

Jakobi, Anja P.

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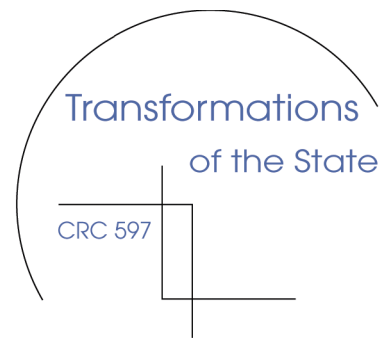
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TranState Working Papers

POLICY NETWORKS IN
COMPARATIVE POLITICS AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:
PERSPECTIVES, TYPOLOGIES
AND FUNCTIONS

ANJA P. JAKOBI

No. 94

Universität Bremen • University of Bremen
Jacobs Universität Bremen • Jacobs University Bremen
Universität Oldenburg • University of Oldenburg

Staatlichkeit im Wandel • Transformations of the State
Sonderforschungsbereich 597 • Collaborative Research Center 597

Anja P. Jakobi

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Anja P. Jakobi

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Universität Bremen

Sonderforschungsbereich 597 / Collaborative Research Center 597

Staatlichkeit im Wandel / Transformations of the State

Postfach 33 04 40

D - 28334 Bremen

Tel.: +49 421 218-8720

Fax: +49 421 218-8721

Homepage: <http://www.staatlichkeit.uni-bremen.de>

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I review existing approaches to network analysis in comparative politics and International Relations (IR). I argue that the theoretical and empirical exploration of global policy networks in IR today can benefit from systematically taking into account the literature that has emerged in comparative politics in the 1980s and 1990s. To show the relationship between both fields, I compare three aspects in research linked to networks, namely the analytical perspectives from which networks are examined, network typologies, and the functions of networks. Finally, I outline three areas that are likely to enrich future IR research on networks: interest representation in networks, typologies of global policy networks and the methodology linked to their inquiry.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| PERSPECTIVES ON POLICY NETWORKS | 4 |
| Perspectives on Networks in Comparative Politics..... | 5 |
| Perspectives on Networks in International Relations | 6 |
| Conclusion..... | 7 |
| TYPOLOGIES OF POLICY NETWORKS | 8 |
| Network Typologies in Comparative Politics | 8 |
| Network Typologies in International Relations | 9 |
| Conclusion | 11 |
| WORKING AND FUNCTIONS OF POLICY NETWORKS..... | 12 |
| Working an Functions of Networks in Comparative Politics | 12 |
| Working and Functions of Networks in International Relations..... | 14 |
| Conclusion | 16 |
| FUTURE RESEARCH LINKED TO GLOBAL POLICY NETWORKS | 16 |
| CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK | 22 |
| REFERENCES..... | 24 |
| BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE | 27 |

Policy Networks in Comparative Politics and International Relations: Perspectives, Typologies and Functions

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, policy networks have been the subject of many important studies in International Relations (IR).¹ In the most positive view, they are assumed to enable global governance in complex matters or to widen participation in international policy-making processes (e.g. Dingwerth 2004, Slaughter 2004a). While IR has only been addressing this issue for a few years, comparative politics has dealt with networks for a long time and has developed a multitude of concepts. Early discussions were theoretically grounded on debates about pluralism and corporatism, later supplemented by the emerging relevance of the European level of policy-making (Jordan and Schubert 1992:7-11, Rhodes 1997:29-32, Börzel 1998:256, Héritier 1993b, Héritier 1995, Dehousse 1997). Given the very different approaches and concepts, network research in comparative politics was labeled ‘Babylon’ (Börzel 1998) already more than ten years ago. In IR, this Babylonian extent of research cannot be determined, as this paper will show.

Research on networks has several important implications for research on the state and changing statehood: First, networks represent a phenomenon that is clearly linked to the emergence of non-state actors participating in policy-making. This is particularly obvious when conceptualizing the modern state as ‘de-monopolized’, becoming a manager of authority in contrast to its former role as central and sole source of authority (Genschel and Zangl 2008). IR has only begun recently to assess the role of networks in global politics, which turns networks, second, to an important means for the internationalization of policy-making. Taking together, networks are an element of both the privatization and internationalization of a transforming statehood. The review of this research is also substantiated by the very positive view on networks in IR in contrast to findings that determine only a relatively low or very conditional effectiveness (compare Slaughter 2000, Slaughter 2004b, Reinecke 1998, Reinecke 1999, Reinecke 1997, Reinecke and Deng, 2000 with Nölke 2000, Nölke 2003). Expectations on networks as new form of governance are thus high, while empirical evidence seems to be more difficult to pinpoint. In this context, a review of basic concepts and a comparison with research in other fields of political science might help to overcome some existing blind

¹ I thank the participants of the INIIS-Colloquium, in particular Kristina Hahn, and my colleagues from the research project ‘Internationalization of Education Policy’, in particular Alexander Nagel, as well as two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. Michael Dobbins provided valuable support in language editing. Any remaining errors are, of course, my own.

spots in research: It is only reasonable to assume that comparativists have something to say to current network research in IR. Yet it is remarkable that, although both comparative politics and IR share a growing number of research interests (see e.g. Russett 2003), the linkage to earlier network analyses in comparative politics is astonishingly weak in much IR research on networks. There are numerous case studies on global networks, which also often differ in the conceptions of what a network is (Slaughter 2000, Raustiala 2003, Koenig-Archibugi and Zürn 2006, Dingwerth 2004, Keck and Sikkink 1999).² However, researchers cite traditions such as those of transnational relations in the 1970s as an important point of departure. References to the literature in policy studies or other fields are rarely given.³ Since the discipline of political science already has a large strand of research on networks, it should be assessed whether and, if so, how the debate in comparative politics can enrich IR research.

In this article, I therefore systematically compare approaches to network analysis in both sub-disciplines. I argue that IR and political science as a whole could benefit from systematically taking into account the literature that has emerged earlier: It would not only provide insights on some methodological questions – such as typologies – but it could also be a way to continue working on problems that comparative politics was dealing with – in particular assessing the effects of networks.

