P01 / Regional responses to global challenges? Building global governance arrangements across policy areas in uncertain times

Topic : GLOBAL POLICY

Chair : Juan Carlos Triviño Salazar (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Second Chair : Andrea C. Bianculli (Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI))

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The Covid-19 pandemic, natural or human-made disasters, large migratory flows, climate change, rising inequality, and financial crises are examples of some of the challenges which have transboundary implications in their effects and causes. Hence, the need to provide coherent and coordinated responses to address them is becoming more and more pressing. However, across the globe, multilateralism appears in crisis given the growing skepticism about the benefits of multilateral cooperation, the discredit of liberal values, and the resurgence of power competition, among other factors. In this context, the construction of global and regional strategies to respond to these shared challenges is endangered. Yet, transnational risks defy national boundaries, which no single nation or bloc can solve on its own. They demand multilateral cooperation as a mechanism on both global and regional levels. This is a practical necessity. Furthermore, the presence of transboundary risks of different nature calls for global and regional - either supranational and intergovernmental - responses beyond the borders of the nation-state. This demand for concerted and multilateral strategies varies across regions, but also across policies and issues.

Our panel seeks to go to the heart of these global challenges by trying to elucidate which policy efforts are being put together beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Thus, we intend to answer the following questions: How are global challenges reconfiguring the role of the nation-state in the policy response to them? Moreover, one of the characteristics of transnational governance is the fragmentation of power and control between states and constellations of non-state actors and networks. Hence, a question the panel also intends to explore is which actors and networks underlay the articulation and implementation of these transnational responses. Thirdly, demands for multilateralism vary across policy areas - economic vs. social challenges, but also across sub policy fields - as these entail different risks and challenges. Are transnational responses strengthening in particular policy areas, and weakening in others? Is there variation across time? Understanding these variations across issue areas and time is important. Finally, there is a wide agreement that regions and regionalisms matter in world politics. Yet, the role of regions and regionalism in regulatory cooperation and integration remains unclear. In this respect, a question worth exploring is whether and how inter- and regional responses are being articulated. Do regions and regional powers seek to use regional strategies to complement, challenge, or contest global governance scripts?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Our panel studies the global and regional policy efforts that are being put together beyond the boundaries of the nation-state to respond to transboundary challenges. Against this backdrop, our panel looks for answers to several questions, namely: how are global challenges reconfiguring the role of the nation-state in the policy response to them? Which actors and networks are behind the articulation and implementation of these transnational responses? Are transnational responses strengthening in particular policy areas, and weakening in others? Is there variation across time? Do regions and regional powers seek to use regional strategies to complement, challenge, or contest global governance scripts? We welcome conceptual and empirical papers addressing these questions, either from a quantitative and/or qualitative perspective, and that analyze both single or comparative case studies (across time, regions, policy areas). In all, we are particularly interested in papers that can implicitly or explicitly broaden our understanding of transnational risks and harms and global governance arrangements in a context marked by both structural and transnational challenges.

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Session 1

Wednesday, July 7th 10:00 to 12:00 (008)

How do Swiss Cantons Implement International Law? Actors and Networks

Matthieu Niederhauser (University of Lausanne)

International law instruments are increasingly used as tools to tackle global challenges, but they often require implementation at the national and sub-national levels. While the implementation of international law at the national level has been largely documented, implementation at the subnational level is an under-explored process. Yet, subnational entities regularly enjoy a degree of sovereignty, which raises questions such as whether – and how – they implement international law. This paper aims to explore this question, using the implementation of the Council of Europe's 2011 Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) in Switzerland as a case study. Domestic violence is a topical issue both internationally and regionally. In Switzerland, the implementation of the Istanbul Convention is complicated by the fact that several obligations fall under the competencies of subnational entities – the cantons. To facilitate the implementation of the Convention at the cantonal level, federal actors decided to use the Swiss Conference against Domestic Violence (CSVD). The CSVD is an intercantonal conference, i.e. a mechanism allowing members of the federal and cantonal levels to discuss issues of common interest. It acts as a network of civil servants embedded within cantonal administrations who are in charge of domestic violence issues. This paper focuses on the role of civil servants and parliamentarians who participate in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. It is based on original empirical data, as 21 semi-directive interviews have been conducted with members of cantonal parliaments, governments and administrations who participate in this implementation. An explanatory typology of actors is developed, which shows that most of them use international law as a tool and as an argument to support the fight against domestic violence at the cantonal level, while others oppose the use of international instruments for tackling issues at the regional or local level. The findings demonstrate that the CSVD network facilitates the exchange of information and best practices among civil servants, but plays a limited role with regard to implementation. This paper reinforces knowledge on the implementation of international law at the subnational level.

