

## Abstracts

*Mathias Albert/Bettina Mahlert*

### **World Society and Communication: on the Systems Theory of International Relations**

*zib*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 10-36.

This contribution seeks to provide a sociologically inspired contribution to the debate on social constructivism in International Relations (IR) in a broader sense by using an approach based on systems and world society theory to inquire how differing basic assumptions about the constitution of the social translate into differing views of the international. First, the article introduces how systems theory approaches the social and the concept of world society via communication theory, noting convergences and divergences with constructivist approaches in IR. It argues that a world society contextualization requires supplementing views of the international as a form of social structure with a semantic view of the international within the political system, and on this basis it critiques methodological internationalism in IR. The contribution concludes with thoughts on conceptual modifications to systems theory implied by this critique.

**Keywords:** IR theory, systems theory, world society theory, constructivism

*Regina Hack*

### **Deliberation as a Reaction to Protest? The WTO Dialogue Forum**

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In reaction to protests of the alter-globalization movement, the World Trade Organization (WTO) established an official forum for dialogue with civil society actors in 2001. Numerous actors from civil society have participated in the dialogue forums since then. Some hoped that the protests might have triggered the WTO to integrate civil society actors more broadly and listen to critical voices in particular. Following Iris Marion Young's critical discussion of deliberation as a means of political participation in terms of its potentials and constraints, this article elaborates how the WTO interacts with the participants and who is included or excluded. For this purpose, I examine the accessibility, the procedural openness and the inclusivity of the forum as well as the »absence of external power relations«. With these criteria in mind, I consider whether the WTO forum can fulfill the legitimating potential of deliberation, as illustrated in the following pattern of interaction: while mod-

erate critical voices are integrated into the WTO's practices, radical voices are excluded from the discourse and effectively delegitimized.

**Keywords:** deliberation, international organization, civil society, legitimation, protest

*Manuel Becker*

**Reason-based War Reparation Payments in the UN Security Council. How Procedural Rules Solve the Time-inconsistency Problem**

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The article examines whether and how procedural rules in the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), a subsidiary organ of the UN Security Council, have facilitated reason-based war reparation payments. Reason-based decisions are incompatible with regulatory capture. Its prevention, however, must be institutionally ensured if the member states make all decisions themselves. Therefore, the institutional design of the UNCC includes a division of labor between the member states and quasi-independent experts. Whereas the member states defined the general compensation rules and made the formal decisions, the experts applied those rules to the individual claims and made recommendations. The mixed-methods analysis of the institutional incentives and the compensation decisions reveals that regulatory capture was effectively constrained in the UNCC. By establishing specific procedural rules, the member states were able to commit themselves credibly to a reason-based compensation system without withdrawing from the decision-making process.

**Keywords:** international organizations, UN Security Council, functional differentiation, compensation payments, regulatory capture

*Steve Schlegel/Christoph Schuck*

**For Still by Policy the World is Ruled? On the Decreasing Significance of Critical Security Studies/the Welsh School in IR**

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This article investigates why Critical Security Studies (CSS), also known as the *Welsh School*, is losing significance in International Relations (IR). First, we analyze the framework of CSS in the theoretical field of IR. We demonstrate that CSS has attempted to strengthen normative aspects of security studies considerably. While this has contributed to a useful broadening of the dominant theories in security studies, it has also led to theoretical contradictions. Building on these contradictions, we critically assess CSS. Considering the relevance of emancipatory features in CSS, the resulting defiance of moral value judgements leads to epistemo-

logical problems. CSS, moreover, suffers from inconsistencies, due to its holistic understanding and its self-induced isolation from other theories in IR. The evolution and cautious empirical opening of CSS have led its original conceptual shortcomings to become problematic in practice.

