

Multilateral Cooperation and Organizational Complexity

Instructor: Stephanie Hofmann

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Dates and schedule:

Thursday	05 June @ Badia Fiesolana, Seminar Room 2 from 09:00 until 13:00
Monday	09 June @ Badia Fiesolana, Seminar Room 2 from 09:00 until 13:00
Tuesday	10 June @ Badia Fiesolana, Seminar Room 2 from 09:00 until 13:00
Wednesday	11 June @ Badia Fiesolana, Seminar Room 2 from 09:00 until 13:00
Thursday	12 June @ Badia Fiesolana, Seminar Room 2 from 09:00 until 13:00

Credits: 20

Outline

Over the last decades, the number of international organizations has grown rapidly across policy domains such as security, trade, human rights, cyber, or development aid. Not only have new organizations been created but existing ones also expanded their scope. In crisis management, for example, we observe not only the UN, but also the EU, NATO, OSCE, AU, ECOWAS, IGAD - just to name a few. Trade is governed through the WTO, regional organizations and many other PTAs. As a result, what has been governed through relatively disconnected international treaties and agreements before, is today subject to overlapping organizations and so-called regime complexes. In this seminar, we ask whether this growth in organizations has transformed the ways in which we think of global governance and multilateral cooperation? In addressing this question, more questions arise such as: Why have some international organizations proliferated and expanded while others have not? Which actors push for what kind of institutional change? Do we observe differences across policy domains and/or regions? We will examine these questions by reviewing advanced theoretical and empirical scholarship on international organizations.

In this seminar, we first revisit theoretical and conceptual debates on international institutions and global governance. We do so to distill key assumptions and mechanisms on which current theories might still rest. Second, we discuss different sets of institutional forms (e.g. formal and informal institutions, multistakeholder institutions) and actors (e.g. IO bureaucracy, nonstate actors) to gain a better understanding of the governance space. Finally, we turn to the recent debate on regime / institutional complexity. We examine whether and under what conditions the existing assumptions and mechanisms still hold in a densely institutionalized space. We will also engage with the questions of how different actors influence and are influenced by this complexity as well as debate what impact this complexity has on global governance and multilateral cooperation at large.

With a focus on organizational complexity, we move away from studying organizations in isolation from one another and only focusing on few rich, resourceful and powerful institutions. Instead, we will gain a more nuanced understanding of when, where and how organizations can make a difference (for a few actors or many).