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Interorganizational governance of transnational infrastructure programmes across multiple national environments: The south American Bioceanic Corridor as ‘the new Panama Canal’

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, global connectivity is being shaped by transnational infrastructure megaprojects, which are commonly organized as programmes relying on specific interorganizational governance mechanisms. While previous research on programmes has examined how governance mechanisms address institutional conflicts, it has largely overlooked the pressures generated by multiple national environments. This paper examines a unique case study of the transnational Bioceanic Corridor programme in South America, which aims to construct a road connection between Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile in the absence of a central coordinating authority. The study identifies a balanced configuration of seven interorganizational governance mechanisms operating across three levels. The findings extend current debates on governance of transnational infrastructure programmes by showing how governance mechanisms are distributed and enacted across levels to manage institutional complexity. In addition, the study contributes to literature on governance mechanisms by presenting an empirical case where relational governance mechanisms predominate in facilitating programme progress.

1. Introduction

Increasingly, global infrastructure connectivity is developed through transnational infrastructure megaprojects (Esposito et al., 2021; Levitt & Scott, 2017; Qiu et al., 2019; Winch et al., 1997). These projects involve multiple countries, not necessarily bordering each other, often spanning entire regions or continents, requiring multi-lateral governance structures, often involving international organizations or regional alliances with an emphasis on geopolitical strategy, economic integration, and interorganizational coordination (Levitt & Scott, 2017; Scott et al., 2011). Examples are the high-speed train connections between Laos-China and Thai-China (Saiyarod, 2025), and between Turin and Lyon (Esposito et al., 2021) or the road infrastructure connecting Hong Kong, Macao and Chinese mainland (Qiu et al., 2019). These megaprojects are often executed as complex multi-project entities with several parallel or sequential efforts, frequently referred to as programmes (Artto et al., 2009; Lycett et al., 2004).

Transnational infrastructure programmes are exceptionally challenging to manage as bridges, rails and roads are attached to a specific location (Levitt & Scott, 2017) and thus grounded in multiple nations

and regions, each with their own political system, laws, regulations, and culture (Saiyarod, 2025; Scott et al., 2011; Shi & Xiao, 2021). For example, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau transnational megaproject crosses three jurisdictions, with differences in management, methods and procedures of public works and differences “in relevant legal systems, government management, social environment and culture” (Shi & Xiao, 2021: 192). Overcoming seemingly incompatible and competing institutional environments point toward a need for particular programme management (Pellegrianni et al., 2007; Ponzini, 2025; Vermeulen et al., 2016). For example, how to cope with conflicting regulative demands from diverse national safety laws (Hetemi et al., 2021), or how to handle different professionals standards across borders (Qiu et al., 2019)? Institutional environments are understood here as the unique conditions requiring a project organization to comply with regulations in order to reinforce contractual agreements and facilitate alignment between the programme team, clients, and external stakeholders (Levitt & Scott, 2017).

This paper aims to examine the interorganizational governance mechanisms employed by transnational infrastructure programmes to manage pressures arising from multiple national environments

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(Biesenthal et al., 2018; Levitt & Scott, 2017; Ponzini, 2025). Interorganizational governance mechanisms refer to formal and informal rules of exchange between project partners (Roehrich et al., 2020). Qiu et al. (2019) found diverse mechanisms that were used to govern the institutional complexity stemming both from external and micro-level environments. Frederiksen et al. (2021) mention governance mechanisms such as; interior design plans, conformity to meeting principles, mandatory participation in induction, dissemination and orientation meetings, and a project model. However, little emphasis has so far been placed on how programme organizations design their governance mechanism to manage pressures arising from multiple national environments. The majority of programme management literature has been focused upon the managing of programmes in a single institutional environment (Martinsuo & Gherardi, 2020). Diverse project scholars (Denicol et al., 2023; Martinsuo & Gherardi, 2020; Söderlund & Sydow, 2019) ask to further theorize how programme management is nested in interorganizational and institutional environments.

Based upon the discussion above, the central research question in this paper is how do interorganizational governance mechanisms coordinate transnational infrastructure programmes across multiple national environments? To answer this question, the transnational BiOceanic Corridor programme, which aims to construct a road connection between the Atlantic Ocean in Brazil and the Pacific Ocean in Chile, has been studied. This programme (2019–2026) has been selected as it provides a unique example of the phenomenon under study (Siggelkow, 2007); showing the unique features of a transnational infrastructure megaproject. A single case study approach (Yin, 2003) has been used to collect data on this case. The findings showed that the transnational programme implemented a robust configuration of seven interorganizational governance mechanisms at three different levels to coordinate activities across the four involved nations. These findings enhance the debate on transnational infrastructure programmes (Balasubramani et al., 2020; Denicol & Davies, 2022; Esposito et al., 2021; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Levitt & Scott, 2017) by showing how governance mechanisms are implemented at different levels to cope the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements stemming from public and private stakeholders from the involved nations. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the debate on interorganizational governance mechanism (Brunet, 2021b; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2019; Roehrich et al., 2023) with presenting an empirical case where contractual governance plays a limited role, and where relational governance mechanisms predominate in facilitating programme progress.

The paper is structured as follows. First, the paper critically discusses underlying assumptions in the theorizing of programme management of transnational megaproject and interorganizational governance mechanisms. The paper then explains the different methods that have been used to collect data in the BiOceanic Corridor programme. The seven interorganizational governance mechanisms are then presented at three levels in the findings section. The discussion section presents the contributes of the findings to the theoretical debates of transnational infrastructure programmes and interorganizational governance mechanisms. Finally, in the conclusions a view is given on limitations of the study, on future research and on lessons for project managers to improve transnational infrastructure programmes.

2. Theory

2.1. Transnational infrastructure programmes

Literature on how programme management contributes to infrastructure megaprojects has developed over the past two decades (Arto et al., 2009; Denicol & Davies, 2022; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Pellegrinelli et al., 2007; Rijke et al., 2014). This set of literature focuses simultaneously on the internal coordinating of multiple projects to achieve the project goals, and, at the same time, on the external

alignment with objectives and regulations of parent organization, key external stakeholders, and public opinion (Denicol et al., 2023). Internal coordination of activities across multiple interdependent projects is needed in transnational programmes to achieve a common goal, which is not possible if they were managed in isolation (Lycett et al., 2004). Moradi et al. (2025) limit coordination to situations where project partners work independently to ensure each other's developments so the diverse deliveries will fit a final result. Cooperation in their view is when project partners divide tasks but share resources and information to combine individual contributions for a final result. Finally, when partners are highly dependent on each other collaboration is needed to solve problems and trust issues to reach the common goals (Moradi et al., 2025; Ruijter et al., 2020). For example, Han et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of coordination and improvisation between China and Indonesia in a study of the jointly developed Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Rail. Thus, coordination refers to the joint determination of common goals, while cooperation refers to implementation of those common goals and collaboration refers to voluntarily helping of other partners to achieve common goals or one of their private goals (Castañer & Oliveira, 2020).

Next to providing internal coordination, programme management has to conform to externally defined requirements and regulations (Hetemi et al., 2021; Mok et al., 2015). This is especially complex with transnational infrastructure megaprojects (Esposito et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2019; Stephenson, 2025) which have to navigate across multiple sovereign states, align multiple national environments, and cope with multiple political systems (Stephenson, 2025). For example, in the Laos-China and Thai-China high-speed railways projects the bureaucratic land rights system in Thailand operates under a different legal framework to the state-centric land rights system Laos (Saiyarod, 2025). Yu et al. (2018) found in a review study of transnational infrastructure projects that legal risk, cooperation risk, tariff risk, financing risk, and political risk are most frequently mentioned critical risk factors. For example, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) megaproject had to align with diverse set of sociopolitical environments in Hong Kong, Macao and China (Qiu et al., 2019). A broad understanding on institutional environments is used here, including “symbolic frames, rules, and normative frameworks that provide guidance to and justification for, varying modes of acting” (Levitt & Scott, 2017: 99).

Programme management of transnational infrastructure projects require careful consideration of institutional arrangements in practice (Biesenthal et al., 2018). Institutions encompass regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that together provide stability and meaning to social life (Levitt & Scott, 2017; Scott, 1995). Regulative elements include law, state policies, legal agreements and rules, which can be different for each nation. Normative elements are made up of norms and values, professional standards, but also moral and informal agreements. Finally, cultural-cognitive encompassing shared understanding of a situation, taken for granted assumptions and frames of reference (Levitt & Scott, 2017). A robust governance arrangement is made up of varying combinations of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements (Levitt & Scott, 2017).

