a 3:4 format. Christian fundamentalism changes the mother-the-country and destroys a symbiotic world. The sufferings of a path that the film spreads out with painful visual force and the inescapable presence of a monologue suffocated with tears lead to a moment of metamorphosis when looking into a mirror in a foreign, new country.
Accountability in Humanitarian Governance

Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre

The current system of multilateral global governance, created in the wake of WWII and dominated by inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations (UN), is experiencing multiple challenges. The global distribution of power seems to be shifting away from hegemony to a multipolar system. Foreign policies such as the United States’ ‘America First’ and the United Kingdom’s ‘Brexit’ from the European Union presage not only the retreat of the very foundations of the post-WWII liberal world order, but also a system of international cooperation through bi-lateral deal making and not multilateralism. The migration crisis, climate change, and the spread of infectious diseases like Ebola have overwhelmed inter-governmental organizations and present new challenges to a system that is heavily bureaucratic, state centric, and not designed to act nimbly or quickly. Emerging powers in the Global South and global publics continually challenge the legitimacy of the liberal world order that was largely built without their input and often does not reflect their voices or interests. Global publics use new technologies and communication tools to monitor the performance of global institutions and actors and demand accountability for unfulfilled promises of justice, equality, democracy and development. Indeed this fragile legitimacy and weak accountability are common critiques of global governance institutions, and establishing and enhancing legitimacy and accountability is a key challenge (Scholte 2011).

In the lead up to the 75th anniversary of the UN, scholars, practitioners, and politicians are taking stock of the system of global governance, identifying underlying problems and challenges, and proposing reforms. These reforms often take the shape of institutional fixes—restructuring institutions like the U.N. Security Council, revisiting trade treaties, or developing new laws and procedures. However, these solutions will not fully reinvent or reinvigorate the system. In the past 75 years, global governance structures have changed. They have adapted to policy complexity, interdependence, and challenging global problems by shifting away from top-down centralized systems of governance to decentralized, community-based, or polycentric arrangements. Polycentric governance is characterized by multiple actors—including non-state actors, inter-governmental organizations, and states—with decision-making powers operating autonomously in a given policy arena. What do legitimacy and accountability look like in systems of global governance that include state and non-state actors with public and private interests? How do we ensure the legitimacy and accountability of global governance given this complexity? How do we include the voices of global publics in global institutions? How do we establish social justice and equality?

These overarching observations are what drive my research project on accountability in humanitarian governance. Accountability includes the processes and practices through which an actor reports on and answers for its conduct to those parties whom it affects (Scholte 2011). Whereas accountability is typically considered a feature of democratic governments, the rise of global actors who exercise private authority but provide public goods has led to increased scholarship on the multi-directional and complex forms of global accountability (e.g. Ebrahim and Weisband 2007; Grant and Keohane 2005).

My previous research on why and how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) developed voluntary collective accountability standards shows that in defining collective accountability NGOs developed a transnational community of values through social learning processes that created shared social identities, built trust, and fostered mutual accountability (Deloffre 2010, 2016). Collective accountability standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standard create social norms for accountability and elicit compliance through self-regulation, peer pressure, and social sanctioning. In my current project, I expand my inquiry to the entire humanitarian sector,
which I view as a dynamic system of polycentric governance.

In polycentric systems of governance, accountability is multi-faceted and diffuse. Actors such as states and NGOs do not share the same sources of authority and legitimacy, and thus, defining collective accountability requires agreeing upon shared values and goals. As humanitarian actors debate what it means to be accountable, they negotiate the relationships, objectives, responsibilities and the very functioning of the polycentric system of governance. I examine the case of humanitarian governance by asking a series of questions: which actors are shaping how collective accountability standards are defined, practiced, and enforced globally and regionally? How do (and do) collective accountability standards diffuse across levels of analysis? What are the political, social, and operational effects of these global accountability standards?

Accountability is linked to power. Accountability mechanisms such as voting, complaints procedures, and audits check the power of an actor or institution. Accountability can also empower and equalize power, transforming hierarchical relationships to horizontal relationships by increasing participation and inclusivity. From the perspective of human rights-based approaches to accountability, this potential to transform power relations is often considered a major reason to address accountability and give voice to the voiceless. My project seeks to create understanding of whether and how collective accountability standards upend or reinforce power relationships in humanitarian governance.