**Keywords:** Critical Security Studies, Welsh School, Aberystwyth School, International Relations theory, critical theory

*Nicole Deitelhoff*

**Cheap Talk and Empty Words? What Remains of the »zib Debate«?**

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The »zib debate« is a success story in several respects. Perceived as the starting point for the professionalization of German International Relations (IR) in the 1990s, it was instrumental in helping German IR to establish a specific profile and make it more visible internationally. This success also had its price. For the debate, it meant abandoning its initial focus on the coordinating force of language and communication and analyzing the institutional conditions of effective deliberation instead.

**Keywords:** discourse theory, deliberation, public sphere, arguments, normalization

*Anna Holzscheiter*

**The Legacy of Arguing**

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This contribution considers the legacy of the so-called »zib debate« of the mid-1990s. This debate revolved around the relevance of communicative action and, more specifically, Habermas's theory of communicative action to the study of international relations. Searching for the remains of the notion of arguing, this contribution returns to the origins of the debate and its influence on theories about the relationship between discourse, being and normativity in international politics – both in Germany and internationally. Based on the theoretical propositions of scholars in the tradition of communicative rationality and arguing, the article contends that the »zib debate« had a profound impact on contemporary ontological, epistemological and methodological discussions. At the same time, it recalls the potential of Habermas's discourse theory to capture productive and laborious struggles over norms, values and goals that guide international politics – particularly in times of great uncertainty and transformation.

**Keywords:** discourse, communication, Habermas, contestation, zib debate

*Gerald Schneider*

**Theories Come and Go. Against the Debating Nostalgia**

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The debate over the status of communicative action in the theory of international politics has professionalized German political science. Yet, this debate can no longer shape the agenda due to the move away from meta-theoretical discourses. This contribution summarizes how the rationalist approach has evolved over the past two decades and what challenges the currently widespread empiricism poses in the social sciences. Finally, I criticize the ancillary discourses of the German-speaking International Relations community and the related protectionist efforts to revive an extinct language of science, German, at conferences and in journals like *zib*.

**Keywords:** rational choice, constructivism, communicative action, inductivism, big data

*Harald Müller*

**The Borders of »Logics« and the Logic of Borders: Modes of Communication in International Negotiations and the Legitimacy of Global Governance**

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Communicative action has been depicted as an important condition of both diplomatic understanding and good global governance. This article reviews this depiction critically. It recalls that the distinction between »arguing« and »bargaining« as speech acts refers to ideal types whose empirical instantiations are usually inextricably interwoven. Next, the hypothetical contributions of communicative action to global governance are scrutinized: these contributions are problematic because international socialization processes are hierarchized, defying the conditions of the ideal speech situation. Power changes in the international system lead to a series of value conflicts that can be mitigated and neutralized through reasonable compromises rather than through the victory of the »better argument«. In the politics of compliance, the »shadow« of the relative power of participating states is always present behind the achievement of understanding about contested norms. The function of communicative action in advancing international (or even cosmopolitan) democracy begs for a challenge, because this concept is highly doubtful given the current status of the »world of states« as well as the central precondition of global democracy, namely the existence of a global »demos«. Finally, the huge importance of justice issues in international negotiations points beyond the boundaries of rationality — communicative rationality included — at the emotional components of political behavior.

**Keywords:** communicative action, international negotiations, global governance, international democracy, emotions in politics

*Thomas Risse*

**Talk Is (Still) Not Cheap. A Comment**

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This comment contributes to a reflection of the »zib debate« on arguing and bargaining twenty years later. First, I summarize empirical research on communicative action in international politics. Second, I comment on the assertions by Nicole Deitelhoff and Anna Holzscheiter in this »zib Forum« that the empirical turn in International Relations research on communicative action has neglected the critical and normative potential of a Habermasian approach. In contrast, I submit that empirical research on communicative action in international politics can be used to criticize contemporary practices, particularly in light of the current challenges to the international, European, and domestic orders by (right-wing) populism.

**Keywords:** IR theory, arguing, bargaining, constructivism, zib debate