Furthermore, programme management has to ensure that stakeholders are actively engaged in transnational infrastructure programmes in order to collect their inputs, insights, contribution, and support (Pellegrinelli et al., 2007). A lack of engagement can result in serious delays, For example, the construction of the high-speed train connection between Turin and Lyon experienced, for over thirty years, problems with cultural and legal differences between France and Italy (Esposito et al., 2021). Frequently, these megaprojects have asymmetric benefits for involved nations and are subject to diplomatic relations and geopolitical tensions (Esposito et al., 2021). The collective value attributed to transnational infrastructure projects frequently overshadows the voices of those directly impacted, underscoring the importance of inclusive infrastructural development approaches (Saiyarod, 2025). In sum, managing tensions emerging from multiple

institutional environments is important in the management of transnational infrastructure programmes (Biesenthal et al., 2018; Esposito et al., 2021; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Hetemi et al., 2021).

2.2. Interorganizational governance mechanisms

Governance of transnational infrastructure programmes is viewed as rules of the game defined internally by the programme management to ensure that the goals and expectations of various stakeholders are met (Alqershy et al., 2025). Governance is here understood as the monitoring of project standards (Ahola et al., 2014), defining through processes, mechanisms, policies, etc. “what is and what is not allowed in fulfilling the manager role and serves as a gauge to hold managers accountable for their actions and performance” (Müller et al., 2023: 4). In a literature review, Alqershy et al. (2025) found that governance mechanisms in megaprojects are subdivided in contractual and relational mechanisms. Among contractual governance mechanisms are; clear definition of goals, clear distribution of responsibilities and roles, authority for decision making, incentives and risk allocation, formal control and monitoring, dispute resolution, and adaptable and flexible contracts. And among relational governance mechanisms are; communication and knowledge sharing, coordination and collaboration, trust, team workshops and training, leadership and support, and commitment (Alqershy et al., 2025). Applied to transnational programmes Qiu et al. (2019) found diverse mechanisms that were used to govern the institutional complexity stemming both from external and micro-level environments; (a) setting up system leaders, (b) localizing practices, (c) building a collaborative network that underlies the collaborative hierarchies, and (d) implementing a flexible design to allow the multiple actors to reach a consensus. In conclusion, governance mechanisms in transnational programmes can take a wide variety of form at diverse levels; from project model, principles, roles, scripts, contracts, and well-defined rules (Frederiksen et al., 2021).

Governance mechanisms in transnational infrastructure projects have implications to partner organizations and stakeholders across multiple nations and levels (Levitt & Scott, 2017). For example, in Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau transnational project the “inconsistency between central and local interests leads to vertical conflicts in the institutional environment” (Shi & Xiao, 2021: 192). Levitt and Scott (2017) distinguish international, regional and programme level in institutional environments. Therefore, Esposito et al. (2021) argue that transnational programmes must align with an overarching institutional strategy that coordinates stakeholders across different organizational levels. Brunet (2021b) argues that each level is related to one central objective: the institutional level is focused on legitimacy, the organizational level deals with accountability and the project level is occupied with efficiency.

The review of literature on transnational programmes can be

summarized in a conceptual framework, as visualized in Fig. 1.

3. Methods

The study explores the interorganizational governance mechanisms used to coordinate the transnational BiOceanic Corridor megaproject across multiple national environments. The case has been selected as it provides a unique case. The four different nations involved (Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile), each with their own political system, laws, economy, regulations, and culture provide an interesting institutional complexity for studying governance mechanisms of a transnational infrastructure programme (Abrita et al., 2023; Franco et al., 2025). The BiOceanic Corridor programme runs the risk to become a “white elephant” (Franco et al., 2025) as it has to cope with serious pressures arising from institutional complexity, especially from cultural differences between Portuguese speaking Brazil and Spanish speaking countries of Paraguay, Argentina and Chile and from economic differences between the strong economies of Brazil and Chile and the weak economies of Argentina and Paraguay. Furthermore, the case was selected to provide an example from Latin America in order to add to the academic project management debate, which is dominated by cases from USA, Europe and Asia (Gerald et al., 2020).

3.1. Data collection

Data on the BiOceanic Corridor programme has been collected through three different methods. First, desk research of reports and documents (Hennink et al., 2020) helped to become acquainted with the programme and explore the used governance mechanisms. Second, analyses of YouTube videos (Benson, 2015) provided a better understanding of the used governance mechanisms. Third, during a field work study (Fyhn, 2025) non-publicly available reports on the governance mechanisms could be collected, while data on the mechanisms was collected through (participant)observations and interviews. By combining these three methods data is triangulated, which is the use of multiple sources of data to study the same phenomenon, with the aim of increasing the validity, credibility, and robustness of the findings (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Below each of the methods are discussed separately.

In the desk research method 32 reports, internal documents and articles have been collected to learn about socio-economic goals, involved organizations, programme management and governance structure of the BiOceanic Corridor megaproject (see Appendix A). Five of these were written in English, five in Portuguese and 19 in Spanish. Interestingly, the majority found has been written by regional institutions in Antofagasta (Chile) and Matto Grosso do Sur (Brazil), with very few studies from Argentina or Paraguay.

In the second method, footages of YouTube videos on BiOceanic Corridor megaproject have been collected to gain a better understanding of the actual governance activities in the four different countries. English, Spanish and Portuguese search terms for ‘BiOceanic Corridor’, ‘Capricorn Corridor’, ‘Road Corridor’ were used for this search, resulting in 28 YouTube videos relevant to our research (see Appendix B). Studying YouTube videos as text focuses either on the content or on the YouTube page as a whole, including number of viewers and reactions (Benson, 2015). I mainly focused upon the content of the videos as this is the focal point of a YouTube page and the main reason why people visit the page (Benson, 2015). The found videos were distinguished in three levels (Levitt & Scott, 2017): international, regional, and programme level, which helped me to understand the multilevel programme governance. For example, I observed that YouTube channels in Chile and Brazil were the most active in providing content and overview of the programme. Furthermore, the 28 pages are products of multiple authorship, for example by ‘liking’ and ‘disliking’ the video or by individual comments. For example, some videos of engineering platforms are very popular (21 K visitors), while others are much less frequently

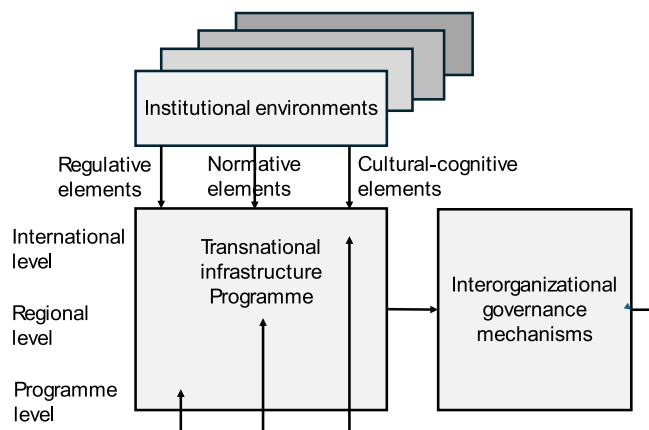


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of transnational infrastructure programmes.

visited. Finally, the pages are highly dynamic in the sense that the text of the page constantly changes in response to user and machine-generated input, for example by viewing a page users alters the number of views. I therefore revisited the websites earlier found in December 2023 again in March 2025, but, except for growing numbers of visitors, not much difference could be found.

In the third and final method, the author executed field work on the BiOceanic Corridor megaproject in Argentina between February 1st and March 8th 2024. Fieldwork is a fine method to explore the everyday phenomena and its material reality in construction projects, thus revealing a better understanding of local situation, physical conditions and surprising connections between elements in a project (Fyhn, 2025). Such an interpretive approach of infrastructure projects has been executed earlier by other scholars (e.g. Harvey, 2018; Larkin, 2018; Van Marrewijk et al., 2016). For example, anthropologist Harvey (2018) studied a road construction project connecting the Peruvian highlands to the Amazon as “roads are there for all to see” (p. 84). She states that

“the material condition of the roads, their very presence as well as their state of repair, registered histories of both state presence and neglect” (Harvey, 2018: 86). In the same way, I studied the presence and material condition of the RN 51, RN 52, and RN 34 which are all essential parts of the BiOceanic Corridor road. For example, observing the unfinished construction of the toll-road RN 34 connecting Salta and Jujuy in Argentina shows the lack of funding and the strong focus of the government on the Buenos Aires region, an observation which was also reflected in reports (e.g. document #22, #24). On my travel I took pictures of road condition, construction work, high altitude passes and road connections. I talked to truck drivers, co-travelers, gas station owners, hotel owners, and police officers over the condition of the roads, the progress of the construction work, the regional impact and future of the BiOceanic Corridor road. Notes on these observations and conversations were written down in field notes.