References


Senior Fellow Dr Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre joins the Centre from July 2019 to June 2020. She conducts her research in the Research Group ‘Pathways and Mechanisms of Global Cooperation’. Having been a Visiting Research Scholar at Temple University Deloffre will continue her research as an Associate Professor at The George Washington University, Elliott School of International Affairs. Her fields of research are NGOs, accountability in global governance, global humanitarianism and global health.
Global Cooperation in Amazonia: Matters of Fact and Matters of Concern

Andrés López Rivera

The Amazon is on fire. When the news came out, it seemed almost like an accident, a fortuitous calamity of unknown origin, much like the fire that set the Parisian cathedral of Notre-Dame aflame. And yet, the recurring forest fires in the Amazon were going on for a while, and early warnings had been already given by the scientific community. In July, Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research (INPE) warned about an alarming rise in deforestation, pointing out an increase of 88 percent in June compared to the year before. These numbers, however, were dismissed by the far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, who called the data ‘lies’ and denounced these as an irresponsible attempt to damage the image of the country. But the spike of deforestation would be dramatically confirmed less than a month later, when INPE issued new data about an alarming rise in forest fires in the Amazon. When the smoke-filled skies of Sao Paulo turned black in the middle of a Monday afternoon, the media and the international community woke up to the fact that the Amazon rainforest was burning.

The ‘internationalization’ of the Amazon

The current situation of the Amazon rainforest is to a great extent the result of a systematic dismantling of environmental and climate policies that had proved to be effective in the past. Between 2005 and 2015, the Brazilian government made major advances in combating deforestation through the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon. Under this scheme deforestation was brought to a historical low in 2014, when it registered a 70 percent decline (Nepstad et al., 2014). This success was the result of a set of policies in which global cooperation was central. The Amazon Fund was created as a REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) mechanism to raise international funds to contribute to the efforts of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. By far, the largest contributor to the fund was Norway, with US$ 1.3 billion, followed by Germany, with US$68 million. These funds were being periodically disbursed as deforestation declined. However, following the recent upsurge in deforestation, Germany and Norway decided to suspend their contributions. Not long after this, the crisis of international cooperation was further deepened when Brazil’s president went on to reject G7 aid to tackle the forest fires.

To justify his position, Bolsonaro has resorted to populist rhetoric, in a well-known trope of Brazilian nationalism, denouncing the ‘internationalization’ of the Amazon as a form of neocolonialism. The rejection of internationalism, paradoxically, refers exclusively to intergovernmental and transnational governance schemes that would allow global cooperation. This rhetoric intentionally ignores the fact that the Amazon – Brazilian and beyond – has been historically inserted in global markets: since the rubber boom of the late nineteenth century up until the commodities boom of the 2000s. This feeds into a growth model that relies on the expansion of the extractive frontier: agroindustry, oil extraction and mining, along with the infrastructure that is needed to access and commercialize these commodities.

This dependence on free trade and global markets reveals ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’
towards the Amazon – to draw on a basic principle of
cclimate change governance. The European Union is
using this interdependence as leverage to pressure
the Brazilian government to change its approach to the
Amazon. France and Ireland have already threatened
not to ratify the free trade agreement that was recently
signed with Mercosur, a South American regional trade
bloc, unless Brazil addresses the current crisis in the
Amazon. For their part, seven states from the Amazon
basin, including Brazil, have signed the ‘Leticia Pact’
as a pledge to save the Amazon. However, it is not yet
clear how this pact will translate into concrete policies
or if it will foster a more assertive regional approach.
This is something that is clearly lacking in the existing
regional organization of Amazonian states, the Amazon
Cooperation Treaty Organization.