Competition or Cooperation? International Institutions and China's Evolving Role in the Global Economic Governance

Michael Sampson (Leiden University)

Important research has emerged in recent years on the drivers of institutional creation and overlap in international governance, but few explore the strategic options available to powerful rising states when it comes to driving this change. Using new empirical material on China's strategy in development finance, we develop a framework which demonstrates that when it comes to strategies to induce institutional change and creation China possesses a greater range of options than most other states. We derive two results from this analysis that complement existing accounts of institutional change. First, China has adopted institutional use, change, and creation strategies simultaneously rather than sequentially, adopting a 'multi-front' institutional approach to achieve its objectives. These strategies are not pursued in a linear fashion, progressing from least costly to most costly over time but rather simultaneously. We conclude that pursuit of each of these strategies simultaneously improves the chances of success by reinforcing each other but that such an approach is open to relatively few countries. This suggests important qualification to existing accounts of the creation of overlapping international institutions.

(Virtual) From Covid-19 to green, digital and resilient societies? An early assessment of the congruence and effectiveness of the NGEU led pandemic reconstruction

Francesco Violi (Canterbury Christ Church University)

Matilde Ceron (European University Institute)

Carlo Maria Palermo (Centro Studi Problemi Internazionali (Sesto SG, Italy))

Unlike previous crises calling into question the sustainability of European integration and EMU, the pandemic is by nature a symmetric crisis, with little fault or moral hazard concerns justifying refusal to share the burden of the tragedy wreaking havoc across the world. However, the impact of the pandemic is far from homogeneous for outbreak severity and impact. Weaker southern economies still paying the price of austerity affecting the healthcare preparedness of are left with harsher downturns and more limited fiscal spaces for public interventions.

Against this backdrop, NGEU and SURE aim to mitigate unbalances allocating additional support to periphery and countries experiencing steeper decreases in GDP and employment. The measures overcome longtime struggles and aversion from frugal Member States, a testament to the severity of the post-pandemic reconstruction challenge and the recognition of Covid-19 as an existential turning point making or breaking prospects for transnational solidarity and integration. The stakes of NGEU well surpass the contingency of the Covid-19 crisis rendering politically acceptable jointly supporting an effective recovery and reconstructions throughout the EU. At the same time the question remains of whether: (i) the firepower of NGEU is sufficient to support the recovery and mitigate the risk of further divergences across core-periphery, (ii) the governance fulfils the needs of the fiscal void in the EMU at the forefront of the need itself for emergency instruments such as NGEU and SURE and (iii) the two allow for an effective support for the effort of the post-pandemic reconstruction and the orientation of national approaches toward the joint big priorities and challenges of sustainable, digital and inclusive societies.

The analysis aims to assess the evolution of the political debate throughout the presentation and negotiation of plans - together with the economic outlook of Member State economies - to put forward preliminary consideration on the effectiveness of NGEU along the three above-mentioned dimensions. The paper highlights the appropriateness of the instrument both in its scale and in relation to emerging weaknesses of the governance framework against the stabilisation needs of the EMU. At the same time the analysis evaluates the congruence of the national resilience and recovery plans against the conditionality of joint priorities. In doing so the analysis puts forward a scoreboard of National Recovery and Response Plans across the EU 27 against the commonly defined priorities aided by a quantitative text analysis of the proposals presented to the Member States to the supranational level. The analysis contributes an early assessment of the NGEU instruments against the reality of national implementation and divergent priorities, assessing the degree of convergence across the plans and pinpointing which countries and geographical areas fared better in translating the guidelines into investment and reform prospects. As such it provides an overview of the cross-country outlook for NGEU, together with broader consideration on governance weaknesses and the extent to which the plan is well equipped to fulfill the purpose of mitigating imbalances and fuelling a strong recovery across the continent.