The role of the anthropologist in studying infrastructure projects is challenging as the path of research is rarely set in stone beforehand and

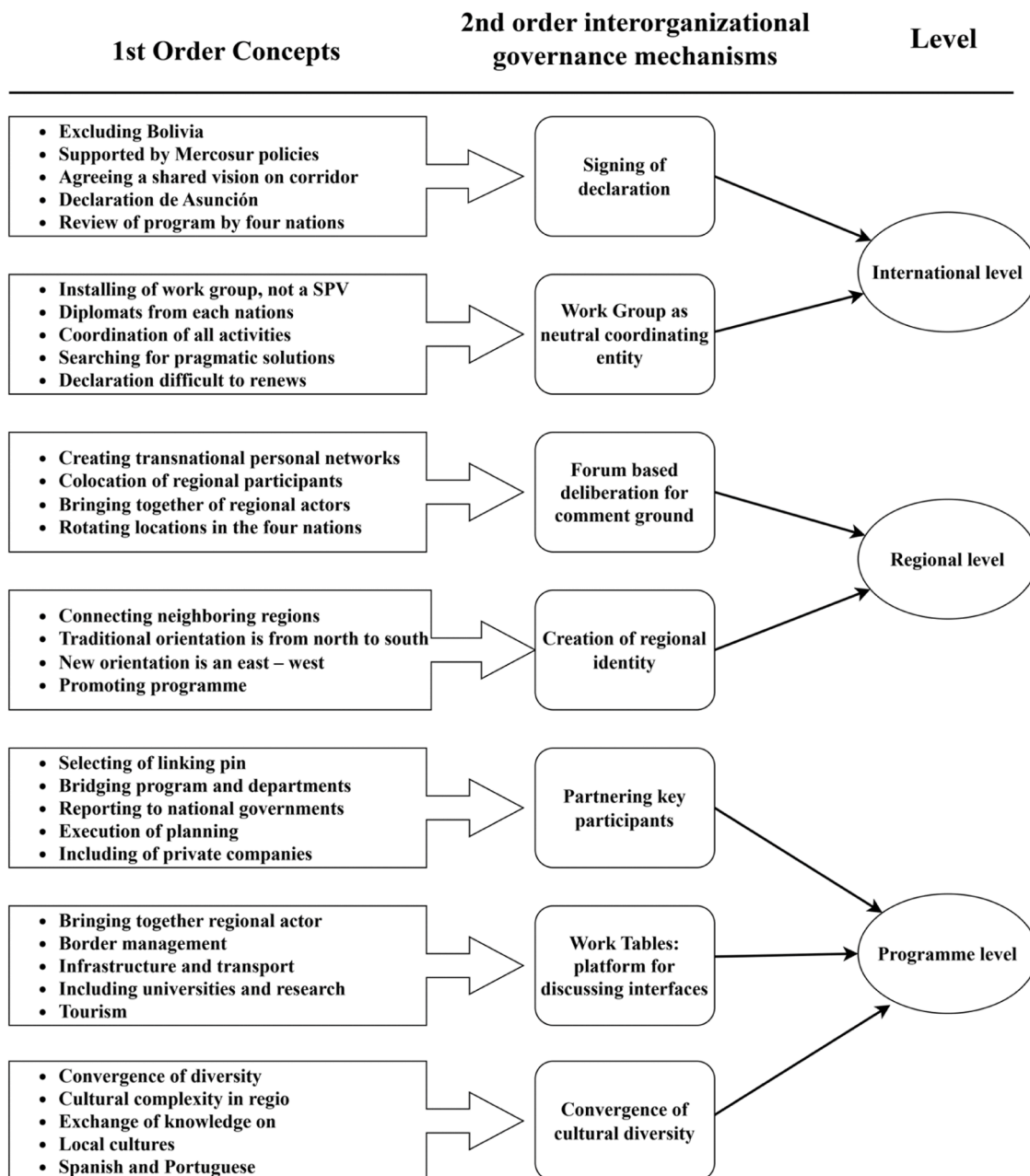


Fig. 2. Gioia analysis of data.

depends of gaining access and trust of relevant stakeholders (Fyhn, 2025). During my field visit, the BiOceanic appeared to be a sensitive topic for Argentinian public officers. Interview requests in Salta and Buenos Aires were turned down, interviewees didn't show up, and days of waiting in government buildings didn't turn out in getting access to public officers responsible for the Argentinian infrastructure projects of the BiOceanic Corridor programme. Finally, I was able to interview two academics of the UCASAL University in Salta (Interviewee #1, #2), which were personally involved to the programme. These interviews were held in February 2024 in Spanish, recorded and transcribed. Quotes from these interviews were translated to English by the author. Furthermore, the Coordinator of Brazil (Interviewee #3) was twice interviewed online in English, in February and April 2024. These interviews were also transcribed and used for analysis.

3.2. Data analysis

Data analysis employed a first- and second-order coding methodology as outlined by Gioia et al. (2013). This allowed me to systematically analyze the data, providing rigor and offering room for the development of new concepts inductively (Gioia et al., 2013). Such interpretative methods for analyzing data is "no less systematic than positivistic-informed research" (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006: 9). To analyze the field data a multiple-step interpretive method (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013) is employed. First, all documents, YouTube footages, interview transcripts, and field notes were thoroughly reviewed to familiarize with history, socio-economic goals, involved organizations, budgets, and project structures and thus obtain a more in-depth, holistic, and enriched view of the social reality (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Based on this first analysis, 1st order concepts were provided (see Fig. 2). For example, the inclusion of public officials representing a national department and are expert on, for instance, traffic, border management, and tourism, was labeled 'selecting of linking pins'. In a second step, these first order concepts were clustered into seven second order inter-organizational governance mechanisms. For example, all first order concepts on diplomats, coordinators, work group, political influences, and pragmatic solutions were clustered in the interorganizational governance mechanism of 'work group as a neural coordinating entity'. In this way, all seven mechanisms were clustered. In a third step, the seven mechanisms were concentrated into three governance levels of transnational megaprojects (Levitt & Scott, 2017) to understand the execution of the BiOceanic Corridor megaproject. In a final step the data was transformed into a narrative, which I discussed with the Brazilian Work Group coordinator and checked for factual errors and misinterpretations.

4. Governance mechanisms in the BiOceanic Corridor programme

The main goal of the BiOceanic Corridor megaproject is South America's greater connectivity to transnational trade routes by improving the physical road infrastructure between the regions of central-western Brazil, Paraguay, northwest Argentina, and northern Chile (see Fig. 3) The programme, formalized in 2015, realizes 2250 km of road infrastructure, intending to achieve logistics efficiency to reduce time and costs (Abrita et al., 2023; Franco et al., 2025). The programme started with a declaration by the presidents of Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile. In documents, publications, and communications the programme is labelled with visionary names, such as 'the new Panama Canal' and 'the Panama Canal of the 21st century' as well as drawing comparisons with *Qhapaq Ñan*, a historical 35,000 km Inca path network. Following the proposed strategy for developing corridors by the World Bank (document #24), the four governments decided that first a road connection would be constructed, followed by a railway connection and a fiber-optic network (document #3). This is in line with Priemus and Zonneveld (2003) who define corridors as mainly



Fig. 3. Map of the BiOceanic Corridor in Latin America (source: <https://atlas-report.com>).

passenger and freight transport links. However, corridor projects often result in unequal economic development and do not fulfil their potential for poverty reduction (Franco et al., 2025). Scholvin et al. (2024) warns for an unrealistic grand vision for the future at the BiOceanic Corridor programme with focus on opportunities while neglecting challenges of implementation. Therefore, the management of the transnational infrastructure programme is crucial as "inadequate political and legal frameworks, weak or inconsistent political and legal frameworks across participating countries may pose regulatory barriers and uncertainty, hindering effective governance and implementation" (Franco et al., 2025: 177).

The BiOceanic Corridor programme is not managed through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), which is generally chosen for complex interorganizational infrastructure megaprojects (Denicol & Davies, 2022), but national governmental departments are responsible for the tendering and supervision of their infrastructure projects. Regulative governance mechanisms in the BiOceanic Corridor programme were used for bilateral agreements between nations, for example the construction of the bridge between Brazil and Paraguay and for contracting consortia to construct bridges and roads, and improve existing ones (see list of projects in Table 1). The total needed budget of US\$ 2370 million for the programme is funded by the national governments, the private sector and the International Bank of the Americas. These legal and financial frameworks were established to support the development of the BiOceanic Corridor programme.

Based upon our data and the insights from reports, literature, interview and observations seven interorganizational governance mechanisms were found at international, regional and programme level. Each level is analytically independent and contingent in nature, meaning that

Table 1 Information on the diverse projects in the BiOceanic Corridor megaproject.