To arrive at these conclusions, I analyze three different aspects linked to research on policy networks (see table 1): First, I assess perspectives on policy networks: Why do policy networks catch attention and what is the main interest linked to their exploration? Investigating these perspectives allows us to observe commonalities and differences in research on policy networks, which is particularly important since the term is used with very different meanings. Second, typologies of policy networks are examined, inquiring what is actually meant by policy networks and which different kinds are assumed to exist. Analyzing this dimension allows us to identify similar or different types in comparative politics and IR. Typologies can be useful to guide research, hypotheses and findings across different areas in both fields. Third and last, I focus on the functions that policy networks have in the different research traditions and examine the purpose that

² I do not intend to give an overview on these case studies here, but I mainly focus on two prominent and theoretically oriented concepts which have been elaborated on in detail and influenced much subsequent research: Reinecke's concept of transnational policy networks and Slaughter's concept of transgovernmental networks (e.g. Reinecke 1998, 1999, Reinecke and Deng 2000, Slaughter, 2000, 2004a, 2004b). For subsequent research on transnational policy networks, see for example Nölke (2000, 2003) and Dingwerth, (2004). For subsequent research on transgovernmental policy networks, see e.g. Raustiala (2003).

³ See Raustiala (2003: esp. 19-23). Reinecke (1999) refers to Börzel (1998), also Nölke (2000, 2003) considers concepts of comparative politics.

policy networks are expected to serve and how. Analyzing this dimension allows us to assess similar or different expectations linked to the rise of networks in the two research traditions. Finally, I compare the different dimensions and outline some areas for further research.

Table 1: Dimensions for a Review on Policy Networks

| Dimension | Main Question |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Perspectives on policy networks | Why are policy networks an important object to study? |
| Typologies of policy networks | Which kind of policy networks exist? |
| Functions of policy networks | What are purposes and effects of policy networks? |

The logic of the three dimensions is to examine the background of network research (perspectives on networks), the kinds of networks identified in the literature (typologies) and the contribution networks are expected to provide in terms of policy-making (working and functions). These categories are interrelated and not necessarily clear-cut: They are derived inductively from the literature. Other authors have used categories that were based on schools (Anglo-Saxon versus German, see Börzel 1998), or they have referred to theoretical concepts underlying a network analysis (Lang and Leifeld 2008). Often, methodological questions have been part of such reviews (Lang and Leifeld 2008, Adam and Krisie 2007), since network analysis is strongly linked to methodological questions, but can also contain theoretical assumptions, for example a theory of resource exchange. In this paper, I would like to take a step back to a more abstract level, comparing the two sub-disciplines and asking why networks are the subject of research, what we assume to find when analyzing them, and how we expect them to work. This comparison, I argue, shows that the discussion on networks in IR is only in its beginning, and that it can still widen its focus to new perspectives, types and functions of global policy networks. In particular the development of a systematic typology could be a fruitful step in comparing networks and their effects across different international policy fields.

In this paper I categorize literature as part of comparative politics depending on whether it focuses on the national or on European networks. In IR, authors usually assume a global reach of the networks, even if not all countries are included. Focusing on national and European versus global networks is not only a question of geography, but sharp differences also exist between these two spheres in politics and polity: While a national and European government usually may refer to hard law, this possibility is largely restricted in international politics, implying a need for alternative governance instruments. Moreover, national and European politics usually follow principles of representative democracy, which is not the case on the world level. Consequently, global

networks can also be used, in principle, for a more participatory form of global governance.

Finally, before starting the analysis, a further conceptual issue should be clarified: In this article, I define networks as an established pattern of interaction between different actors that are interested in a common subject matter. This formal definition subsumes the various and differing definitions of networks that will be presented in the following. Moreover, from this formal point of view, networks have always been part of the policy process, as groups and coalitions are well-known parts of politics, and much research had found ‘networked’ policy-making without labeling it with this term (Jordan 1990). From a more substantial perspective, policy networks provide an alternative view to closed and non-fragmented policy processes (Thatcher 1998:392, Jordan and Schubert 1992:11-2). The first studies on policy networks in comparative politics developed against the background of government studies. From the 1950s onwards, the American notion of ‘sub-government’ emerged, a term for the de-centralized interaction of government and private actors. Researchers assessed ‘agency capture’ and ‘iron triangles’ in interest representation among Congress members, bureaucrats and interest groups. The three groups were dependent on each other, needing resources as access to policy-making, information or support of the clientele. From a pluralist account, Heclo assessed ‘issue networks’ as part of the American policy-process, a larger group that consisted of government, industry, but also press or other actors and that was constantly exchanging about policies (Heclo 1978, Rhodes 1997:32-35, Jordan 1990:319-25, see also Jordan and Schubert 1992:12-4).⁴ In contrast to the American study of sub-governments, the English tradition of network research is linked to neighboring disciplines such as organization studies and involves the idea of a policy-making community. Central to this tradition is the development of a fragmented nature of government, including new forms of interagency links across different levels and with different actors (Rhodes 1997:35-45). An important difference is the relatively strong emphasis on private actors and interest mediation in earlier studies, compared to issues of governance that have become more central over time and predominate today. As we will see in the following, research on networks has developed far beyond its initial starting point.

PERSPECTIVES ON POLICY NETWORKS

The term ‘network’ can be applied to very different analytical units. The lowest common denominator in comparative politics conceives networks as ‘a set of stable relationships which are of non-hierarchical and interdependent nature linking a variety of

⁴ Van Waarden as well as Jordan and Schubert review the American tradition extensively (Van Waarden 1992, Jordan and Schubert 1992).

actors, who share common interests with regard to a policy and who exchange resources to pursue these shared interests acknowledging that co-operation is the best way to achieve common goals' (Börzel 1998:254). This is, however, not a consensual definition and it still leaves much space for a variety of networks to be investigated to different ends: Networks can be treated as dependent or independent variable in research designs and they can be analyzed with the aim to explain a member's behavior or a given political outcome (Schubert 1995:224, Adam and Kriesi 2007). Network analysis is also linked to policy analysis, since it provides this strand of research with a complex model of policy-making (Héritier 1993a:16-7, Pappi 1993, Schubert 1995:223-5).

