Summaries

Lars Kohlmorgen, Wolfgang Hein & Sonja Bartsch
Networks and Governance. Transnational Networks as a Basis for
Emancipatory Politics in Global Society

In political science, policy networks are considered to be of increasing importance in linking public and private forms of governance. Though the term of „network society" has been used to stress an apparently dominant role of networks in contemporary processes of social regulation (Castells, Messner), the authors insist that the political role of networks can only be properly assessed in their relationship with hierarchical state structures, market-dominated forms of economic organization and civil society activities. They focus on the potentials of networks to help create an architecture of global governance which can transform the relationship between a globalized economy and fragmented political structures to successfully deal with social problems aggrevated by globalization.

The authors discuss these potentials against the background of questions of legitimacy and power. Due to the lack of a central government authority in global governance these questions are particularly complex but very important. Two cases related to global health policy – the Global Fund and the Access Campaign – illustrate these problems, leading to the main conclusion that networked organizations as well as informal policy networks on the one hand dispose of an important potential to strengthen the role of emancipatory forces in global social policies against the dynamics of a globalized economy as well as against dominant elites in national politics. They can, on the other hand, also be exploited to defend existing structures of domination, and lead to a lack of coordination and public control. However, when network structures offer a framework to overcome deadlocks in established international organizations and are used to give a more effective voice to poor people and to push powerful actors to accept compromises, they might improve chances to strengthen global social policies.

Helen Schwenken
Challenging alliances: Lobbying from the perspective of 'weak actors'
Negotiating social rights of undocumented migrants in the European Union

The paper discusses various attempts of forming coalitions to support undocumented migrants in the European Union. The author refers theoretically to the widespread assumption in NGO and social movement studies that transnational advocacy networks

(Keck & Sikkink) enable 'weak interests' to be better heard; further it deals with the question of alliances between NGOs and business organizations, a strategy which gained importance in some policy fields such as labour rights and environmentalism. However, the empirical evidences of the author show that it is difficult to build alliances in the field of undocumented migration, both among NGOs and between NGOs and business actors. Among others, one reason is the rather narrow common denominator on such a controversial issue and the political opportunity structure at the level of the European Union; another reason lies in diverging political cultures of business and pro-migrant NGOs. The paper pleas for a stronger recognition of 'weak actors' such as self-organizations of migrants and antiracist groups. These forces open up new perspectives on the issue of social rights for undocumented migrants which have been underestimated up to now.

Wolfram Schaffar
People living with HIV and AIDS as political Actors in Thailand: Networks, Self-organisation and Reappropriation

During the political turmoil of the year 2006 in Thailand, which culminated in a mass uprising against Prime Minister Thaksin, people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA) played a crucial role during the formation of the anti-Thaksin movement. One central event was a militant protest against the free trade agreement between Thailand and the US in Chiangmai in January 2006, when the group TNP+ (Thai Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS) together with groups of farmers adopted protest forms from the anti-WTO demonstrations in Hongkong two months earlier. The article analyses the emergence of TNP+ as a political actor. From 1998 on, TNP+ was part of an international network consisting of NGOs, academics, lawyers and state agencies, who fought for access to generic anti-retroviral drugs and challenged the patent on Didanosine (ddI) held by the pharmaceutical company Bristol-Myers Squibb. Although the success of this campaign can be seen as a result of the working of an international network, where every group contributes with its specific expertise, it will be argued that the process of politicisation can not fully be explained by the involvement of TNP+ in this campaign. If we want to understand TNP+'s militancy and generalisation of political claims, we have to take into account specific forms of self-organisations and re-appropriation, which were developed by TNP+ during its struggle for access to medical treatment.

Regina-Maria Dackweiler
Global dialog – transversal politics: The „World March of Women"

The article analyses the practices of the „World March of Women" (WMW) which situates itself within the wide range of social movements against a neo-liberal globalization. The article first discusses the main political axis of the WMW – poverty and violence against women – in the context of the feminist debate about gender justice. These debates have received world wide attention through the United Nations women's conferences. In the second stage it describes the principles and forms of organization and action, the discourses and collective values of the WMW. This analytical description is arranged according to Manuel Castells' methodology, which analyzes the identity, the opponents and the visions of progressive social movements. The concluding third step examines the political scope and the potential for transformation of this global feminist action network. The author refers to Nancy Fraser's debate about redistribution, recognition and representation as the three dimensions of justice; and to Nira Yuval-Davis' concept of „transversal politics", pointing out, that the WMW is creating a global feminist dialogue, which is appreciating diversity while drawing on universal feminist values.

Shireen Hassim
Voices, Hierarchies and Spaces:
Reconfiguring the Women's Movement in Democratic South Africa

This article explores the ways in which the contemporary women's movement in South Africa has been shaped by its own recent history as well as by the changes in the political landscape since 1994. The article argues that the striking feature of the past decade is the manner in which the strategy of inclusion of women in formal political institutions of state and party has tended to displace the transformatory goals of structural and social change. Both goals, of inclusion and transformation, were held to be mutually dependent by women's movement activists throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, the article shows that maintaining the strategic balance between these goals has been difficult to achieve, in large part because the women's movement has been relatively weak, apart from a brief moment in the early 1990s. The argument outlines the theoretical and strategic debates relating to definitions of the term „women's movement" in South Africa, and then identifies and classifies different forms of organisations and strategies. Finally, the article argues that the realisation of gender equality rests on the extent to which a strong women's movement will develop, with a clear agenda for transformation and relative autonomy from both state and other social movements.

Irma Lorena Acosta Reveles
Unforeseen effects of the agrarian legislation in Mexico, 1992-2005

Under the pressure of NAFTA negotiations Mexican government changed the agrarian legislation at the beginning of the 1990. This reform meant turning away from the former leitmotiv of social justice brought up in the revolution towards the neoliberal paradigm of economic efficiency. The old system of subsedies and and institutional support was replaced by a market- and export orientation, the priority of community land was replaced by the primacy of private property rights in order to capitalize the Mexican agriculture. This paper analyses whether the goals of increasing productivity and changing the production structure where achieved.

There are three basic outcomes from the reforms: small scale farmers have los market shares and depend on non-agricultural incomes. Secondly, the trading of land is marginal, as export goods are produced on a small share of productive land and the agricultural corporations have many alternative to the purchase Hof land. The capitalization of agricultural enterprises has also been minimal. These results cause a regional concentration of agricultural corporations and lead to a further marginalization Hof small scale farmers.