Nation	Projects	Planning	Costs
Brazil	Bridge Brazil - Paraguay	2019–2023	\$ 380 million
Paraguay	Phase 1: Carmelo Peralta to Lomo Plata paving 255 km of road + 4 bridges	2019–2022	\$ 430 million
	Phase 2: Mariscal to Pozo Honda paving 354 km of road	2020–2024	\$ 460 million
	Bridge Paraguay- Argentina	2020–2025	\$ 300 million
	Bridge Brazil – Paraguay	2022–2024	\$ 100 million
Argentina	Paving RN 51 to Paso Jama at Chilean border	In planning	??
	Road Tartagal to Pozo Honda, Paraguay	2023–2025	\$ 460 million
Chile	Border Argentina to coast	2020–2024	\$ 340 million
	Total		\$ 2370 billion

there are relationships between the different governance mechanisms, while some governance mechanisms are found at multiple levels. The governance mechanisms found to manage the institutional complexity of the transnational BiOceanic Corridor programme will be discussed in next paragraphs below.

4.1. Interorganizational governance mechanism at international level

4.1.1. Signing of a declaration

The first interorganizational governance mechanism is the signing of a declaration between the four involved national governments. Other corridor initiatives in Latin America failed due a lack of support (Fernández, 2001). For example, the Corridor Central, a route from Brazil to the ports of Peru through Bolivia, was perceived to be the best possible option as this is a short route, following a straight line (Fernández, 2001). However, Bolivia was not a full member of Mercosur, was in conflict with Chile, and underwent political changes after the election of President Morales in 2014. These political tensions hindered full political support of other nations to further development this corridor variant. Instead, the route via Paraguay, including Argentina and Chile, but excluding Bolivia and Peru, is then sought for (Scholvin et al., 2024). Former president Mario Abdo of Paraguay has been one of the main promoters of this route, stating; “Paraguay is the fourth largest exporter of soybeans in the world. For the soybean to reach the Pacific Ocean, it has to pass through the Panama Canal” (riotimesonline.com; visited April 2025). However, Paraguay’s links with other nations is weak. In a network analysis of stakeholders in the BiOceanic Corridor Franco et al. (2025) found strong links between Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, while those between Chile and Paraguay and Argentina and Paraguay were weaker, showing commercial distance between Chile and Argentina and ideological distance between Paraguay and Brazil.

After a process of negotiation, the governments of the four nations signed the ‘Asunción Declaration’ on December 21, 2015. This declaration has to be understood in alignment with the Mercosur treaty. In 1991, the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay agreed in the Treaty of Asunción to establish the regional trade bloc Mercosur. Ever since its establishment, Mercosur studied a road connection between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans (document #7) to prioritize integration of regional economies and connecting these to the world market. A ground-breaking free trade agreement with the European Union in December 2024 is an fine example of this policy. Mercosur intends to fuel economic growth independent of “whether governments are of the left, center-left, or conservative, extractive” (Silva et al., 2018: 27).

The declaration signed by the four nations is a non-binding, political statement of intent, to express the shared goal of developing the BiOceanic Corridor programme (document #3, #4). The advantage of a declaration over a formal contract or agreement is that “it don’t need to go through parliament and therefore much easier to handle” (interview #3). Especially in early feasibility studies and planning of transnational megaprojects a declaration can be useful to align regulative complexity across nations. Continuous high-level support and stability across nations for a longer period of time is an essential governance mechanism to cope with regulative complexity in the region.

4.1.2. Work group as neutral coordinating entity to discourage political influences

The second interorganizational governance mechanism in the BiOceanic programme is the installation of a Work Group. The four governments didn’t establish a separate, autonomous authority governing the programme on their behalf, which is a common way to govern such infrastructure megaprojects (Denicol & Davies, 2022), but assigned a neutral coordinating entity, named the Work Group, to coordinate all programme activities. In the 2015 declaration, this Work Group was asked to come up with a proposition for realizing technical studies and to formulate recommendations for a fast construction of the BiOceanic

Corridor road. In an updated version the Work Group was asked to write a draft plan to improve the normative institutional elements of standards and procedures at the borders in order to become more efficient, and suggest a systematic and uniform inspection and control between the borders of the four nations (document #4). Furthermore, the Work Group was asked to design an integrated information system, which would facilitate the transport of goods, cars and people. Finally, the current functioning of infrastructure and transport were evaluated in collaboration with the private sector (document #32).

Each nation was represented by staff members from national governmental departments headed by a national coordinator, frequently a diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They met every six months for a two-days meeting in the hosting country to coordinate and integrate the different national projects. The host for these meetings is rotated among the four countries. Between 2016 and 2019 the Work Group got together eight times: Antofagasta (May 2016); Campo Grande (July 2016); Jujuy (October 2016); Asunción (May 2017); Antofagasta (Novembre 2017); Salta (June 2018); Asunción (April 2019); and Campo Grande (August 2019) (document #32). During the pandemic, the coordination was hindered; physical meetings were no longer possible and were temporary replaced by online meetings. A website was created to share all documents and information on the programme.

In the Work Group meetings, a synchronization of norms, values and project activities takes place, identifying what the problems and bottlenecks are and how to solve them in order to reach the programme objectives. The progress of each of the national road projects had to be aligned with programme goals. The coordinators, together with staff members, pragmatically explore what solutions can be found in order to continue the further development of the corridor. “The work to coordinate all the activities to make this road, passing four national borders, is enormous. It is an intense work, as we discuss so many details, we have to work with the particularities of each location. Therefore, our progress is slow” (Chilean coordinator in YouTube #3). This decentralized approach allowed for a hybrid solution of upgrading and connecting existing roads and bridges with new, to be constructed, highways and bridges. For example, >300 km of new paved roads had to be constructed to cross the Chaco in Paraguay.

The Work Group concentrated on the practical coordination of national projects and operated independent, preferably on a distance of tensions in the political arenas as these can hinder the development of the programme. Political patronage or clientelism, in which political leaders give public resources and positions to their clients in exchange for political support, is a deep rooted practice in Latin America (Singer, 2023). Notwithstanding the efforts to keep the programme out of the political arena, the BiOceanic Corridor is perceived by many as political, “as decisions and budgets have to come from national governments” (interview #1). Furthermore, discussions and negotiations didn’t stop after the signing of the declaration; “mayors and governors asked to change the route as it didn’t go through their territory. My answer was simple, no problem at all, if you want to change the route we need a new declaration” (interview #3). The Work Tables as main space for interaction to connect organizations and actors across borders was mentioned as a strength of the programme (document #10). However, Franco et al. (2025) warns that the BiOceanic Corridor can become a “white elephant” if institutional coordination is not improved and incentives for private sector participation are not included. In conclusion, the Work Group is a governance mechanism to cope with the institutional complexity of normative elements in the involved countries.

4.2. Interorganizational governance mechanism at regional level

4.2.1. Forum-based deliberation to find common grounds

The third interorganizational governance mechanism is the organizing multilateral coordination platforms called Forums. These Forums are large gatherings in which regional officers, politicians and private sector of the four nations meet to find common ground for governing the

normative elements of institutional complexity. In bringing together regional actors personal networks across borders are being created, that previously hasn't been developed. The decentralized approach of the BiOceanic Corridor megaproject requires emancipation of the regions, as "the regions through which it passes have, so far, had little participation in its governance" (document #10). For example, for Paraguay the BiOceanic Corridor was an enormous financial challenge with two bridges, new paved roads and the acquisition of large terrains. The bridge, linking Porto Murinho (Brazil) and Carmelo Peralta (Paraguay) is expected to be ready in 2026, is an iconic design of 680 m long, 380 m of free spans and 22 m in height, with two towers over 100 m in height (document #27). However, as benefits of transnational infrastructure projects for involved nations are asymmetric (Esposito et al., 2021; Han et al., 2025), Paraguay's strategic investments are very risky. Therefore, policies should promote forms of integration that enhance competitiveness in economic activities, as unplanned integration risks merely reinforcing existing regional inequalities (Abrita et al., 2023).

Because the regions of Northern Chile and of Mato Grosso do Sul are the main receivers of the project's benefits (Franco et al., 2025) they are very supportive in finding common grounds for collaboration. The governor of Northern Chile opened up an office in Campo Grande, Brazil to interest companies for exporting their cargo via harbors in northern Chile (YouTube #7). And in 2024, Brazil and Chile signed 19 bilateral acts focused on improving infrastructure and logistics services to ensure efficient and modern border and logistics operations (YouTube #23). In contrast, the infrastructure development of northwest Argentina region is still in its infancy, partly caused by the declined national economy and partly because of the federal government's strong central focus on the Buenos Aires region (Franco et al., 2025). Consequently, infrastructure development of, for example, Route National 51 and 34, both part of the BiOceanic Corridor megaproject, are lagging behind; "I arrived at the unfinished toll gate at the RN34. No sign of construction work going on, just some police men controlling passing cars. After the toll gate I had to drive the car from the road to bypass an unfinished bridge. Again no traces of construction activities going here" (Field notes, March 2024). This is what Gupta (2018) would call 'ruination of infrastructures', were remnants of future ambitions remains visible through unfinished infrastructures.

