

External influence over regional organizations and regionalism

Conveners:

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Regional cooperation and integration around the globe has deepened and expanded considerably over the last two to three decades. Most scholars and observers maintain that regional international organizations (RIOs) are primarily crafted from the ‘inside’, by intra-regional and domestic agents, and in response to collective action problems or external pressures, such as globalization or international hegemonic powers. A nascent strand in the literature challenges this assumption and examines how regions and RIOs are instead influenced, shaped, and sometimes even controlled from ‘outside’, by external powers, donors, development agencies, and global governance institutions. However, there are almost no systematic explorations of external influences upon regions and RIOs.

This panel explores why, how and to what effect external actors, powers, and agencies — directly and indirectly, actively and passively, formally and informally — shape and exert influence over RIOs and regions in different parts of the world and in different policy fields.

The panel draws on insights gained from an ongoing research project funded by the Swedish Research Council: *External Funding of Regional Organizations in Africa: What Works and Why?*

Potential papers

We welcome contributions that explore and examine external influence over regional organizations and regions from a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches and in a broad array of empirical cases (case studies as well as comparisons). Papers may address questions and themes such as:

Why and to what extent do external actors interact with and fund RIOs and regions?

How do domestic/affected actors perceive and interpret external influences and foreign funding?

How do external actors influence RIOs and regions from outside?

What ways and means do external actors use in order to shape RIOs and regions?

How and to what extent do external actors ‘control’ RIOs and regions from without?

How does external influence and foreign funding of RIOs impact on their performance and, more broadly, on regional stability, growth and development?

Does external influence and foreign funding undermine the legitimacy and credibility of RIOs and their activities?

Does external influence and foreign funding increase or decrease the implementation gap of RIOs?

To what extent does external influence and foreign funding undermine the ‘ownership’ of RIOs and regions?