**Beyond ‘speaking truth to power’**

The way in which Brazil’s president belies facts thwarts
democratic governance and global cooperation. When
satellite data from a recognized scientific institution
is dismissed or climate change is denied, ‘speaking
truth to power’ seems to become a futile task. In a
less blatant but equally pernicious way, extractive
industries and states mobilize serviceable experts
to continue plundering natural resources. All this to
the detriment of local populations and, in particular,
indigenous peoples whose traditional territories play a
crucial role in conserving the Amazon. In this context,
to mobilize for science is to mobilize for human rights – and indigenous rights. It is not merely ‘speaking truth
to power’, but it is first and foremost a call for justice.
This is how scientific facts link to the environmental
justice movement, bringing a gleam of hope to a bleak
picture.

It is precisely this connection between scientific facts
and environmental justice that is being put forward by
transnational alliances among scientists, activists, and
indigenous peoples from the Amazon. An illustrative
example of this is the collective work of the umbrella
organization uniting indigenous peoples from the
Amazon basin (COICA) together with a network
of scientists who map indigenous territories and
protected areas, with the purpose of quantifying their

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**Andrés López Rivera** is a PhD candidate at the International
Max Planck Research School on the Social and Political
Constitution of the Economy (IMPRS-SPCE) with his project
‘The Politics of Knowledge in Global Climate Governance’
(Project duration: October 2017 to March 2021).

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A talk with Florian Coulmas about languages, power and society

QM: Thank you for sharing your time. If we look at the US-China antagonism that seems to frame the global political economy today, one can also have the idea that hardly two languages are so different in many respects as English and Chinese.

Coulmas: Certainly true in many ways! There is one common feature however. These are both languages of very powerful countries. But the interesting difference is, that as regards the number of native speakers of some variety of Chinese and native speakers of some varieties of English, the Chinese vastly outnumber the English. As a second language however, English speakers vastly outnumber Chinese second language speakers. That’s a very important difference on the international scene.

QM: More than half of the world’s population live in cities since 2008 and more than half of the world’s population live with two or more languages in their everyday lives. Is multilingualism the new normal?

Coulmas: Being conversant in more than one language has been the normal state of affairs for the majority of the world population for a long time. However, in Western countries - and it is the West that dominates perception of virtually everything - linguistic nationalism since about the time of the French Revolution has been the name of the game. Unification, homogenization, discrimination of minorities: that was the typical agenda all across Europe, and still is in some places and more so in recent years. But not in many other countries!

QM: In political science, different levels of governance are addressed. In current instances of multilingualism, official and vernacular language may co-exist, with English as a global language completing the picture. Do we witness a weakening of the national language?

Coulmas: Yes, I think we do. This is above all technology driven, but also related to post-industrialism. Industrial society needs conformity. Mass production fosters standardization; and so does compulsory education, which leads to the homogenization and standardization of languages. The Germans insisted on homogenizing that tool to create national unity. One country, unexpectedly perhaps, that adapted this policy, was Japan; although half a century later and with much success, if you consider this a success. But now we live in the age of new media, of technologically mediated communication, where everyone can write on their display and on their smartphone with no teacher watching over their shoulder. We are seeing de-standardization of languages as a result. Reminiscent of the nobility’s use of French through the 18th and 19th century, half-baked English is now widely used by many.

QM: The ‘pluricentricity’ of languages, is this another instance of a de-standardization today?

Coulmas: Not really, for ‘pluricentric’ means multiple standards, such as Castilian Spanish and Argentine Spanish. One has to understand that this notion applies only to colonial languages that became indigenized in separate parts of the world. Portuguese is a ‘pluricentric’ language because Angolan, Mozambican, Brazilian varieties of Portuguese are quite different from Portuguese Portuguese. The same holds true of English. At one point the Americans decided they didn’t want to speak a looked down upon dialect, but ‘the American language’. It is no coincidence that Noah Webster, who gave his name to the well-known dictionary, was a great nationalist.

It is a delicate question how power and structural features of the languages work on their diffusion. English is simple. It has a very primitive morphology, which might help its adoption for various purposes. However, I tend to believe that power is more important than structure. Consider the Confucius Institutes, of which we have one here at this university. The first one was established in 1996. Now there are 500 worldwide and a target for 2020 of 1000. Maybe the young generation has a sense of what’s coming. Four decades ago, when Japan’s economic power could no longer be overlooked, the Japanese language was brought out of the exotic corner in Western universities. Now Chinese is experiencing a similar appreciation as a foreign language. Not only students interested in Chinese literature and philosophy study it.