The Forum meetings physically brought together regional governors, local mayors, public officers, politicians and members of the private sector of the four nations to informally learn to know each other and create networks. The Forum meetings were rotated, each time organized in a different nation. Forum I was organized in Campo Grande, Brazil in 2021. Forum II was in Paraguay. Forum III was organized in Salta, Argentina in 13–14 April 2023. Forum IV was in Chile in Spring 2024. At these Forum meetings, national representatives and experts were brought together. For example, at Forum II, 400 public officers and parliamentarians from the four nations gathered in Chile to discuss themes related to the programme (YouTube #14). In a picture of a work group meeting 10 representatives of the four nations sit around the table with another 30 participants (document #6). The Chilean scholar Herman Cortés (document #10) perceives the organizing of these Forums as a success to overcome differences in norms and values between the countries.

4.2.2. Creation of a regional cultural identity

The fourth interorganizational governance mechanism is the creation of a regional cultural identity to connect neighboring regions across national borders. The territorial complexity of the regions along the BiOceanic Corridor route is large due to historical divides (Singer, 2023) and the many regional wars during nation forming in the 19th century (Keen & Wasserman, 1980). For example, Chile victoriously won over Bolivia in the War of the Pacific (1879–1884), leaving Bolivia landlocked, which indirectly blocked its participation in the BiOceanic Corridor programme. The Paraguayan war (1864–1870) between Paraguay and an alliance of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay resulted in

killing of 100.000 people, leaving Paraguay being one of the poorest countries in the region. The Cisplante War (1825–1828) between Brazil and Argentina over the territory of what later became Uruguay resulted in a long standing animosity between the two. And recent border disputes in the Andes and Patagonia between Argentina and Chile nearly escalated in a war. This history has hindered the development of a regional identity (Singer, 2023).

Latin America. Brazil, Paraguay, Chile and Argentina do share some common cultural elements such as gastronomic habits, religion (catholic), dances, folk performances, and some indigenous heritage (document #7). However, "there is a lack of identity in the continent. The development of the corridor will support the development of the historical identity; we belong to a geographic base that we share" (Interview #3). Therefore, unplanned integration in the BiOceanic Corridor potentially can lead to the strengthening of regional inequalities (document #27). The Work Group therefore suggested to promote a regional innovation system, in which cooperation between the productive sector, companies, universities, and research institutes (YouTube #3, #21, #24, #27).

Not all communities are willing to integrate into a new regional identity. For example, Mennonites, originating from Canada, Russia, and Europe, live in isolated communities trying to preserve their traditional culture, based upon religious values (Roessingh & Verver, 2022). However, the new road is constructed along their communities and will challenge their traditional way of live. In their study on Mennonite communities in Belize, Roessingh and Verver (2022) found contention between Mennonites and state demands for assimilation into administrative systems and Mennonite resistance to these demands based on their religious-moral code. Therefore, BBC journalist Chambers wonders if the cultural costs to the indigenous communities and the Mennonites in Paraguay who chose to live in isolation, is worth the economic profits of the programme (YouTube #28). In conclusion, creating a regional identity is only partly an answer to the complexity of cultural-cognitive elements in the programme.

4.3. Interorganizational governance mechanism at programme level

4.3.1. Partnering of key participants

The fifth interorganizational governance mechanism is the connecting of key participants of the BiOceanic Corridor programme. As the Work Group does not report separately to the national governments, national governments are represented by linking pins, which are public officials representing a national departments, among which, the Ministries de Infrastructure, of Public Work, and of Transport. Furthermore, the Ministry of Law and Justice joint to discuss border security, the Ministry of Economics negotiated trade affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism explored opportunities to increase tourism. Other national institutions such as National Police participate in specific discussions. This coordination of key partners is perceived to be essential for the success of the programme; "services have to be well developed and aligned with project goals and institutions have to prioritize, invest and support needed changes" (document #32). Franco et al. (2025) studied the networks of key participants in the BiOceanic Corridor and found that coordination in Brazil was related to a single prominent actor with a strong influence of academic partners; that in Paraguay national government coordinated activities but networks were highly fragmented; in Argentina too, networks were highly fragmented but with a strong influence of private sector; while in Chile there was a high cohesion between key actors with coordinating role of subnational government.

Apart from national departments, multiple regional authorities, such as provincial and municipalities authorities were involved as key stakeholders. For example, 12 regional actors under supervision of two consultants discussed a comparative study of logistics costs and Chilean port efficiency (document #22). This included a network of regional academic and research institutions studying transport, regional economics and infrastructure development. However, an analysis regarding

networks of actors and organizations pointed the minimal participation from especially local governments (document #10). This is in line with findings of Franco et al. (2025) who observed poor coordination between subnational public agencies and private sector actors in the BiOceanic Corridor programme.

Private organizations such as the national associations of trade companies, logistic companies, and port authorities are involved as key stakeholders. One of these local partners is for example the Corfo Antofagasta Committee working in coordination with the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism to contribute to productive development in the Antofagasta territory (document #18). Especially the connection to the private sector in these regions is crucial, as it is “the blood of the corridor, what is a corridor without private business!” (interview #3). So far, the involvement of the private sector in the development of the BiOceanic Corridor is underdeveloped (Franco et al., 2025), “which, together with the effects of the pandemic, has made for limited progress in commercial and tourism agreements” (document #14). This is in line with Scholvin et al. (2024) who warn that in the BiOceanic Corridor programme each country strives to maximize their benefits at the expense of others.

Finally, a general weakness of the BiOceanic Corridor is the minimal participation of environmental groups, small villages and local communities along the corridor route to improve social development and work opportunities with respect to gender and local communities (Kunaka & Carruthers, 2014). For example, the Chaco is populated by the *Ayoreo* and *Guaraní* indigenous people and Mennonite settlers. The consequences of the new road for them are enormous. The deforestation of the Gran Chaco forest changing the life of the *Ayoreo* and *Guaraní* significantly. Already 20 % of the forest has been converted into land for cattle grazing and agro-industrial production since 1985 (document #30). Their resistance against the megaprojects is growing during the construction of the Corridor (YouTube #5, 28). The collective value attributed to transnational infrastructure projects frequently overshadows the voices of those directly impacted, underscoring the importance of inclusive infrastructural development approaches (Saiyarod, 2025). Overall, partnering of key participants has been used in the BiOceanic Corridor programme as an interorganizational governance mechanism to cope regulative elements of institutional complexity at international and regional level.

4.3.2. Work tables: platform for discussing interfaces

The sixth interorganizational governance mechanism is the establishment of Work Tables, which are sector-specific and project-focused groups of technical experts and officials from relevant national ministries (e.g., transport, planning, infrastructure) to discuss technical alignment, share data and project updates, and coordinate timelines and standards across borders (document #10) to cope both regulative and normative elements in the institutional environment of the BiOceanic Corridor programme. The first Work Table discusses the topic of trade integration between the four countries. Economic growth is stimulated by a faster and cheaper connection with the Asian markets. For example, 30 % of Brazilian exports is transported to China (valuing 90 billion US\$ in 2022). Generally, a passage by ship from Brazil to China takes 45 days. The transnational trade routes are now via the Panama Canal or via Cape Horn. Every day, almost forty vessels passed through the Panama Canal, with vessels under the flag of the United States and China as top users, paying an average toll of US\$ 54.000 (Smits, 2014). The corridor is calculated to reduce travel costs with 30 % and save 14 days of traveling time. The economic impact of the BiOceanic Corridor is promising as the creation of new routes has far reaching transnational impact on the global economy and can open up new markets (Silva et al., 2018).

The second Work Table discusses the coordination of border management. Cortés (document #10) writes that “it will be necessary [for the corridor] to have an overall procedure that is standardized as much as possible, with electronic border controls and using modern

technologies”. In this second Work Table, representatives of national governments discuss what the barriers are for efficient border management and how customs procedures can be synchronized. Now these are different for all type of goods; fruit, meat, mining, etc. all have their own border procedure (document #23).