NGEU; Covid-19; NRRP; EMU; EU governance

Public policy responses to global challenges: a comparative analysis of peacebuilding policies across sub-estate regions

Míriam Acebillo-Baqué (Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona)

Cécile Barbeito (Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona)

This paper tackles how peacebuilding policies adapt to global challenges such as the increase in human insecurity and forced displacement. To contribute to this main question, the research draws upon the comparative analysis of two sub-state contexts in Spain (Catalonia, Valencian Country, cities of Barcelona and Valencia) and their involvement with multilateral cooperation during the 2015-2019 period. Two overall trends frame the research. First, the research acknowledges studies showing global security worsening during last decade. This deterioration in human security that people suffer can be observed, for instance, in the number of forced displaced people around the world. In this regard, the research places emphasis on the multilevel articulation of global policy instruments affecting peacebuilding policies (notably, the 2030 Agenda, the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the subsequent Global Compact for

Migration, but also key EU policy narrative on the themes tackled by the study). Second, the selection of cases is of interest to the extent that it covers a period of time when political shifts occurred at those governance levels. Moreover, they took place within a Spanish decentralisation system with significant autonomy (in terms of relative share of public funding and competences) in international development cooperation policy definition and policy-making areas.

The framework for analysis of this research defines peacebuilding policies as encompassing public policies linked to international cooperation policy areas aiming at impacting causes or impacts created by tensions, armed conflicts and post-armed conflict situations. The definition includes looking at peacebuilding actions, but also analysing the ways in which policies address forced displacement or the role of women and young people in peacebuilding initiatives as it has been bestowed by the UN system.

Drawing upon a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis, together with qualitative analysis of policies and 20 semi-structured interviews to civil society and government representatives in the studied contexts, the research unveils some of the dynamics and challenges behind the translation and articulation of responses to global policy challenges and different governance levels. Moreover, the paper aims to contribute to bridge peace and development studies with interregional and transnational policy processes.

Do formalization, hegemony, issue specificity in regime designs matter for adopting regime forest policy?: A comparative study

Pradip Sarker (Georg-August Universität Göttingen)

Md Saifur Rahman

Forests are governed by a combination of sub-national and national as well as global and regional regimes. The international forest regime is already explained as more multi-centric and fragmented than other international environmental regimes due to the absence of any single legally binding agreement on the world’s forests. Over time, a number of such regional regimes developed policies for addressing forests in multiple ways. The regional cooperation and institutional arrangements offer a multitude of political, economic, and environmental bene?ts not readily available in local, national, or global settings. Comparative analysis encourages moving beyond the particularities of each case and identifying patterns and regularity across cases, settings and time periods. This comparative study explored the status of regional forest policy development in current stage based on the regime design structures by using the full qualitative approach. Comparative analysis widens the understanding of potential policy options – thus pushing the researcher to explain not only why certain policies were adopted, but also why others were not – and also permits the building of classi?cations and taxonomies of regulations, policies and instruments. The study poses the several research questions, includes, 1. Does formalization of the regional regime strengthen the regime forest policies? 2. Does regime design identify the hegemonic member state(s) between the regional regimes based on the exert power capabilities? 3. How do regime design and regime policy differ each other between the regime, especially, following the issue specificity under the regime? and 4. How do regimes illustrate adopted regional forest policies coherent and consistent? To address these research questions, this research employs the institutional design framework and the policy development analytical framework. The influence of the degree of regime formality (i.e. informal vs. formal treaty/convention regimes) on regime policies will be presented. Lastly, the influence of hegemonic regional powers on the regimes’ forest policies will be revealed. This study may bring more essence and adding more research value in comparative analysis, if it further through applying the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) only with adding some more cases for comparing results. QCA is a new analytic technique, which systematically compare differences and similarities of configurations of variables between a set of cases and inductively explore data and develop explanatory models.