QM: Do you think that some languages are structurally more tolerant than others?
Coulmas: Clearly no. But linguistic cultures are more or less tolerant. The Académie Française is the prototype of an institution that protects the integrity of the French language. The Accademia della Crusca in Italy is charged with similar tasks. And even if we don’t have an institutional framework, one might have the corresponding attitude which we call purism. Purism is racism on the level of language. The idea that things always change and have to adapt in order to be functional, is to be resisted, which makes this stance politically interesting. Sometimes it is easier to understand and invites more sympathy. Say, for example, Afrikaans used to be a despised dialect of Dutch until the Afrikaans speakers in South Africa decided: No, we will found an academy. That was in the 1920s, and they even erected a huge concrete monument to celebrate the independence of Afrikaans from Dutch and with it liberation from colonial rule. That is a matter of politics, not of the structure or nature of that language.

QM: How do sociolinguists research that? If you refer to the power question, you are very much on the sociological side ...

Coulmas: ... yes, power is decisive if you want to understand what the sociology of language is all about. If we turn to the beginning of our conversation, when you were talking about changes in the world population and if we look at our cities. Now in London, for example, more than 300 languages with a speech community of more than 5000 people are being spoken. In Berlin you find districts were German is decidedly in the minority. What we observe - and that has been the rationale of the sociology of language from its inception - is that decolonization and labour shortage made many people move from the south to the advanced countries of the north. Migrants carry their languages with them. Even though there is pressure to adapt and master the dominant language of the target country, they maintain their first language(s). That has created urban environments that are highly diverse, also language-wise. The principal reason for studying these new, mostly urban environments is that this kind of diversity is not flat. Where you have linguistic diversity, you have a hierarchy. And that is what sociologists take note of. Just like we have an ethnic hierarchy in our cities today. The migrants are at the bottom. There is free movement in the European Union. In a sense you can say, the Brits and the French who settle in Düsseldorf, they are not even migrants. Migrants are people hailing from poor countries.

QM: In the theory development of political science the so-called ‘practice turn’ is a current approach, much debated at the Centre. In the field of sociolinguistics you stress that research is not simply about objects but that objects of investigation are always and already constructed. Insofar as languages are always in flux - you use this beautful picture of the cloud - what is your preferred approach to research about what’s going on, let’s say in cities at the moment.

Coulmas: In the sociology of language and in sociolinguistics, Pierre Bourdieu’s idea of practice and ‘communities of practice’ has a long history, longer actually than in political science. The idea is that the objects of our research are what we see through the lens we use. There was once the idea of Ebonics. Ebonics was a name that people proposed for what is now known as African-American Vernacular English, formerly ‘black English’. The idea was the same as with Afrikaans. ‘We don’t speak a corrupted version of English, we speak Ebonics’. There we have things like double negation, which are wrong in Standard English. However, the black community eventually thought that the tangible...
advantages of being members of the English speech community outweighed the symbolic satisfaction of flying the proud flag of Ebonics. So what we look at is practice, on the one hand, ideology, on the other.

QM: Political actors produce high-frequency streams of attention grabbing messages over Twitter and at the same time the question of the reliability of those messages is arising.

Coulmas: In the sociology of language computer mediated communication (CMC) has emerged as an entirely new field of research. New norms are being established, so far without much regulation. Politicians are just trying to catch up if they want to be part of the game.

QM: Is this also a challenge for some of our analytical tools? In a super-diverse environment differences may happen more often but at the same time their potential to surprise or provoke eases off.

Coulmas: You mean, thanks to the social media we are getting used to lies and stupidities? This is surely true, but at the same time, the options to position yourself in a certain environment have been enlarged. For instance, we are looking at children. They don't have the same prejudices and norms as adults. If they see people use ‘coffee to go’ than that’s maybe the way to say it. Or if they count in Turkish in the math class, fine, why not. This greater variety comes about only by social factors: migration, urbanization and the incorporation of new technology in everyday and school life. The internet is a space we study. Twenty years ago, 70% of internet communication was in English. That has changed but there is still a hierarchy of languages. In sociological or political science journals, do we find any articles in, say, Serbian or Albanian?