Perspectives on Networks in Comparative Politics

There are at least three very different ways of conceiving policy networks in comparative politics: First, networks can be conceived as public-private relations. In that sense, networks represent a meso-level concept that links the micro-level of analysis – the role of interests and government in a specific policy process – to the macro-level – the issue of power in a polity. Research analyzes processes by which institutions manage their relationships (Rhodes 1997:29,12). Börzel (1998) labeled this field of research as the 'Anglo-Saxon school of interest intermediation', whose common interest has been related to the question how interests are pursued under a specific government type, or, more generally, how state-society relations are organized. Van Waarden's characterization of networks as 'types of state-industry relations [with ...] a more enduring linkage pattern based on an interdependence of the various actors' provides a good example for this strand of research (Van Waarden 1992:31). Second, research in this tradition can also be restricted to vertical or horizontal linkages of government entities only. In this case, research focuses on how government and its governance are organized (Schubert 1995:226-231). A third approach is a governance perspective: The main difference to the Anglo-Saxon school is the emphasis on questions that span beyond government studies and interest representation: 'While the analytical network concept describes the content of and factors leading to joint policy-making, the concept of networks as inter-organizational relationships focuses on the structure and processes through which joint policy-making is organized, i.e. governance' (Börzel 1998:259). From such a macro-perspective with regard to governance, there are only three basic ways of governing a society, either in a hierarchical way, by market exchange or – as a sort of intermediate – by networks. The background of this earlier governance perspective in comparative politics is the analysis of an increasing complex and less hierarchically manageable society which constitutes a problem for the capacity of political activity; this results in an increasing reliance on private actors in public policy-making. 'These changes have favored the emergence of policy networks as a new form of governance [...] which allows

governments to mobilize political resources in situations where these resources are widely dispersed between public and private actors' (Börzel 1998:260). In this context, networks are characterized as 'a *specific* form of public-private interaction in public policy (governance), namely the one based on non-hierarchical coordination, opposed to hierarchy and the market as two inherently distinct modes of governance' (Börzel 1998:255, emphasis in original). In this function, networks can overcome problems linked to bargaining among actors, as they provide an arena for common problem solving and additional linkages between different organizations and individuals (Scharpf 1993). Nonetheless, institutionalized networks also contain well-known problems of other governance modes, such as structures of conflict, resistance to change or a lack of legitimacy (Börzel 1998:61-3).

In sum, comparative politics has applied several perspectives to networks, ranging from networks as a means for the inclusion of private actors in the policy process, to intergovernmental contacts and to governance beyond market and hierarchy.

Perspectives on Networks in International Relations

The distinction of focusing on interest mediation or on intergovernmental contacts is particularly important when comparing research in comparative politics with research in IR: In the latter field, these distinctions are mostly conflated into the comprehensive term of 'global governance'. Literature is clustered around the question how far states and international institutions can manage a world that is increasingly characterized by economic and social globalism, while effective policy-making is still strongly attached to national territory. A basic and common starting point for IR research is thus the assessment that political problems have become complex and internationalized, so that the nation state alone cannot solve them (e.g. Zürn 1998, Raustiala 2003:7, Slaughter 2004b:4,8, Reinecke and Deng 2000:2, Koenig-Archibugi and Zürn 2006, Coleman and Pearl 1999, Rosenau 1997, Nye and Donahue 2000). States can react to this development by creating new modes of cooperation and governance, global networks being one of them (Keohane and Nye 2000).⁵ Hence, although the cases are different, both comparative politics and IR start with the finding that the state 'does not do it alone' – either because the state is not alone, or because it is incapable of doing so. Global and national policy-making is a fragmented process, and networks tie the fragments together. The conceptions of networks differ on whether non-state actors should be an integral part of a networked order and, if so, which role they would have to play, and two – partly overlapping, but distinct – ways of conceiving global policy networks can be found,

⁵ Zürn conceptualizes networks as a specific form of international institutions, besides international organizations, regimes and constitutive principles (Zürn 1998:176).

The first strand underlines the emergence of global public policy, a shift from national policy processes to the global sphere. According to this logic, globalization has created a need to reconfigure ‘internal sovereignty’, the governmental capacity for effective policy-making on its territory (Reinecke 1998:54-8). Global public policy is international cooperation around specific issues, involving either those state agencies that have the best position to deal with the global issue or the delegation to non-state actors concerning a specific policy process (Reinecke 1998:88-90). Such networks are conceptualized as a reaction to a globalizing environment, and governments as well as international organizations are expected to use them to fill existing ‘gaps’ in global governance, areas in which global activity is needed and not yet effectively established (Reinecke 1998:228, also Reinecke and Deng 2000:9-10).

Besides this understanding, a second strand of research on global policy networks assumes that a large part of international policy-making can still be carried out by states themselves or by parts of them. The state is conceived as a disaggregated unit that collaborates with foreign counterparts to establish an international order in the specific issue-area (Slaughter 2004b). Slaughter defines networks as ‘a pattern or regular and purposive relations among like government units working across the borders that divide countries from one another and that demarcate the “domestic” from the “international” sphere’ (Slaughter 2004b:14). A system governed by global networks would involve several of them, including governmental officials and, partly, also supranational institutions (Slaughter 2004b:15-6). From this perspective, governmental actors create a web of different international relations, and establish global policies without following foreign policy. This perspective is explicitly distinct from the first in that it treats global policy networks as solely transgovernmental, not transnational networks. Policy networks in that sense rely on governmental exchange. Business or non-governmental associations are mostly kept separate from that realm, and their inclusion in the policy process is seen critically (Slaughter 2004b:9, 240,262-3). The transgovernmental perspective is still strongly linked to the state apparatus, and sees networks as being a possibility to establish governmental policy-making beyond its territory.

Conclusion

The perspectives on policy networks have much in common in comparative politics and IR (see table 2): In both strands of research, networks are linked to a changing role of the state and changed policy-making processes. The state is just not the only decisive actor - it remains an important one, but obviously it is embedded in a structure and exchanges. Despite this common ground, however, there are important differences: probably due to the longer duration of research conducted in this tradition, policy networks are more nuanced in comparative politics and linked to very different tasks such as in-

terest representation, intergovernmental relations, or network governance as a macro-perspective. In International Relations, ‘global governance’ embraces different understandings of global policy networks, ranging from those that include private actors and are characterized by interest representation to those that are intergovernmental only, including or excluding governmental organizations. Here, IR could possibly benefit from developing more coherent strands of network research, e.g. those dealing with interest representation versus those dealing with transgovernmental networks only.

