

# **The construction of political spaces by semantics of in- and exclusion:**

## **Development and function of the term „international community“ in politics and in the law of nations**

**Funded by:** Project Segment of SFB 584 (Collaborative Research Centre) “The Political as Communicative Space in History”

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**Term:** July 2008 – June 2012

The project focusses on the changing semantics and strategies of in- and exclusion with regard to the term „international community“.

The term of the “international community” is often and prominently used in political and public debates. Nevertheless, this prominence comes together with an extreme ambivalence in the use of the term and its actual content. In international politics as well as in the mass media, the term „international community“ is used extensively to label a coherence of the state-world guaranteed by norms and rules. It is thereby mainly used in an excluding manner: the reference to an “international community” generally highlights the denomination or explicit conviction of an action to be standing *outside* the international community.

Besides, the content of such a community is not explained or at best assumed by reference to certain fuzzy norms or behavioral standards. The term or concept “international community” has thus to be regarded as a kind of „empty” or “floating signifier“ which is *not*, or *only temporarily*, charged with specific meanings. But even though or maybe even because of that, it can be used strategically to support a certain argumentative position or to justify certain politics.

The project analyzes the shifting meanings of the concept of “international community” in two different discursive arenas. On the one hand it looks at the vast body of scientific literature, that has dealt or still deals with the definition and problems of “community” in an international context. On the other hand, the daily usage of the concept shall be analyzed, for example in the news coverage.