QM: Several European national languages have a colonial history. And then the colonies took over the idea and were in favour of a national language as a basic element of their sovereignty as independent states. But how many languages are used for science?

Coulmas: Not many, in fact, because it is difficult to keep a language up-to-date in all fields. The epitome of the political side of this question is the EU. Here multilingualism is presented as something that we want. We have a multitude of languages and we are told that we should celebrate that. The other side of the coin, however, is that, in the spirit of linguistic nationalism, we are unable to agree on one language. There is an interesting discussion in Political Science: On one hand there is the argument, that you cannot have democracy if you don’t have a common language. Some serious people defend this position, whereas others say: look at Switzerland. Not a democracy? Look at India. Celebrated at the biggest democracy ever, where depending on how you count them between 700 and 1200 languages are spoken.

QM: Let’s finally have a look at an area that may have the potential for a future scenario. I read with great interest what you wrote about Singapore.

Coulmas: Indeed, a very interesting case. When the former British crown colony became independent, it was a huge mixture of ethnic groups. Yet, because the great majority were ethnic Chinese, one could have expected Chinese to become the national language. Luckily a far-sighted leader, Lee Kwan Yew, saw the risk of ethnic conflict as a great danger.

QM: … and already for the foundation of the state ...

Coulmas: … right, independence from Malaysia. His government pursued much more than a symbolic policy. 20 to 30 language groups were too many. So they formed four groups, Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians, that is, all sorts of ‘Whites’. This grouping had implications for education, housing policy and local administration. Over the years and nudged by these policies, people accommodated. - ‘My grandmother was Tamil. But now I am a Singapore Indian.’ - And since the Malays in the ethnic hierarchy were always the weakest, Lee Kuan Yew and his advisers decided to make English, Mandarin and Tamil ‘official’ languages of Singapore, and Malay the ‘national’ language. So the groupings were largely accepted and ethnic conflict avoided. It is always power and symbols.

QM: Professor Coulmas, thank you very much for the talk.

Interview conducted by Martin Wolf
Researchers and Themes

New Research Fellows at the Centre
with affiliation, duration of stay, and research topic at the Centre

Dr Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre
(The George Washington University)
Senior Research Fellow
July 2019 to June 2020
Collective Accountability in Humanitarian Governance

Dr Catherine Hecht
(Vienna School of International Studies)
Senior Research Fellow
October 2019 to September 2020
Inclusive International Institutions and Global Cooperation: Evolving Pathways for Sustainable and Democratic Development

PD Dr Stefania Maffeis
(Freie Universität Berlin)
Senior Research Fellow
September 2019 to August 2020
Migration as a Human Right? Philosophical and Political Contentions in Europe

Prof. Dr Jens Steffek
(Technische Universität Darmstadt)
Senior Research Fellow
September 2019 to August 2020
Global Standards of Good Governance

Imprint
Global Cooperation Research - A Quarterly
Magazine
Vol. 1, No. 3 (October), 2019
ISSN 2628-5142 (print)
ISSN 2629-3080 (online)

Published by
Universität Duisburg-Essen
Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21)
Schifferstr. 44
47059 Duisburg (Germany)
Tel: +49 (0)203 379-5230
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Editorial Team: Mouli Banerjee (MB), Martin Wolf (MW)
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Authors contributing to this issue: Christof Hartmann, Katrin Seidel, Stephen Brown, Laura Gerken, Martina Kopf, Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre, Andrés López Rivera, Florian Coulmas

Published quarterly
Webspace: www.gcr21.org
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- Filminitiativ Köln e.V.: 12 (film stills) - Mouli Banerjee 17
- Martin Wolf 12 (portraits), 14/15 (tribute to Daniel Rocha), 19, 21
- Anonymous: 23
Event Report

A Resounding Representation of the Centre’s Research

Centre’s research presented and well received at the EISAPEC 2019

(From September 10 to 14, Sophia University in Bulgaria was alive with the buzz of the latest in the field of International Relations, as academics and researchers participated in the lively, well-attended 13th Pan-European Conference on International Relations (EISAPEC), engaging with the theme of ‘A Century of Show and Tell: The Seen and the Unseen of IR’. And of course, from our Research Group Leaders to Senior Research Fellows, to several researchers who have been our Fellows in the past- our Centre was well-represented!