Infrastructure, transport and logistics is discussed in the third Work Table, related to the physical realization of road infrastructure, transport facilities and logistics. “I just passed the Abra Blanca pass at 4080 m, with white snowcapped mountains around. This is really high and I lack oxygen at this altitude. What will this do with Brazilian truckdrivers coming from the Chaco?” (Field notes, March 2024). According to reports, new logistic hubs need to be developed to link the east-west to the north-south transport systems. For example, a logistic hub in Jujuy, northwest Argentina, could collect goods from Paraguay and transport these with local Argentinian drivers to the ports in northern Chile. “These drivers know the Andes, are accustomed to the cold, altitude and lack of oxygen. And, very importantly, they can come back with a new load on their trucks” (interview #3). However, this dependency on territorial rescaling to sub- and supranational levels, while national governments are in power is according to Scholvin et al. (2024) one of the main reason for a potential failure of the BiOceanic Corridor programme.

The fourth Work Table involves a network of Universities, which is unique in Latin America. Universities in the regions along the route use their research capacity to execute studies on topics related to the development of the BiOceanic Corridor and share knowledge with other universities. For example, la Universidad Católica del Norte in Chile received a delegation of Brazil consisting of representatives of the government of Parana, academics, private owners of companies (YouTube #7). The connection of universities to corridor development is not standard in corridor developments, but “I earlier learned how important it is to have connection with academics, lecturers, and researchers” (interview #3).

The fifth Work Table discussed the impact and flows of tourism along the route. With the opening of the new road, Brazilians can easily travel from Campo Grande to popular places such as Salta and Jujuy and onwards to Chile: “We parked the car along the RN 51 to observe the mighty snowcapped Chilean mountains and enjoyed the scenery. We got into a conversation with a Brazilian couple from Sao Paulo who made a trip to Chile and Peru with their camper” (Field notes, March 2024). A large influx of tourists from the Mato Grosso do Sul is expected, as for them traveling to Argentina is faster than traveling to Sao Paulo. “Due to the diversity of attractions in the four countries, the potential for tourism development is immense” (document #29). To support the growth of tourism more is needed than just a road. Therefore, Brazil introduced a model how to make *paradores* [rest places] along the route, including hotels, restaurants, *artensinia*, energy and gas fuel stations (YouTube #2).

Recently, a sixth Work Table on security issues such as drugs traffic, human traffic, weapons, prostitution, etc. has been added to the programme (document #10). Security issues in Latin America are a serious issue and a way for national governments to control movement of people and goods (Silva et al., 2018). The Work Table invited police forces from the four different nations to coordinate their security and intelligence strategies. “So far, if we help to launch the start of a common strategy on intelligence, that would be a tremendous achievement of the project” (interview #3). And addressing a shortcoming of the governance structure of the programme, Cortés (document #10) suggests to include an extra Work Table on the social development and environmental management. This suggestion for an inclusive infrastructural development approach (Saiyarod, 2025) is (too) late in the process and has not adapted by the programme. Overseeing the coordination in the BiOceanic Corridor programme Franco et al. (2025) warn for high costs of such a complex coordination and negotiation among stakeholders, which could escalate costs and delays in decision-making processes.

4.3.3. Convergence of cultural diversity

The seventh and final interorganizational governance mechanism is convergence of cultural diversity, which indicates that multiple actors with diverse backgrounds, interests, and practices, from different countries, ethnicities, institutional systems, and sectors, come together and find common ground to collaborate on a shared goal. This governance mechanism tries to value and cope with the large cultural-cognitive complexity in the institutional environment of the BiOceanic Corridor programme. Culture is here understood as the result of social construction by actors ascribing meaning to their situation which together make up a cultural framework (Alvesson, 2002). The cultural complexity of the Latin American continent has its historical roots in the Conquest and the Spanish/Portuguese colonization which reside in memories and scars of conflicts in various social groups, of indigenous or mixed blood origins, that compete for status, power, and wealth (Singer, 2023).

A clear cultural divide in the BiOceanic Corridor programme is the difference between representatives of the Portuguese speaking Brazil and the Spanish speaking countries of Chile, Argentina and Paraguay. Although Portuguese speaking Brazilians can understand (and sometimes) speak Spanish, the other way around is more difficult. In the Work Group and Forum meetings Spanish was the dominant language (e.g. YouTube #14, #15, #16, #17), which made the selection of Spanish speaking public officers important for the work group sessions. In the documents written in Portuguese, Spanish (and sometimes English) summaries were made, while English was used in international presentations outside of the Latin American region.

Another important cultural divide is between indigenous groups, colonists, and mestizos (mixed origin). Indigenous groups such as the Kolla in highland Andean areas and the Ayoreo and Guaraní in Chaco low lands hardly participate in the regional economy (YouTube #28). And the construction of new roads “leads to more deforestation and felling of forests in small stretches, which puts enormous pressure on the fragile ecosystem,” said Lovera, who heads an organization that fights to protect indigenous groups in the Chaco (document #30; YouTube #5, #28). In many of the reports and presentations, for example document #6 on the Paraguayan part of the road construction, threats for local communities and environment are not mentioned.

The Forum meetings gave limited attention to the exchange of knowledge on local cultures. For example, in the Forum meeting in Salta local representatives were wearing pañuelos rojo (red scarfs or bandanas) (YouTube #15). However, “no matter what political color, governments have prioritized extractive activities as a means to fuel economic growth over potential social and environmental consequences for indigenous

people” (Silva et al., 2018: 27). The material and non-material cultures of the regions permeating the BiOceanic to safeguard the sense of place of local citizens in favor of citizenship rights (document #7). Resistance against the BiOceanic Corridor programme especially came from Chaco communities (document #30) For example, the Mapucha Indians in Central Chile have been involved in an armed conflict over roads passing their territories (YouTube #28).

5. Discussion

This paper studied how interorganizational governance mechanisms coordinate the transnational infrastructure programme BiOceanic Corridor across the multiple national environments of Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile. A single case study approach (Yin, 2003) has been used to collect data through desk research, analyses of YouTube videos and field work. The found configuration of seven interorganizational governance mechanisms operates across multiple levels and national environments (see Fig. 4). These findings contribute to the academic debate on transnational infrastructure programmes (Arto et al., 2009; Balasubramani et al., 2020; Denicol & Davies, 2022; Levitt & Scott, 2017) and on interorganizational governance mechanisms (Brunet, 2021b; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2019; Roehrich et al., 2023).

5.1. Managing transnational infrastructure programmes

The first contribution is to the debate on transnational infrastructure programmes (Ainamo et al., 2010; Balasubramani et al., 2020; Levitt & Scott, 2017; Mahalingam et al., 2011; Scott et al., 2011) with new insights on how a specific configuration of governance mechanisms is used to manage institutional complexity in a transnational infrastructure programme. Unlike many other major infrastructure programmes (f.e. Van Marrewijk et al., 2016), in the BiOceanic Corridor programme there was no SPV and limited central authority to manage institutional complexity, while the national environments of Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile caused numerous institutional conflicts. For example, the diversity of custom procedures for fruit, meat, mining, etc. hindered fluent border passing. Institutional conflict is a central concept in the study of global projects (Levitt & Scott, 2017; Mahalingam et al., 2011). Navigating these conflicts is critical to successfully steering infrastructure projects (Balasubramani et al., 2020). To do so, governance arrangements are often selected based on the institutional affiliations inculcated by the field-level context (Balasubramani et al., 2020). For example, the transnational environment of the Mercosur was supportive in the signing of a declaration. However, the findings of the

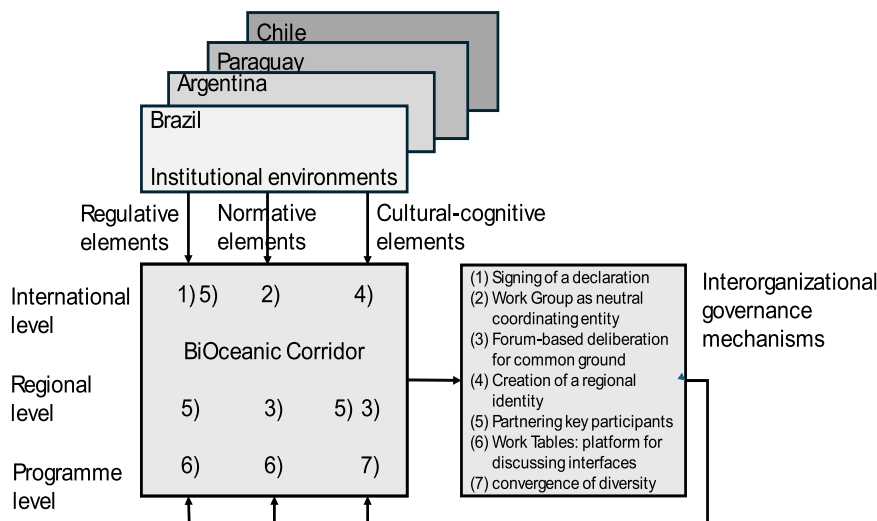


Fig. 4. Findings in conceptual framework of BiOceanic Corridor programme.

study show that the configuration of governance mechanisms initially selected is due to changes. For example, the sixth Work Table on security issues was not mentioned in the initial design of the BiOceanic Corridor programme but added later on. Mahalingam et al. (2011) already noted that it is often impossible to initially select a perfect configuration of governance mechanisms. This is supported by a study of twelve Indian megaprojects which found that no single combination of institutions, project characteristics, and governance mechanisms guarantees success (Delhi & Mahalingam, 2020). The configuration of governance mechanisms used to manage institutional complexity in transnational infrastructure programmes is inherently context-specific and evolves over time.