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Session 2

Thursday, July 8th 10:00 to 12:00 (008)

(Virtual) Can Asia finance its way out of COVID-19: Role of Regional Financing Arrangements under the Global Financial Safety Net

Bhavya Gupta (Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy)

To overcome the adverse supply-side and demand-side impacts inflicted by COVID-19 on the economy, countries have pumped massive amounts of liquidity into the system in the form of direct income support, moratoriums on loans, concessional lending to small and medium enterprises, and so on. Since countries are confronted by budgetary constraints, they have tapped multiple sources for augmenting their liquidity, including (1) international organisations, such as the IMF and World Bank; (2) regional organisations, such as the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; (3) bilateral swaps; as well as (4) their own international reserves. Together, these four components comprise the ‘Global Financial Safety Net (GFSN)’, a concept that evolved in response to previous economic and financial crises in 1997-98 and 2008.

Asian economies are quite susceptible to the contagion effects of global economic and financial crises. Since they suffer from the ‘original sin’ problem – an inability to borrow in their own currencies (B. J. Eichengreen & Hausmann, 2005) - they borrow in other stronger currencies, predominantly the dollar, and witness rapid capital outflows to safe havens as global uncertainty mounts, thereby putting downward pressure on their currency and balance of payments. This further erodes confidence in their financial health, and they face increasing difficulties in accessing liquidity from global markets.

In order to mitigate some of these economic and financial risks, southeast Asian economies (ASEAN + 3, comprising 10 ASEAN countries and Japan, China, and South Korea) have established a regional financing arrangement (RFA) called the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), launched in 2000 as a series of bilateral swap arrangements (later multilateralised in 2010), and the Asian Macroeconomic Regional Office (AMRO), a regional surveillance agency, to augment the limited fiscal and monetary capacities of member countries.

In the context of the economic fallout of COVID-19, this paper aims to analyse the individual and regional responses of ASEAN + 3 countries to mitigate the economic downturn induced by the coronavirus pandemic. In undertaking this analysis, the paper intends to point out the transboundary (and oftentimes unintended) impacts of one country’s domestic economic policies on another. Consequently, it provides an articulation of the advantages of using RFAs over individual domestic policy responses, by looking at other RFAs such as in Europe and Latin America. However, regionalism in Asia is highly contested and unbalanced, and the power dynamics underlying Asian countries are also reflected in the structure and composition of the regional financing entity. We proceed with deciphering the political economy of regional financing in Asia, addressing questions such as which actors and interests underlay the articulation and implementation of policies framed by the RFAs, focusing on the competition between larger economies such as China and Japan, and how they are being used by different countries to challenge or contest the established global economic architecture, composed of the US as the financial centre and the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and the IMF) as the dominant pillars of the GFSN.

(Virtual) Sociocultural integration of Filipino migrant nurses: Findings from the Triple Win Project (TWP) Implementation

Racquel Helena Abagat (Philippine Overseas Labour Office - Embassy of the Philippines Berlin)