Table 2: Perspectives in Comparative Politics and International Relations

| Sub-discipline | Perspectives |
|-------------------------|--|
| Comparative Politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Changing Role of the State as Starting Point- Interest Mediation Perspective- Governance Perspective |
| International Relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Changing International Setting as Starting Point- Global Governance Perspective |

TYPOLOGIES OF POLICY NETWORKS

Policy networks can come in different shapes and sizes and they differ in terms of duration. In particular the participating actors have been the focus of interest in comparative politics, but comprehensive typologies also include issues such as the power structure or resources. Authors have developed numerous typologies and I will thus restrict myself to show five different types (for others see e.g. Rhodes 1997, Börzel 1998, Adam and Kriesi 2007, Van Waarden 1992, Jordan and Schubert 1992). The selection is not to be meant representative and complete, but to focus on different possible ways to conceive typologies. In particular, I present one general typology and four more specific ones that concern interests within the network, levels on which networks operate, the actors involved and explanations derived. So far only a few typologies have been created in IR – without even labeling them as such. I will present an overview of existent global networks and then elaborate on two prominent concepts: transnational networks and trans-governmental networks.

Network Typologies in Comparative Politics

As one way of dealing with networks in comparative politics, Van Waarden defines policy networks as an ‘overarching characterization of public-private networks’ (Van Waarden 1992:31). Based on a review of network conceptions, he presents a comprehensive and complex typology with seven dimensions of policy networks, namely actors, functions, structures, institutionalization, rules, power relations, and strategies. Only some examples should be repeated here: Actors can be either individual or corpo-

rate, numerous or small in number or functions can range from mere interest representation to information exchange or coordination. The typology offers a very comprehensive account, and not every analysis of networks can include all aspects mentioned (Van Waarden 1992:33-49, see also Schubert 1995:233-4).

Rhodes, together with March, developed a typology including a continuum ranging from the policy community to the issue network. Dimensions such as membership, integration, resources and power are crucial for the classification (Rhodes 1997:44). By their focus on the specific actors and interests involved, these typologies go beyond the mere focus on the structure of a network. Moreover, Wilks and Wright (Rhodes 1997:42) choose a classification that additionally distinguishes several levels of policy-making. Accordingly, they conceptualized different networks linked to these levels.

Interested in the role of networks for policy-making processes of state governments in federal countries, Benz develops a systematic typology that focuses on interorganizational contacts by individuals. He distinguishes whether the actors are political generalists or specialists and whether or not these networks involve not only public but also private actors. The result is a four-cell matrix that classifies transgovernmental networks (Benz 1995:196-200). This distinction can also presume a different logic in the network itself: Based on a general interest in networks as part of the policy process and with explanative potential, Adam and Kriesi develop a systematic typology that tries to unify different approaches to network analysis. They use two dimensions linked to ‘distribution of power’ and three ‘types of interaction’ to create a six-cell matrix with network structures. Each cell of the matrix is then linked to a specific manner of policy change (Adam and Kriesi 2007:133-5, 143-6). This kind of typology explicitly links the inquiry of networks to an explanation of policy outcomes, and does not need to be substituted with an overarching theoretical framework the way other typologies need to (Adam and Kriesi 2007:148).

Network Typologies in International Relations

The small selection of network typologies presented above already denotes that comparative politics devoted much effort to developing typologies. A very different situation predominates in research on networks in IR: Here, typologies of networks are widely unknown; authors usually restrict themselves to describing what they understand as networks. As one of the most comprehensive accounts, although against a background of policy studies, Stone (2008) published a list of international networks, distinguishing five kinds of global policy networks that can act together and have a varying influence on different stages of policy-making: She listed transnational advocacy-coalitions that consist of NGOs, activists and other actors whose activities are mostly based on moral arguments. Business networks and associations form a group for deep-

ening economic relations, guaranteeing market exchange and for favorable political conditions. A third group, transgovernmental networks or public officials, have an important executive position. A fourth kind of networks, the public-private-partnerships, have a corporatist function while, finally, knowledge networks and epistemic communities process specific policy issues and provide expertise. They usually overlap with other kinds of networks or build alliances with actors as governments or international organizations (Stone 2008:31-2).⁶

The most prominent elaborations of the role of networks in world politics are concerned with transnational and transgovernmental networks. In both cases, authors have a substantial understanding of the term ‘global policy network’, they are explicitly concerned with questions of governance and they link networks to a specific understanding of how world politics should deal with globalization. Based on research on global public policy (Reinecke 1997), authors conceive global policy networks as ‘transnational policy networks’, or ‘global public policy networks’, involving tri-sectoral participation from government, business and civil society. A specific typology has not been developed.

In contrast, transgovernmental networks involve exchange of a state’s sub-entities with foreign or supranational counterparts. Based on the work of a network, Slaughter distinguishes ‘information networks’, ‘enforcement networks’ and ‘harmonization networks’ – without attempting to construct a typology (Slaughter 2004b:19-20, see also Raustiala 2003): Information networks bring together participants to exchange information and best practices, but also to provide technical assistance. Enforcement networks support the enforcement of common regulations in countries with weaker capacity or less experience in the specific regulation. Harmonization networks, finally, are brought into place to ensure common regulatory standards, often in relation to international agreements.⁷

In sum, typologies have not been a major research effort in examining global policy networks. There are categorizations of possible types of non-state networks, such as

⁶ In this list, Stone unified different stands of research: Non-governmental organizations have been discussed in their role as advocacy-coalitions, or as part of a norm life-cycle (Keck and Sikkink 1999, Finnemore and Sikkink 1999). International corporations and their networks have been subject of much literature on globalization (e.g. Keohane and Nye 2000:22). Transgovernmental networks have, for example, been identified as a source of convergence in different areas of regulation (Raustiala 2003). Transnational partnerships have been established in fields as diverse as labour rights, environment or trade (Dingwerth 2008), and epistemic communities have been identified as a source for policy change (Haas 1993, Haas 1992).