The governance mechanisms identified in this study are not entirely new; several have been noted in earlier research (f.e. Alqershy et al., 2025; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2019). Governance structures are often borrowed from a project's proximate field, and subsequently modified and adapted to the local context (Balasubramani et al., 2020). As cultural and institutional variation are significant in global projects (Ainamo et al., 2010), such modifications and adaptations produce configurations of governance arrangements that may be unique to a project's specific environment. In the BiOceanic Corridor, the distinctive strength lies in this contextually adapted configuration of governance mechanisms—particularly the development of coordination through forum-based deliberation (Mok et al., 2015; Stephenson, 2025) supported by transnational platforms. This is in line with the study of Balasubramani et al. (2020) who argue that governance arrangements evolve through a bottom-up process while simultaneously accommodating top-down, institutionally driven pressures.

The case study indicates that transnational infrastructure programmes benefit from a balanced configuration of interorganizational governance mechanisms, which allows actors to collectively manage institutional pressures and maintain programme progress amid cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative challenges. Such a balanced configuration of mechanisms is in line with earlier studies (f.e. Levitt & Scott, 2017). However, these studies tend to focus primarily on normative elements (e.g. Delhi & Mahalingam, 2020; Qiu et al., 2019). The strong presence of normative support without regulative and cognitive support was also observed in failed Indian megaprojects (Delhi & Mahalingam, 2020). The BiOceanic Corridor case shows the importance of cultural-cognitive elements for governing transnational infrastructure programmes. For example, in coping with language and cultural differences and when including indigenous communities. This is in line with other studies (Saiyarod, 2025), indicating that cultural-cognitive elements remain rather underdeveloped in transnational infrastructure programmes, notwithstanding the wide diversity of national, organizational, and professional cultures (Esposito et al., 2021; Scott et al., 2011; Smits, 2014). Exogenous management practices may collide with programme management routines (Brunet, 2021a). Therefore, if transnational infrastructure programmes are unable to govern cultural-cognitive elements, this can be held responsible for cost overruns and time delays (Brunet, 2021a; Saiyarod, 2025; Scott et al., 2011; Shi & Xiao, 2021; Smits, 2014; Winch et al., 1997).

5.2. Interorganizational governance mechanisms at multiple levels

The second contribution of the paper is to the debate on interorganizational governance mechanisms of major infrastructure programmes (Brunet, 2021b; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2019; Roehrich et al., 2023) with the deepening of interorganizational governance mechanisms underpinning coordination of projects across multiple levels and nations. This is in line with earlier studies acknowledging that interorganizational governance is a multilevel phenomenon (Biesenthal & Wilder, 2014; Brunet, 2019). Unlike the study of Brunet (2021b) who found that a governance mechanism is related to a specific level, the findings of the BiOceanic Corridor programme show that the same governance mechanism can be implemented at multiple levels. For

example, 'creation of a regional identity' focuses at both regional and international level.

Furthermore, whereas governance literature emphasizes contractual mechanisms over relational ones (Alqershy et al., 2025), evidence from the BiOceanic Corridor programme reveals an opposite pattern; a limited reliance on contractual mechanisms and a strong prevalence for relational mechanisms. This finding seems to be more in line with Stephenson (2025) who found that forums and informal networking are key interorganizational governance mechanisms in European transnational transport corridors. Such mechanisms are labeled 'experimentalist governance' in policy science (Sabel & Zeitlin, 2010).

Finally, the seven found interorganizational governance mechanisms confirm Frederiksen et al. (2021) stating there is a wide diversity of governance mechanisms in transnational infrastructure programmes. These mechanisms add to the ones described by others (e.g. Frederiksen et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2019; Stephenson, 2025).

6. Conclusions

This paper used a single case study approach to answer the question of how interorganizational governance mechanisms coordinate the transnational infrastructure programme BiOceanic Corridor across multiple nations. Based upon the collected data a configuration of seven interorganizational governance mechanisms at three different levels were found. The study is relevant to the debate on transnational corridor programmes (Levitt & Scott, 2017; Qiu et al., 2019; Shi & Xiao, 2021) as worldwide governments are establishing corridor programmes (Kunaka & Carruthers, 2014) and transnational transport networks (Stephenson, 2025). Furthermore, the study contributes to the debate on interorganizational governance mechanisms (Brunet, 2021b; Frederiksen et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2019; Roehrich et al., 2023).

The limitations of this study are found in the poor response of interviewees, involved organizations, and in the limited time for executing fieldwork. To overcome these limitations, future studies can apply comparative ethnography, process tracing, or longitudinal case study to capture governance adaptation in transnational programmes (Fyh, 2025). Another emerging question from the BiOceanic Corridor study is the role of intermediaries in translating global governance standards into local practices; how can equitable participation of local communities and indigenous groups be guaranteed? To what extent do regional alliances provide informal governance platforms for transnational megaprojects? And how do cultural differences influence the development of trust and collaboration between stakeholders in transnational programmes?

The implications for practitioners of this unique BiOceanic Corridor study are to be found in the careful creation of contingent governance mechanisms to coordinate projects in transnational infrastructure programmes. Programme actors, in the studied case 'ambassadors', connecting multiple levels and nations, are of utmost importance to implement multi-level governance mechanisms. To prevent a transnational programme from becoming subject to geo-political contestation, practitioners may employ governance mechanisms that rely on supportive transnational platforms (e.g., Mercosur) and forum-based deliberation structures (Mok et al., 2015; Stephenson, 2025), such as Work Tables, to engage with stakeholders. For transnational programmes it is highly important to not only focus upon formal but also on normative and cultural-cognitive mechanisms (Saiyarod, 2025; Scott et al., 2011). Such mechanisms are important to fuel potential social and environmental consequences for indigenous people over economic growth.

The skills discussed above are especially relevant in the context of the Global South where political situations can be unstable (Ika et al., 2020). In such context national governments will be reluctant to delegate budget and responsibility to a SPV, as such a central authority can pressure nations to fulfill their obligations. In these situations, programme managers should further develop their skills to diplomatically

operate in political arenas, much in the same way as European Commissioners function in transnational multistakeholder governance [Stephenson \(2025\)](#). In this way, programme management can contribute to the successful management of infrastructure programmes in the Global South, and contribute to the global projects literature in which contexts of the Global South have been underrepresented ([Ainamo et al., 2010](#)).

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Alfons van Marrewijk: Writing – review & editing, Writing –