Health work migration and the issues that surround it such as the global shortage of nurses have initiated policy formulation and research among and between countries. In fact, this has also paved way for global public policies such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) to highlight the importance of international cooperation on the governance of international migration. Given that some countries demand for health professionals such as doctors and nurses, bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) between countries with oversupply and undersupply of workers emerged. This study focused on how health work migration as a response to a global challenge transcends to the individual through integration. Recognizing the need to assess and better understand how one of the major key players in migration adapt to the destination country, this study aimed to determine and assess the sociocultural integration of the Filipino migrant nurses in Germany hired through the Triple Win Project (TWP), a BLA on the recruitment of qualified nurses between the Philippines and Germany. Using the human and social capital theories, this paper explored the importance of five indicators (language proficiency, social contacts with native population, circle of friends, participation to organizations, and ethnic identification) to the nurses' sociocultural integration. This study employed qualitative research where the focus is mostly about the perspectives and experiences of Filipino nurses with regard to their integration. To gather primary data, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 Filipino nurses who were part of the pioneer batch and those who have been living in Germany for a minimum of two years. Interviews with the TWP implementing agencies were also conducted to determine the integration policies they are conducting. Secondary data were also obtained to conceptualize the TWP processes and their statistics relevant to the study. Results show that although the indicators affect their integration, the degree of the nurses' sociocultural integration varied due to some other external factors like their interests and experience. The integration policies and activities conducted by the TWP are also perceived helpful by the nurses but can still be improved. Some of these are the inconsistent integration plan and not uniform recognition processes of the nurses which they think posts a significant impact of their integration. To improve the nurses' sociocultural integration, the study recommends a more structured, comprehensive, and coordinated integration plan for the nurses hired through the TWP.

(Virtual) The Role of universities in Science Diplomacy at European and Global levels: The Case of Switzerland

Tatyana Bajenova (European University Institute)

The term "science diplomacy" (SD) has been increasingly in the limelight within both academic and policy-making spheres. However, its definition requires further conceptualization. One of its main defining characteristics is involvement of state actors, while SD conceptualization from the standpoint of non-state actors is not common. At the same time, the activities of universities seem to be crucial to the success of SD. Therefore, this study aims to determine why and how Swiss universities engage in SD at national, European and global levels. It is based on the analysis of documents and website materials of Swiss organizations engaged in SD; participant observation of online events related to SD; conducting semi-structured interviews with representatives of Swiss universities and other organizations, engaged in SD; social network analysis using Gephi software in order to visualize the involvement of Swiss universities in transnational networks at European and global levels.

The case of Switzerland was chosen taking into account its high level scientific achievements and long-standing tradition of SD. Switzerland occupies leading positions according to the internationalization of education and scientific research, including percentage of universities and scholars taking part in international networks. Swiss SD is now institutionalized as a valuable component of the Swiss Foreign Policy. One of its main tools is Swissnex, a network of science and technology offices and counselors at the Swiss representations abroad which support relations of Switzerland with the foreign innovative centers. According to one of the conceptualizations of national SD approaches, Switzerland concentrates on promotion of scientific interests, international scientific cooperation and bilateral relations. Exerting influence in the world politics or to deal with global challenges is not their main priority which is understandable taking into account a small size of a country and its neutral status in international affairs (Flink and Schreiterer, 2009). However, this paper shows that Swiss universities play an important role in SD not only with regard to national needs, but also European and global ones. At the European level, Swiss SD is not only often seen as a model, but Swiss universities can be also seen as objects of the European Union (EU) SD. Although the EU is Switzerland's most important partner, the negotiations over the Swiss status in the EU Framework Research Programme provides an interesting case of SD, which shows how scientific cooperation is used by the EU in its foreign policy. At a global level, Switzerland (in particular Geneva) is headquarters for many international organizations, such as UN agencies, dealing with "global challenges", and serves as arena for generation of a global discourse related to SD, including in collaboration with Swiss higher education institutions. Thus, this study contributes both in empirical and theoretical terms to the scholarly debates related to the SD as a concept and practice.

(Virtual) Analyzing an External Crisis from a Network Perspective: the Response to Cyclones Idai and Kenneth

Carlos Bravo-Laguna (Leiden University)

This paper will examine the humanitarian response to Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, which hit Southeastern Africa between March and April 2019. Idai and Kenneth left millions of civilians in need of assistance and became the tropical cyclones in the South-West Indian Ocean with the highest death toll in decades. Nevertheless, these natural disasters did not gain much political salience in Europe, unlike other threats with the potential to affect the European Union Member States directly. Hence, this article will pay particular attention to the extent to which EU Member State and supranational bodies coordinated their response with the non-governmental and non-EU governmental members of the network that managed the recovery efforts in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. With this purpose in mind, this study will combine social network analysis with several semi-structured interviews with high-ranked officials serving in governmental and non-governmental organizations that were involved in the humanitarian response. More specifically, this article will use an Exponential Random Graph Model (ERGM) in order to test a series of relational hypotheses concerning the drivers of formal and informal tie formation, as well as regarding the overall effectiveness of the crisis network. For their part, interview-based findings will provide relevant empirical insights into the operation of EU-led interventions aimed at combatting external crises with an epicenter located in a region far from the European Union borders.