⁷ In an earlier analysis, Slaughter presented a different typology that was based on the example of economic regulation and conceptualized two different types of networks (Slaughter 2000:179).

civil society networks, business networks or epistemic communities. Focusing on state involvement, it is possible to basically distinguish transgovernmental and transnational networks, the latter being divided into different subcategories (information, regulation, harmonization). Compared to comparative politics these types are less elaborated and no attempt to link specific kinds of global networks to a specific outcome has been made so far (see table 3).

Conclusion

Linked to the existence of typologies, the situation in both parts of the discipline is very different: Comparative politics has faced a vast array of typologies, while they are virtually unknown in IR. To what extent should this part of network research also be further developed in this sub-discipline? To answer this question, it is also important to acknowledge difficulties that arose in comparative politics: Linked to terminology, the categorization of networks proved to be a major problem, since different names did not always refer to different concepts, and different concepts did not always have different names (Rhodes 1997:42, Jordan and Schubert 1992, Jordan 1990, Van Waarden 1992:49). Thatcher brought forward a skeptical assessment of network typologies, listing three main difficulties linked to them: First, the dimensions underlying typologies are often difficult to operationalize and not easily transferable across cases. Second, the number of dimensions can be so high that they are practically non-applicable in empirical research. Third, if the number of dimensions is kept low, non-comparable and non-exhaustive categories are often chosen, partly resulting in a high number of ‘intermediate cases’ in empirical research (Thatcher 1998:395-6).

Despite their potential weaknesses, typologies represent an important element of research on networks, linking inquiries across different policy fields and constituting a potentially influential independent variable for explaining policy outcomes. An ideal typology would contain several possibilities of forming a global policy network, for example distinguishing the structure and the available instruments, and it would try to deduce from these features to a specific policy outcome, ideally with a general applicability across policy fields. The lack of such typologies in IR thus denotes a lack of a potentially unifying piece in researching global policy networks and their effects. For developing such typologies in IR, finding a sort of ‘middle way’ – which means defining a common ground of typologies that are not over-complex and that do apply terms consistently – would be the most promising strategy. In particular the link between typologies and policy outcomes is a field that has been treated with modest results by comparative politics (see Börzel 1998, Thatcher 1998), so that IR could also make important contributions with a view to comparativists here. Moreover, Stone has pointed to the fact that different types of networks can be more or less crucial along the different

policy stages: Transnational advocacy-coalitions and business groups are important in the stage of agenda-setting. Epistemic communities are important at the policy formulation stage, while transgovernmental networks also play an important role in the execution of policies. Finally, transnational networks relate to different stages of policy-making (Stone 2008:31-2, also Reinecke 1998:90-1). Mapping this theoretical approach empirically and across policy fields could be an additional task yet to be carried out in IR.

Table 3: Typologies in Comparative Politics and International Relations

| Sub-discipline | Typologies |
|-------------------------|---|
| Comparative Politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Large efforts to create typologies- Typologies involve different dimensions, as type of actors, their properties, relations, levels of policy-making- No common ground on which typology to use |
| International Relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Creation of network typologies does not take place- Authors usually speak of different conceptions when referring to a global policy network |

WORKING AND FUNCTIONS OF POLICY NETWORKS

After having outlined perspectives on networks and types of networks, the question remains how the network operates and what its political function is. While the perspectives on policy networks to some extent already predetermine some functions, there is a different complexity of their analysis across comparative politics and International Relations.

Working and Functions of Networks in Comparative Politics

Depending on the level of abstraction linked to governance issues, the functions of networks in comparative politics are manifold: On a micro-level, van Waarden lists functions as channeling access to decision-making processes, consultation and information exchange, negotiation or resource mobilization, and coordination of independent actors (Van Waarden 1992:33-4). A further assumption concerning the working of networks from a governance perspective is that they are based on resource exchange (Börzel 1998:256). For example, networks can provide ministries with external experience to formulate adequate policies, or private actors can credibly promise to solve existing problems without governmental regulation (Schneider and Janning 2006:122-3, 131-4). Negotiations, trust, and communication are also important elements of networks, in particular since they often focus on a common goal to achieve, representing more than the aggregation of the individual exchanges (Benz 1995:194-5, Mayntz 1993:45-47). A

central feature of policy networks is consensus-building, and, accordingly, actors in the network need to be able to act strategically, to negotiate and to make compromises with other actors.

Negotiation as a key element of networks can still take on different forms, either as hard bargaining or as problem solving. According to a rational choice account, the former would imply a form of negative coordination and problem solving would mean positive coordination towards a common goal (Mayntz 1993:48, Scharpf 1993:69). Moreover, policy networks provide a rather stable framework for repeated interactions and space to acknowledge legitimate interests of the other actors. They thus offer the possibility that actors do not exclusively strive to maximize their utility only, but that they feel obliged to pursue common goals – as long as this does not mean obvious costs to them. This is more likely if preferences are unclear, network members do not primarily see themselves as representing a specific organization and its interests, and are not bound to a specific mandate (Mayntz 1993:49-51, 53-5).

An argument that links the existence of networks to the supply of reliable information, and thus includes normative elements, was put forward by Majone (1997): With the rise of new EU agencies that mainly have a coordinative function but no regulatory capacities in a strict sense, he conceived networks as bearers of reputation. Following his argument, the growing complexity of many regulatory needs is accompanied by a high value of reliable information, that neither policy-makers nor the administration can generate. Creating a network of national and European stakeholders that can deliver reliable information becomes crucial. While the incentive to act strategically and to deliver only information that is useful for the own purpose is existent, a network structure resembles repeated games, in which stakeholders will face negative consequences after cheating. In that sense, upholding a reputation within the network is one of its decisive components and results in more reliable information for policy-makers.

From a macro-perspective of governance, networks work as an intermediate form between market and hierarchy. They combine a large number of autonomous subjects (comparable to markets) with the capability of hierarchal order to pursue defined goals in a coordinated way. In the meantime, networks can avoid problems linked to hierarchies and the negative externalities of markets (Mayntz, 1993:43-4, Scharpf, 1993:61-80).⁸ Moreover, the participants of a network can also be crucial for its success: Net-

⁸ Benz, however, is sceptical on whether networks are always capable of solving problems that the market or the hierarchy cannot solve. Networks emerge as a reaction to formal organizations' specific deficiencies, but this does not mean that they can carry out these organizations' original tasks completely. As the market and hierarchical organizations do, networks are specialized on some functions and neglect others. To achieve successful coor-

works of experts have a higher chance to find a rational solution than networks where a logic of representation prevails (Mayntz 1993:52-3).

