

DFG Research Project: International Organizations and the Challenge of Providing Food Security in Areas of Limited Statehood



Niger: Emergency Assistance to Protect the Livelihoods of Vulnerable Communities © FAO/Issouf Sanogo



Haiti: A Flooded Banana Plantation Downstream from the Canot Catchment Basin in Léogâne © FAO/Haiti country Team



Niger: Sahel Crisis 2012 © FAO/Issouf Sanogo



Sierra Leone: A Man From the Bombali District Farmers Cooperative Association Wrapping up a Bundle of Rice in the Field Outside of Gbanka Potho, Bombali District © FAO/Peter DiCamp



Niger: Working in the Food and Cash for Work Site © WFP/Vigno Hounkanli

Research Questions

1. How do international organizations conceptualize “statehood” and “governance” in areas of limited statehood?
2. Which factors (e.g. experiences made “on the ground”) explain these conceptualizations?

Project Description

International organizations (IOs) are central governance actors in areas of limited statehood (i.e. areas characterized by varying degrees of state capacity): First, they provide fundamental public goods directly. Second, they contribute to devising transnational guidelines, such as principles on how to engage in fragile states. Thereby, they provide guidance to a variety of public and private governance actors.

Our project examines IOs concerned with a particular governance service as well as a fundamental human right: food security. Securing access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food is a highly challenging task in areas of limited statehood as these areas are more vulnerable to evolving food crises. In order to face this challenge, IOs plan and implement diverse programs ranging from immediate food crisis response to long-term agricultural development. In our project, we will be looking at IOs active in West Africa (Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, Sierra Leone), Latin America (Colombia) and the Caribbean (Haiti). In doing so, we assume that IOs collect a whole range of varying experiences in dealing with areas where statehood is limited to different degrees.

Against this background, we are interested in how different IOs see their role and how they perceive the opportunities and challenges regarding their operations in areas of limited statehood. Also, we want to better understand how experiences gathered “on the ground” influence how IOs act. Moreover, we seek to shed light

on the consequences these experiences have and how they reflect back to the international level (e.g. in terms of changing transnational norms).

In order to answer these questions, we seek to carry out a comparative analysis of IOs’ perspectives on “governance” and “statehood”. To begin with, we will carry out a document analysis and analyze relevant IO publications, e.g. annual reports. In a second step, we strive to conduct expert interviews with IO representatives in headquarters and a number of selected country offices. Among the IOs of interest to us are those organizations leading in the area of food security on a global scale: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank (WB) and the World Food Programme (WFP). We will further look at regional organizations with significant experience in the field of food security, such as the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

Overall, our project contributes to a better understanding of the role of IOs as providers of basic governance services in areas of limited statehood as well as their contribution to evolving “meta-governance” norms (i.e. guidelines and principles on fragility). Thereby, we contribute to analyzing the consequences of governance in areas of limited statehood for the international level.

We will look at the following organizations*



*In alphabetical order



Project Background

Our four-year research project (2014-2017) is part of the SFB 700 “Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood”. The SFB 700 is an interdisciplinary Collaborative Research Center funded by the German Research Foundation – “Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft” (DFG) over a time span of twelve years (2006-2017). Five institutions support the research center: the Free University of Berlin (FU), the University of

Potsdam (UP), the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), as well as the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA). Furthermore, the SFB 700 recently launched a project in cooperation with the German Federal Foreign Office (AA) aiming at a mutual exchange of knowledge in the context of foreign affairs over the course of the next four years.

Team



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