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Session 3

Friday, July 9th 14:00 to 16:00 (008)

Review the community or transnational dimension in the model public security action to be fabricated in the perception

Yves Patrick MBANGUE NKOMBA (University of Yaoundé II, Faculty of Laws and Political Science)

Paul Edouard MESSANGA EBOGO (CERDAP)

Albert Richard MAKON MA MBEB (University of Douala)

For nearly a decade, the States of the Lake Chad Basin have been confronted with the rise of violent extremism embodied by the jihadist group Boko Haram (Seignobos, 2014). The extension of the activities of this organization and the human and material consequences have led the riparian States to Lake Chad to implement a common security policy from 2015. In order to fight against the root causes (Ranstrop, 2016) of this threat and strengthen the already existing control mechanisms over time, a multilateral policy (Bagayoko-Penone, 2019) with a socio-economic component was undertaken at the end of 2018 by the African Union Commission and that of the Lake Chad. This involves the establishment of a "Regional Strategy for the stabilization, recovery and resilience of areas of the Lake Chad basin affected by the Boko Haram crisis" (LCBC & AUC Commissions Report, August 2018). If this aims to generate a set of socio-economic programs for training young people, de-radicalization, poverty reduction, effective governance through social cohesion, peacebuilding, etc. it comes up against the resilience of the Boko Haram group (Mandjem, 2020) whose abuses continue to be part of a logic of destabilization of this community space in retaliation for government policies, values, and in a logic of conquest, partition, establishment of a caliphate. Therefore, how does the resilience of Boko Haram's acts reshape the efforts of the Regional Stabilization Strategy put in place by trans-regional actors in the LTB? This reflection sheds light on the delicate equation of responses to be provided to the regional risks and challenges facing these States. Thus, this threat leads these
multi-level actors to review their response strategy, which forces them to build mechanisms that further induce more concerted transnational public action to face not only the transnationalization of this Boko Haram phenomenon, but also to the increase in attacks over time.

Thus, the present reflection based on the observation of the field of study, will be made use of a triangulation (Surel, 2015) through the exploitation of documents such as reports of meetings at the top and the analysis of reports of national and international institutions.

The Regional Governance of Immigrant Reception: Mercosur before the presence of Venezuelans in South America

Juan Carlos Triviño Salazar (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Andrea C. Bianculli (Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI))

Since the 2000s, MERCOSUR, the Southern Common Market of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, established different mechanisms supporting the mobility and protection of intraregional migrants, as in the case of the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement. However, the current socio-political collapse of the post-Hugo Chávez regime in Venezuela represented a major challenge to this approach as millions of Venezuelans emigrated to neighbouring countries in the region. In this context, MERCOSUR has faced important pressures to steer governance arrangements that respond to the migration of Venezuelans based on a human rights approach. Against this backdrop, our paper looks into the role of MERCOSUR in the

regional governance by asking how and why has (not) the regional organisation reconciled top-down (i.e. nation-states) and bottom-up (i.e. civil society and sub-national governments) approaches to immigrant reception? By looking into Mercosur, the paper contributes to assessing whether and how the regional level works as an adequate regulatory mechanism where states and constellations of non-state actors and networks cooperate in the response to common regional challenges derived from human mobility. Our question is highly relevant as concerted and multilateral responses to migration based on a human rights approach have been, until the recent approval of the 2018 Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, elusive at a global scale.