Katja Freistein and Philip Liste, both Research Group Leaders, presented on ‘Repetition as a Technique of Global Governing’, a project currently underway at our Centre. They suggested the need to look at repetitive institutional iterations as a window to global organizational politics. Philip Liste, in another panel, presented on the not-so-innocent facet of global cooperation: the coming together of powerful multinational corporations, offshore banks and law firms to create tax havens, to understand how transnational legal regulations operates in this space. Frank Gadinger, also our Research Group Leader, spoke in a panel on ‘Deconstructing Visual Global Politics’ on a practice-oriented approach to viewing art, through a case analysis of Edmund Clark’s exhibition, ‘Terror Incognitus’, and its emancipatory political power. In yet another paper that he co-presented with Christopher Smith Ochoa and Taylan Yildiz, they looked at the legitimacy struggle in Western democracies, between the state and internet activists in relation to surveillance. Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre, who is currently a Senior Research Fellow with us, spoke on power, hierarchies and accountability in humanitarian governance. Katja Freistein also presented on her work with Alejandro Esguerra and Stefan Groth, on micro and macro power dynamics in international organizations, and how mundane practices within them have political implications. In another presentation with Thomas Müller, she spoke on the ‘rise’ of the BRICS countries within the Global Order, and on the patterns of status rankings for states.

Apart from current researchers at our Centre, the EISAPEC also saw contributions from academics who are the Centre’s Alumni Fellows. Susanne Buckley-Zistel, an Alumni Senior Fellow, presented on the spatialization of global and local memory as well as on the Truth Commissions and how sexual violence was narrativized in Sierra Leone, Kenya and Liberia, while Alumni Fellow Kai Koddenbrock presented his work on capitalism and its production of international hierarchies in context of Western Africa, over the timeline of the slave trade to the CFA Franc currency.

The papers were invigorating and found great reception, and were representative of the great variety of original work being produced at the Centre.
Upcoming Public Events

23 October 2019
Lecture and Discussion (in German)
Was heißt 'liberale Migrationsethik'?
Prof. Dr Reinhard Merkel (Deutscher Ethikrat), Prof. Dr Volker Heins (Institut für Politikwissenschaft, Universität Duisburg-Essen). Moderation: Prof. Dr Anja Weiss (Institut für Soziologie, Universität Duisburg-Essen)
Filmaufzeichnung / film recording (GCR21_Channel)
18:30-20:00
Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen (KWI)
Gartensaal, Goethestraße 31, 45128 Essen
‘What does liberal migration ethics mean?’ Is there a right to global freedom of movement or must this right give way to the sovereignty of liberal nation states that claim a right to close their borders in the interest of the common good? Is there a specifically liberal answer to this question? Volker Heins and Reinhard Merkel discuss this in a debate.

In cooperation with KWI, NoVaMigra, Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit
Please register by 18 Oct 2019 at maria.klauwer@kwi-nrw.de.

11 November 2019
15th Käte Hamburger Dialogue
New Coalitions of Change for Just & In-time Climate Protection?
Linus Steinmetz (Fridays for Future), Dr Martin Frick (UNFCCC), Prof. Dr Maren Urner (Perspective Daily), Moderation: Prof. Dr Dirk Messner (GCR21 / UNU-EHS)
16:00-17:30
Room 2309, UN Campus Bonn, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1, 53113 Bonn
The UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 made clear that accelerating climate action is necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. ‘Fridays for Future’, as a transnationally organized movement, drives climate policy debates worldwide. Is Fridays for Future a game changer in international climate politics? How do they influence political and economic decision makers? Do they have an impact on the UN? How do they cooperate with science? And why is Fridays for Future so visible in public debates?