In sum, networks represent an important structure in settings where decision-making suffers from equal but interdependent actors with diverging preferences. For the individual actors involved, they provide a forum to increase their influence by being able to interact efficiently and rather independently with other fellow colleagues beyond the formal settings. Moreover, such networks can reduce insecurity with regard to the counterparts and create trust. Crucial information can be exchanged and attached to a specific, reliable actor. Finally, networks can provide a forum where actors can search for common solutions without being in a formal bargaining process. This can increase the number of proposals, and it can also result in common norms on how a specific problem should be dealt with and which forms the shared background of the formal procedures (Benz 1995:194-5, 200-1).

Working and Functions of Networks in International Relations

While comparative politics has mainly focused on functions of governance in and by networks, showing a large complexity of analysis linked to the internal structure of networks, IR links the function of policy networks to two broad categories that are mainly linked to the external relations of the network: a) a governance function, and b) a legitimacy function. The former is comparable to some discussions in comparative politics, while the latter is particularly important in a setting of world politics, where legitimate – i.e. democratic – decision-making is a difficult problem to solve.

Conceptualizing transnational networks, Reinecke and Deng argue that, in contrast to horizontal organization, hierarchical governance has problems in processing information across sectors or countries and in operating with this knowledge in time, in contrast to horizontal forms of global organization as they can be found in firms or non-governmental contexts (Reinecke and Deng 2000:9-22). The ‘strength of weak ties’, which refers to network theory in sociology (Granovetter 1973, 1983), is one feature of such networks: They bridge across different contexts and have the potential to unify actors that are usually working separately on a common issue (Reinecke and Deng 2000:xxi). Against this background, global policy networks are seen as being linked to six different functions: They pursue global agenda setting, develop standards, and coordinate knowledge dissemination in a given area. Moreover, they may establish market correcting initiatives, support compliance with international initiatives and can increase public participation in global politics (Dingwerth 2004:2-3, based on Reinecke and

dination, the decisive moment is not the existence of a network, but its combination with other governance institutions (Benz 1995:185-6).

Deng 2000:27-64). Networks are also meant to supplement the existing system of international institutions (Reinecke and Deng 2000:xiii). Moreover, the structure of global politics, its reliance on national politics and of international organizations' hierarchical organization creates problems of legitimacy because there is no structural access for non-state actors. One solution is to delegate as much as possible to the lowest administrative level where bureaucracies and democratic control are already implemented. Further, the participation of non-state actors in global networks helps to overcome these problems of legitimacy on the global level. As Reinecke states, '...it becomes immediately obvious that the involvement of non-state actors contributes to a reduction in the democratic deficit' (Reinecke 1998:101).

Both governance and legitimacy are conceptualized differently in the context of transgovernmental networks: Linked to governance, they can create convergence by spreading a common view of problems, by harmonizing or by ensuring compliance with a specific model. They can enable the export of specific regulations from one country to another. Networks disseminate credible information and they can provide non-formal, but explicit standards, such as benchmarks or best practices. They can build capacity in specific areas, enhance further cooperation and manage compliance if countries are willing, but unable to satisfy international agreements. Despite these various functions of international government networks, they also harness the power of national institutions since they implement the international outcome (Slaughter 2004b:171-95). These activities vary by the type of networks: Harmonization networks contribute to establishing the same standards and regulations, also leading to convergence among states (Slaughter 2004b:167, Raustiala 2003). Enforcement networks support the enforcement of common laws and regulations, in particular in states that have implementation difficulties (Slaughter 2004b:167, see Chayes and Chayes 1996). Information networks can distil and disseminate crucial information (Slaughter 2004b:169). Other functions linked to networks are trust-building, the development of common databases and technical assistance or professional socialization (Slaughter 2004b:3-4). As in the case of transnational networks, a major advantage of transgovernmental networks is the assumed speed and efficiency by which governance can be carried out. They offer 'a flexible and relatively fast way to conduct the business of global governance, coordinating and even harmonizing national government action while initiating and monitoring different solutions to global problems' (Slaughter 2004b:11). Legitimacy of transnational networks is mainly incorporated through the principle of accountability: 'these are networks composed of national government officials, either appointed by elected officials or directly elected themselves' (Slaughter 2004b:4). The legitimacy of actors makes their network a legitimate structure. This fact distinguishes them from other globally active groups such as businesses or nongovernmental organizations (Slaughter 2004b:e.g. 9, 240, 262-3)

According to the concept of transnational networks, networks provide an efficient mechanism of policy-making linked to agenda setting, standard-setting and other functions. They involve different types of actors and the question of legitimacy is mainly linked to access to the network. Governance functions of transgovernmental networks are differentiated according to their types, covering information, harmonization or regulation. Legitimacy is assumed due to the legitimated status of their participants.

Conclusion

In sum, comparative politics and IR show some differences in conceptualizing the working and functions of policy networks (see table 4): Both strands of research underline the efficiency of networks compared to hierarchical or bureaucratic governance. An important aspect in comparative politics is the enlarging number of relevant actors for the beginning and implementation of policy change, shifting away from a mainly state-centered perspective in public policy to private and non-state actors. Networks compensate for weaknesses of markets and hierarchies and they enhance coordination, including the creation of norms and trust, communication and the establishment of enduring relationships.

Table 4: Working and Functions of Policy Networks in Comparative Politics and International Relations

| Sub-discipline | Working and Function of Policy Networks |
|-------------------------|--|
| Comparative Politics | Mainly working as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Coordinative forum actors, also including Non-governmental actors Main functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Granting access to policy process in several forms- Forum for exchanging resources, negotiations, building trust- Form of governance besides markets and hierarchies |
| International Relations | Mainly working as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Forum of governmental and non-governmental actors, including international organizations and business- Forum of governmental actors Main functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Governance: facilitate international cooperation on common problems- Legitimacy: Making processes of global governance more representative or inclusive |

The discussion in IR is somewhat different. In this field, information exchange and coordination play a major role, too, but also aspects of legitimacy are at the center of interest. Besides, the function of global policy networks in relation to existing international institutions can be competitive: Reinecke conceptualized networks as being a supplement to existing international institutions, giving them an additional instrument

for governance (Reinecke and Deng 2000: e.g. xiii,93). In contrast, Slaughter conceives networks as more effective tools compared to traditional bureaucratic structures. Organizations can host transgovernmental networks, or, in case of supranational status, they are themselves an integral part of these networks. Only in selected policy fields, like security, the traditional models of formalized inter-state cooperation, such as international organizations, are still needed (Slaughter 2004b:23).