Regionalism, regional tensions and (un)Gendered Covid-19 responses in sub-Saharan Africa

Matt Barlow (University of York)

Jessica Omukuti (University of York)

Jean Grugel (University of York)

Equitable governance of the Covid-19 pandemic is essential, not only to meet the global health challenges but also to support a return to growth. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), regional organisations have been quick to highlight the additional challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic presents for already vulnerable groups, including women and girls. But their capacity to shape national level action to protect investments in women and girls, in the face of budgetary constraint, has been much weaker. This paper discusses the tensions that are emerging between the approach adopted by the African Union, African Development Bank, and the East African Community which advocate for greater gender sensitivity in pandemic responses and national level policies.

Across SSA, Covid-19 has negatively affected women and girls, particularly in areas of health, including sexual and reproductive health, education, employment and wellbeing. Regional organisations have expressed their concerns that Covid-19 is exacerbating gendered inequalities, putting at risk the capacity of the region to meet the SDG gender targets by 2030. Our research points to wide ranging tensions generated by the gap between, on the one hand, gendered pandemic and post-pandemic strategies at the regional level, and, on the other, national responses. We posit three reasons for this. First, there is limited funding available to governments to respond to the pandemic; second, the choices governments make indicate that gender equality has not become a priority of governments during the pandemic in the areas of health, work and education; and thirdly, regional actors continue to lack policy traction in national level politics. We conclude that whilst there has been a coherent strategy in support of a gendered pandemic response by multi-level regional actors, national level policies remain largely unaffected by it, leaving women and girls vulnerable to being ‘left behind’ once the recovery from Covid-19 begins.

The Missing Link? Regional organizations and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Axel Marx (KU Leuven)

Sukmawani Bela Pertiwi (Binus University)

Charline Depoorter (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)

Michiel Hoornick (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to address, by 2030, global challenges such as poverty, hunger, or climate change. Although the implementation of the SDGs is predominantly country-led, the Agenda acknowledges that the transboundary nature of these challenges calls for the involvement of other actors, including regional organizations. Regional organizations can facilitate the operationalization of global goals in local contexts and foster coherence between countries’ responses to the SDGs without impeding on state’s authority, thereby reinforcing global governance of the SDGs.

Research has however overlooked the role of regional organizations in SDGs governance. In line Panel T16P01, aiming to understand the policy efforts put in place beyond nation-states’ boundaries to respond to global challenges, this paper answers the following question: what is the role of regional organizations in the global governance of the SDGs? We conceptualize the SDGs as a goal-setting governance model, contrasting with rule-making and norm-setting models. Goal-setting involves identifying common problems, engaging relevant actors, and capitalizing on their respective resources to reach common goals. It emerges from the increasing complexity and interlinkages across issue areas and number of actors involved. We distinguish four potential roles that regional organizations can play in the goal-setting model. They can formulate a vision on the goals and translate them into context-specific goals and policies (translating role),

support the implementation of goals by mobilizing resources (supporting role), coordinate member states' efforts in the implementation of the goals (coordinating role), and monitor and report on member states' progress on the goals (monitoring role).

Yet regional organizations differ in their degree of institutionalization and sociocultural, political and economic contexts, which determine their potential to fulfil these roles. To better understand the actual role of regional organizations in SDGs governance, we conduct a comparative case study on the European Union and ASEAN. Although the EU and ASEAN are considered as advanced examples of regional organizations and are not representative, they can serve as examples for others to engage in SDGs governance, and have potential to steer further progress on the SDGs. Methods for this case study involve document analysis from primary and secondary sources, including policy documents from EU and ASEAN institutions and their member states, voluntary national reviews on the SDGs, and interviews.

We argue that the role of regional organizations in SDGs governance is currently underdeveloped and could be strengthened. Both the EU and ASEAN are involved in the governance of the SDGs, yet they fulfil the four roles to different degrees. While the involvement of the EU in the SDGs is seemingly increasing since the new Commission, we make recommendations for both regional organizations to strengthen their role in SDGs governance by improving coordination mechanisms and fostering learning effects, more specifically through the European Semester for the EU, and through the High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue and the ASEAN Forum on the SDGs with National Development Planning Agencies for ASEAN. We argue that the goal-setting model can be applied to address other challenges that regions face.