In cooperation with UNU-EHS and UNFCCC
Please register by 5 Nov 2019 at events@gcr21.uni-due.de or use the online registration form at www.gcr21.org.

30 October 2019
33rd Käte Hamburger Lecture
Is the Paris Agreement Working?
Prof. Dr David Victor
Professor at the School of Global Policy & Strategy, UC San Diego
18:00-20:00
Mercator Saal, Gebäude LR (Gerhard-Mercator-Haus), Lotharstraße 57, 47057 Duisburg
As a global response to the threat of catastrophic climate change, the Paris Agreement offered a fresh approach to fostering cooperation among countries to address the imminent climate crisis. By design, it is more flexible and inclusive than earlier agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol. Many analysts supported this new approach because it would be more effective. From our vantage point of today, four years later, this lecture will take stock of the evidence to assess whether it is indeed working.

Please register by 27 Oct 2019 at events@gcr21.uni-due.de or use the online registration form at www.gcr21.org.

26 November 2019
34th Käte Hamburger Lecture
Shadow Negotiators: How the UN Shapes the Rules of Global Trade to Protect Food Security
Dr Matias Margulis, Lecturer in Political Economy, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh
18:00–20:00
Campus Duisburg, LS105, Lothrstraße 53, 47057 Duisburg
Fighting hunger is a longstanding goal of international cooperation. This talk will analyse efforts to incorporate human rights and development concerns related to food security into international economic law. It will be shown that multiple United Nations agencies have intervened in global trade rule-making at the World Trade Organization in an effort to steer such rules toward outcomes that protect global food security.

In cooperation with INEF
Please register by 20 Nov 2019 at events@gcr21.uni-due.de or use the online registration form at www.gcr21.org.
Public Events (2019/20 Overview)

23/10 Migration  
in Essen
Was heißt 'liberale Migrationsethik'?
A dispute between Reinhard Merkel and Volker Heins (in German) 
in cooperation with KWI, NoVaMigra and Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit

30/10 Climate  
in Duisburg
Käte Hamburger Lecture
Is the Paris Agreement Working?
David Victor

11/11 Climate  
in Bonn
Käte Hamburger Dialogue
New Coalitions of Change for Just & In-time Climate Protection?
in cooperation with UNU-EHS and UNFCCC

26/11 Food Security  
in Duisburg
Käte Hamburger Lecture
Shadow Negotiators: How the UN Shapes the Rules of Global Trade to Protect Food Security
Matias Margulis

21/01 Migration  
in Duisburg
Global Migration Lecture
Familial Migration: Class, Gender, and Global Inequalities
Eleonore Kofmann
in cooperation with InZentIM

11/02 Practice  
in Duisburg
Käte Hamburger Lecture
Practice and Critique in International Politics: 'Engagement all the Way Down'
Marieke de Goede

Subject to changes. For newest info, please consult our website.
You are invited to follow our livestreams and share your thoughts with our team on Twitter.
We are happy to announce that the Research Paper Series is back with Research Papers No. 22 and 23 and further contributions already in the pipeline. The series development will be shaped by contributions from The Centre’s fellows and staff as well as other contributions to the Centre’s fields of research. If you are interested, please contact Dr Frank Gadinger (gadinger@gcr21.uni-due.de).

As the new visual appearance signals, the Centre has entered its second phase and is shifting the agenda to the core issues of first, Pathways and Mechanisms of Global Cooperation, and Global Cooperation and Polycentric Governance from 2018 to 2020, and second, Critique, Justification and Legitimacy as well as Competing Visions of World Order from 2021 to 2024. Papers may also usually but not exclusively relate to one of the four policy fields of the Centre: the governance of migration, climate change, peacebuilding and the internet.

Research Paper No. 22 by Wouter Werner explores the role of customary law as one of the major sources of international law, which in turn regulates global cooperation in various fields. Referring to Samuel Beckett’s play ‘Waiting for Godot’ as an intellectual inspiration, Wouter analyses a report by the International Law Commission (ILC) among other sources. The paper states that repetitions are one of the major reasons why international customary laws exist in the first place, and as Frank Gadinger, member of the Scientific Board of the Series, concludes: ‘This interesting and somewhat surprising finding highlights why it is fruitful to focus on the formation of such counter-intuitive pathways of global cooperation.’