FUTURE RESEARCH LINKED TO GLOBAL POLICY NETWORKS

The discussion on policy networks is thus marked by important differences in comparative politics and IR: In comparative politics, networks are seen either against a background of interest mediation, in particular as public-private relations, or they are linked to governance issues. This includes both a micro-level perspective – i.e. how government agencies are coordinated or how exchange with other actors is organized – or a macro-level perspective – analyzing how networks work in contrast to instruments as hierarchies and markets. In IR, networks are linked to the question of global governance, even if this term contains many different understandings of governance. However, both sub-disciplines share the underlying observation that the state is not the only actor in shaping and implementing policies, and that networks are an important means for policy-making. Significant differences exist in the extent to which typologies of networks have been developed and what they are used for: In comparative politics, many typologies exist, differentiating networks on the basis of dimensions such as actors, structure and the like. Some attempts have been made to link the structure of the network to an expected policy outcome (e.g. Adam and Kriesi 2007). In IR, typologies have not been created: Authors describe network features, but no attempt to systematize them or to link them to policy outcomes has been made. However, both sub-disciplines share the assumption that networks function as an efficient instrument for political decision-making. In comparative politics, they are seen as an important structural feature of contemporary policy-making. Besides, IR also discusses them as a means for a more legitimate way of global governance, a discussion that – given national democratic polities – does not take place in comparative politics. Table 5 shortly summarizes the comparison.

Returning to the initial aim of analyzing research on policy networks in order to contribute to IR research, there are three major points that deserve further attention: First, the question of interest mediation in networks could be an important one for IR. In particular because global policy networks are seen as important means in current debates on global governance, the question to what extent they can and should serve specific interests could be crucial; it is also directly related to the issue of legitimacy. Including non-state actors in global policy networks is not only a way to increase participation and

legitimacy, as visible in the concept of Reinecke (1998:101), but it is also a way for international actors to have their interests represented on a global level. It could be fruitful for IR to shift its focus in global policy networks to lobbying and interest representation and conflict management in such networks, enlarging the perspective from questions of governance to those of interest mediation, comparable to the discussion in comparative politics. As researchers in that discipline have argued, networks can enhance the legitimacy of the policy process, but they do not necessarily do so: For example, access may be difficult, information unevenly dispersed, the role of actors or network managers may be unclear or the status quo is preferred over innovation (Börzel 1998:266-7, Rhodes 1997:58-9, Benz 1995:202-3, Mayntz 1993:50). Debates on who actually has power in politics are thus repeated in all network-related research.

Table 5: Comparison of Comparative Politics and International Relations

| Dimension | Question | |
|------------------|---|---|
| Perspectives | Why are policy networks an important object of study? | Comparative Politics: Interest mediation, governance IR: Perspective of global governance |
| Typologies | Which different kind of policy networks exist? | Comparative Politics: Many typologies, partly linked to explanations of policy outcomes IR: no explicit typologies, no explanation of policy outcome by reference to network structure yet |
| Functions | What is the purpose of policy networks? | Comparative Politics: efficient policy making among diverse actors, governance beyond market and hierarchy IR: Efficient policy-making in absence of central authority, legitimate policy making in absence of democratic world polity |

Network typologies are a second area for future research in IR. So far, only specific categories of networks are described, such as transnational and transgovernmental networks, or those of non-governmental organizations, business or epistemic communities. In comparison to the other sub-disciplines, these types are less developed, and not used to explain specific policy outcomes. Table 6 summarizes different conceptions of global policy networks: Transnational advocacy coalitions, business networks and epistemic communities are networks based on non-state actors. Their activities can be found across different policy fields and concern mainly agenda-setting. They are seen as legitimate representatives of their own interests, so that legitimacy may be an internal problem, but they are not expected to be legitimate in the sense that governmental organizations should be (which means: having a clear mandate of the majority or its representation). Conceptually, these networks can be linked to interest mediation. In contrast,

transnational networks also involve aspects of governance. Members involve business and civil society, as well as governmental and international organizations; they are mainly concerned with agenda setting and implementation, partly policy formulation, all across different policy fields. They supplement existing international institutions, and the principle of legitimacy is incorporated by tri-sectoral participation and stakeholder involvement. Transgovernmental networks, finally, are conceptualized with an obvious governance function. As vertical networks, they involve government agencies; vertical networks also include supranational institutions. Problems typically dealt with in these networks are focused and concern information exchange, enforcement or harmonization. They can be part of different stages of the policy process, ranging from agenda setting to implementation. The principle of legitimacy is incorporated by involvement of state actors only, a form of indirect accountability. Unlike the other networks, transgovernmental policy networks not only substitute existing international institutions, but could also partly replace them.

This typology subsumes the different global policy networks and it is only a starting point for further inquiries. Besides, the linkage of different types of these networks can be expected to be a very important element of current global governance, in fact ‘networking the networks’ in search for political solutions. In any case, creating typologies could help to compare networks across cases, across time or across policy fields in IR. This does not mean that IR should replicate the numerous and conflicting typologies as was done in comparative politics, but it is highly likely that the understanding of global networks and their consequences are more difficult to assess when we do not rely on basic types of networks that are to be investigated. That way, we can eventually compare whether business networks are more effective than NGOs or the reverse, and why. Also, it would help to map whether and, if so, why some global policy fields are networked differently.