Research Paper No. 23 by Theresa Reinold explores identity politics as a key factor for explaining the successes and failures of officially orchestrated reconciliation processes after mass atrocities. Rwanda and Burundi are presented as examples of how different approaches chosen by the respective governments have affected reconciliation in deeply divided societies. Whereas imposing a superordinate identity in a top-down process has not been very effective in either case, there is some evidence suggesting that bottom-up cooperation has been rather successful in promoting reconciliation in Rwanda. The author concludes that ‘Transitional Justice still plays an ambivalent role in both countries. Volker Heins, member of the Scientific Board, finds that Reinold ‘offers important insights in forms and outcomes of transitional justice mechanisms and thereby contributes to our ongoing research on ‘pathways and mechanisms’ of cooperation at multiple levels.’

The importance of information policy and knowledge governance in global society today is all-pervasive, and on the rise. What are its causes and effects? This comprehensive collection uses a multidisciplinary approach, with inputs from political science, international political economy, law, sociology, science and technology studies (STS), criminology, and communication studies to answer these questions. At its core is Susan Strange’s conception of the ‘knowledge structure’, which provides the theoretical framework that ties the volume together. How do we understand ownership in the age of the Internet of Things? How does the surveillance state deliver governance? How is international migration affected by information policies? With voices not just from the Global North, but also case studies from the Global South- from India to Mexico- this book is a truly global entry point into this field.


This article acts as a comprehensive introduction to a Special Issue on ‘Diaspora Mobilisations for Transitional Justice’. Both diaspora studies as well as the field of Transitional Justice (TJ) are vast and interdisciplinary. For maximizing the potential for Transitional justice in post-conflict societies, it is important to identify a framework of causal mechanisms. This is even more important for diasporas from such societies, who negotiate with their trauma from a spatial as well as temporal distance. This article builds a framework linking the two sets of actors within the Transitional Justice - diasporas and local actors- with each other. The contributions in the Special Issue bring together empirical evidence from across the globe, to complicate the binary understanding of transitional justice on the ground by including the diaspora perspective.


The Special Issue brings together fascinating insights from across the globe, in a truly transnational, in-depth view of the politics of migration. The introduction to the Special Issue by the editors delves into the surprisingly under-explored area of the politics of data collection on migration. The articles in the issue look at the Romas and the use of visual technologies for policing migrations in Europe, at the facets of refugee registration and control at Greece’s Moria hotspot, and at the dynamics of migration management. The issue also presents a great set of perspectives on the politics of space and responsibility. It has articles on indigenous peoples’ rights across the world with cases from Australia and Canada, and on the sea as a space of solidarity with regard to the ships sailing from Gaza to Greece.

Reviews: Mouli Banerjee
Selected Publications

October 2019 (received since August 2019)

What follows is a list of new publications of the Centre’s current and former fellows and staff as well as authors from our wider academic network. We publish an updated list and invite you to inform us about your recent contributions to the field of global cooperation research. The published list represents a selection of titles that we feel are substantive contributions to the field.


Research Agenda
A detailed elaboration of the Centre’s research agenda is available on the Centre’s website:
https://www.gcr21.org/research/research-agenda

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ISSN 2198-0411 (Online)
doi: 10.14282/2198-0411-GCRP-[issue]

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ISSN 2198-0403 (Online)
doi: 10.14282/2198-0403-GD-[issue]

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Every Wednesday...
... we tweet the Centre’s MID WEEK BRIEF on current affairs under the lense of our policy fields. Our twitter bird loves to cite statements from fellows and affiliated scholars as well as public figures related to our research.

www.gcr21.org 2.0
The Centre’s new website displays in a new responsive design on your portable devices and provides a new section. ‘Opinion’ invites contributions to current topics and focuses - among others - on recent developments in the Centre’s policy fields: climate, peacebuilding, migration and internet.