Finally, research on policy networks could also benefit from enlarging its methodological scope: It is yet an open question what the specific quality of a network conception actually is. Empirical research has identified the G7, World Commissions, public private partnerships or epistemic communities as global networks. From a formal perspective, this is obviously correct. The analytical value of any concept, however, is likely to decrease with the breadth of the conception. Developing types of global networks that follow an underlying theoretical categorization could enhance the inquiry of networks and could contribute to a better understanding of networks themselves and their relation to world politics. Many functions of global networks have been developed from small-sample case studies, and research on whether global policy networks can really perform all these functions is still in its infancy: Reinecke and Deng presented

several case studies on networks and successful governance, but have been criticized for focusing on positive cases only (Dingwerth 2004). Raustiala found dense regulation activities in global networks, but himself acknowledges that cases represent positive examples only (Raustiala 2003), and also Slaughter's examination is restricted to such (Slaughter 2004b). In a variable-oriented design, Nölke critically assesses that successful working of governance networks needs specific preconditions on the national and international level (Nölke 2000).⁹ Since studies involving negative cases – i.e. cases in which networks do not have an effect – remain rare, and it would also come as no surprise if the list of governance functions linked to global networks still grew. This, however, might result in a misleading picture and it also does not reveal the conditions under which policy networks can perform specific functions successfully. Besides, research usually starts from identifying a given network and examining its working and consequences. This can result in a positive bias that is likely to overlook networks which produce negligible output only – they are simply harder to find compared to successful examples that a researcher easily comes across. On the other hand, starting from existing networks is unlikely to result in evaluations of which political problems are actually not dealt with by a network structure and why – presuming that one has a clear definition of a policy network.

To solve these problems, two approaches could be fruitful: First, researchers could examine the solution to clearly identifiable crises, trace the process by which solutions had been found and assess the role that specific types of networks played therein. Second, researchers could more often identify an international policy field and try to assess the role of networks therein (see Schneider and Hyner 2006). The important element of both approaches is that they do not assume an important role of networks from the very start and by their focus. Instead, either a problem-oriented perspective is applied, or a perspective that analyses a distinct field of politics. With such a method, networks are only one possible form of politics and their importance is also put in relation to other modes of governance in the specific subject area.

⁹ Nonetheless, some authors are cautious about the expectations linked to networks: For example, with regard to the UN Global Compact, Ruggie warned not to expect too of much this network structure (Ruggie 2001, see also Dingwerth 2004, Nölke 2000).

Table 6: Types of Global Policy Networks

| | Business Networks | Epistemic Communities | Transnational Advocacy Coalitions | Transnational Policy Networks | Transgovernmental Policy Networks | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | Interest Mediation | | | Interest Mediation & Governance | Governance | |
| Members | Business | Scientists | Civil Society | Governments/ International Organizations | <i>Vertical networks:</i> | Government entities & Supranational Institution |
| | Business Associations | Experts | Non-governmental Organizations | Business | | |
| | | | Others (also governmental) | Civil Society | <i>Horizontal networks:</i> | Government entities |
| Problems typically dealt with | Unspecified | Unspecified | Unspecified | Unspecified | Information exchange, incl. technical assistance | |
| | | | | | Enforcement | |
| | | | | | Harmonization | |
| Link to Policy Stage | Mainly Agenda Setting | Mainly Agenda Setting | Mainly Agenda Setting | Mainly Agenda Setting and Implementation | Agenda Setting to Implementation | |
| Legitimacy | n/a | n/a | n/a | through tri-sectoral participation | through participation of legitimized entities | |
| Relation to existing international Institutions | n/a | n/a | n/a | Supplement institutions | Supplement, also partly replace institutions | |

Source: based on concepts by Stone (2008), Reinecke and Deng (2000) and Slaughter (2004b), own account

CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

The paper presented a review on policy networks in comparative politics and IR. Distinguishing three dimensions – perspectives on networks, typologies and functions of networks – I compared research activities in both sub-disciplines. As observed, interest mediation is a more prominent strand of network research in comparative politics than in IR, but questions of governance are, despite different foci, dealt with by both sub-disciplines. Functions of networks are partly similar in national and global policy networks, although IR puts more emphasis on questions of legitimacy. The most prominent difference can be observed in typologies, where comparative politics has developed numerous ones, while this has not been the case in IR. I argued that in particular the lack of typologies constitutes an obstacle for assessing the consequences of networks in a comparative way – either across types of networks, across policy fields or across time. IR has not yet embarked upon assessing the impact of specific network structures on policy outcomes: Doing so could not only provide interesting results, but it could also enrich comparative politics which has had difficulties in reaching this goal, too. In sum, there is much to do beyond further case studies of specific networks and their activities.

The importance of ongoing and future research on global networks is part of the overall debate on how global governance can be made more effective. Assessing the contribution of networks to this aim and examining their role in existing international institutions is therefore of crucial importance. ‘Under some conditions networks should make treaties work better. Under other conditions networks perform a gap-filling role [...] In still other situations networks may smooth the negotiation of treaties’ (Raustiala 2003:6). Isolating these conditions is a major task, and in this context, this paper mainly had a conceptual aim. While it developed specific categories under which research on network can be subsumed, it is a different and future task to systematically review empirical results linked to these categories, such as how far interest mediation in global networks takes place, whether specific types of networks show specific policy outcomes and so forth. In the context of transforming statehood, it would be interesting to see whether national governance functions linked to new or established policies are delegated to a network, for example a consortium of private and public actors. Moreover, international policy-making across sectors could be expected to involve a growing number of actors, among them business and non-governmental organizations. A comparison across policy-fields, ranging from chemical control to accounting regulations and social policy could show which sectors are more or less likely to show a networked governance order. A further major point related to networks is to assess whether the empirical results are congruent with expectations. Some authors have been critical of overwhelming expectations concerning networks (Ruggie 2001, Nölke 2000, 2003),

others have claimed that their concept of networks includes both facts as well as expectations (Slaughter 2004b). There is still ample opportunity to link expectations to results. As Börzel put it more than 10 years ago in the context of comparative politics: ‘it has to be shown that policy networks do not only exist, but are also relevant to policy-making’ (Börzel 1998:254). The same applies to contemporary IR.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Anja P. Jakobi, Dr., is a senior researcher at the University of Bremen, Collaborative Research Center ‘Transformations of the State’. Her main research interests are internationalization of public policy, mainly in the fields of education policy, social policy and crime policies and with an emphasis on international actors and international relations.

Telephone: +49 421 218 8728

Fax: +49 421 218-8721

E-Mail: anja.jakobi@sfb597.uni-bremen.de

Address: University of Bremen, Collaborative Research Center „Transformations of the State“, Linzer Strasse 9a, D 28359 Bremen