original draft, Validation, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

There are no conflict of interest in this paper

Appendix A. List of documents on the BioOceanic Corridor programme

#	Author(s)	Year	Title (in Spanish/Portuguese)	Pages
1.	L.I. Fernandez	2001	In Gestion Y estrategia	19
2.		2011	Corredor Bioceánico Ferroviario: Estudios técnicos referentes al Eje de Capricornio. Informe Consolidado.	350
3.	Four national governments	2015	Declaración de Asunción sobre Corredores Bioceánicos	2
4.	Four national governments	2017	Declaración de Brasilia sobre Corredores Bioceánicos	2
5.	J. Parkinson	2018	Presentación coordinador Brasil Corredor carretero bioceánico	15
6.	G. Arréllaga	2019	Presentación Ministry of Public Works Paraguay: Bioceanic Corredor	25
7.	M.L. Ferreira, M.A. Castilho, E.M. Oliveira	2019	Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile / Bioceanic Route: cultural relations in the lived territory. INTERAÇÕES, 20, 69–89	20
8.	Gerencia de capacidades tecnológicas	2019	“Smartfruit”; digitalización de cadenas agroalimentarias frutícolas	21
9.	P. Silva Barros, R. Padula, L. Wexell Severo, S. Escobar Samurio, J. de Souza Borba Concalves	2020	Corredo Bioceánico de Mato Grosso Do Sul ao Pacifico: Producao e comerisona rota da integracao sul-americana	190
10.	H. Cortés	2020	Construccion de capacidades para el corredor bioceánico en la region de Antofagasta	32
11.	L. Ascencio, C. Felipe Manchón C. G. Guzmán Mariano, Terashima Rosa González, R. Sergio Cruz	2020	Análisis de impacto potencial del Corredor Bioceánico del Eje Capricornio sobre la demanda de puertos de las Regiones de Tarapacá y Antofagasta-Chile	100
12.	F. Figueiredo, F. Brites, M. Constantino, A. Cantero Dorsa	2021	Ruta Bioceánica: un enfoque basado en indicadores económicos de 2016 a 2019	17
13.	M. Atienza	2021	Impactos económicos y sociales del corredor bioceánico vial en la región de Antofagasta. Una evaluación preliminar.	148
14.	H. Cortés (editors)	2021	Bi-Oceanic Corridor – a transportation artery across Latin America	4
15.	P. Silva Barros, F.J. Ribeiro, A. Pineli, L. Wexell Severo, C. Alves do Carmo, J. de Souza Borba Gonçalves, H. Christoffer Carneiro	2021	In: Gerencia de riesgos y seguros. Integración Económica Bilateral Argentina-Brasil: reconstruido pontes	23
16.	P.S. Barros	2021	Mato Grosso do Sul's Protagonism for the Resilience of the Bio-Oceanic Road Corridor in Moncoes	24
17.	P. Silva Barros, L.Wexell Severo	2021	Transformaciones geoeconómicas en América del sur: Amarco, integración regional y Asia-Pacífico	
18.	C.H. Ribeiro da Silva, H. Christoffer Carneiro	2021	Servicios logísticas para el comercio exterior.	283
19.	Plataforma logística Antofagasta	2021	Entender el Corredor Bioceánico Vial: Los relatos de los expertos y de la Región de Antofagasta	73
20.	M. Atienza, H. Cortés, L. Franco y L. Mi. Rodrigo	2021		
21.	P. Silva Barros, L. Wexell Severo	2022	Nota Técnica: a dinâmica recente do algodão no mato grosso: possibilidades de exportação para a peru e a Asia-Pacífico	14
22.	A. Gervásio de Sousa, H. Christoffer Carneiro	2022	Primera asesoría para la identificación y caracterización de los insumos, materias primas y productos de la oferta exportable de la Zicosur con potencial de agrogación de valor y contenido regional en la región de Antofagasta.	134
23.	Ahem M., R. Meneses, H. Morales, A. Manhood	2022	Estudio comparado de costos logísticos eficiencia portuaria el comercio exterior en el corredor bioceánico trópico de capricornio	322
24.	L. Ascencio	2022	Primera asesoría para la identificación y caracterización de los insumos, materias prima y productos de la oferta exportable de la ZICOSUR con la potencial de agregación de valor y contenido regional en la región de Antofagasta.	134
25.	Alejandro Ahern M., Ricardo Meneses E., Henry Morales G. Alejandro Manhood M.	2022	Corredores económicos transformadores del noroeste Argentina	
26.	World Bank	2023	Linking Brazilian Regions to Value Chains: Is There a Potential for Regional Development? In Economies	
27.	Sanguinet et al.	2023	Dynamics of local productive arrangements in the municipalities of Mato Grosso do Sul considering the transformations of the Bioceanic Corridor. PLoS ONE 18(4): e0284023.	14
28.	M. Boldrine Abrita , R. Stradiotto Vignandi, D. Amorim Souza Centurião, A. Rondina Neto, A.P. Camilo Pereira, G. Espindola Junior, N. Marques, V. Aparecida de Moraes Weber, R. Franco Mas	2023	Dynamics of local productive arrangements in the municipalities of Mato Grosso do Sul considering the transformations of the Bioceanic Corridor. PLoS ONE 18(4): e0284023.	
29.	Abrita MB, Vignandi RS, Centurião DAS, Rondina Neto A, Pereira APC, Espindola Junior G,	2023	Mapea de nichos productivos en América Latina y el Caribe: Experiencias y Lecciones Aprendidas	125
30.	Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe	2023	Perspectivas da economia criativa e do desenvolvimento local no Corredor Bioceánico INTERAÇÕES, 20, 193–210	17

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#	Author(s)	Year	Title (in Spanish/Portuguese)	Pages
30.	Laurence Blair	2023	Rocky road: Paraguay's new Chaco highway threatens rare forest and last of the Ayoreo people Global development The Guardian:	7
31.	Barros, P.S., Gonçalves, J.d.S.B.,	2021	O protagonismo do Mato Grosso do Sul para a resiliência do Corredor Rodoviário Bioceânico. Monções: Revista de Relações Internacionais da UFGD, 10, 105–128.	13
32.	Atienza, M., Cortés, H., Franco, L., Rodrigo, L., Antofagasta, G.R., de Antofagasta, C.R.,	2020	Entender el Corredor Bioceánico Vial: Los Relatos de los Expertos y de la Región de Antofagasta.	

Appendix B. List of YouTube footages on the Bioceanic Corridor megaproject

#	Level	YouTube	Content	Information of website
1.	International	Corredor Ferroviario Bioceánico de Integración del cual Bolivia es parte, es ratificado por Mercosur	Interview Benjamín Blanco, Viceministro de Comercio Exterior de Bolivia	Bolivia TV Official, 16 min, streamed live on Dec 9, 2022, 3 K views, 51 likes, with transcript
2.	International	Corredor Bioceánico: un "revival" político (05.01.2023) Iquique TV -	Public officers supporting the project	Chile, Iquique Television, 3 min, 5 Jan 2023, 5,5 K views, 99 likes.
3.	International	El Revolucionario plan de BRASIL para Cambiar Sudamérica El Corredor bioceánico	Explaining the background of the project for broader audience	Paraguay, Educamundi, 11,35 min, 78 K views, 2,8 K likes, visited Jan 2024,
4.	International	El Corredor Bioceánico que revolucionará Sudamérica Historia Geopolítica	Critical geopolitical perspective on project	Historia Política, 25 Sept 2022, 1,5 M views, 39 K likes, visited Jan 2024,
5.	Regional	Building the Bi-Oceanic Corridor	Critical reflection of Paraguay citizens	CGTN America, 3,10 min, 808 views, 16 likes, visited Jan 2024
6.	Regional	The route that will revolutionize South America	Critical reflection on positive and negative impact of project	Brazil, Economic of things, 8,50 min, 206 views, 0 likes, visited Jan 2024
7.	Programme	Construcción de Capacidades para el Corredor Bioceánico en la Región de Antofagasta	Seminar hosted by Hernan Cortés. National coordinators evaluate the programme	Chile, Universidad del Norte, 120 min, Jun 30, 2021, 51 K views 451 likes, with transcript
8.	Programme	Avances de la construcción del Corredor Vial Bioceánico 1ra Parte	Interview with Jorge Vergara, Director de Proyectos Estratégico del MOPC, Paraguay	Paraguay Canal Pro, 9 min, 5,7 K views, 500 likes, visited dec 2023
9.	Programme	Avances de la construcción del Corredor Vial Bioceánico 2 da Parte	Interview with Jorge Vergara, Director de Proyectos Estratégico del MOPC, Paraguay	Paraguay Canal Pro, 12,40 min, 8 K views, 163 likes, visited dec 2023
10.	Programme	Webinario: Corredores Bioceánicos del Área de Capricornio 4.0: Inversiones para el Desarrollo	Webinar of experts discussing progress project	Cristian Rojas Veas, 207 min, 26 Sept 2020, 197 views, 3 likes, visited Jan 2024,
11.	Programme	Corredor Bioceánico: Los puentes que cambiarán Paraguay (Héroes del Chaco y La Bioceánica)	Progress on the bridges and road construction in Paraguay	Peru, Macro alianza, June 2023, 2.1 K views, 789 likes, visited Jan 2024
12.	Programme	Brazil and Chile fast-track bioceanic corridor		CGTN America, 808 views, 16 likes, visited Jan 2024
13.	Regional	Resumen de la primera jornada del Foro: Tocopilla, un Puerto para Chile	1st meeting of regional representatives	Chile, Tocopilla, 8 min, 96 views, 1 likes,
14.	Regional	2º Foro de los territorios subnacionales del Corredor Bioceánico Capricornio -	2nd meeting of regional representatives	Chile, Antofagasta, 160 min, November 2022, 200 views, 5 likes,
15.	Regional	Inició en Salta el tercer Foro de Territorios Subnacionales del Corredor Bioceánico Capricornio	3rd meeting of regional representatives	Argentina, Salta, 6 min, 13–14 April 2023, 1.1 K views, 0 likes,
16.	Regional	Autoridades lanzan IV Foro de los Territorios Subnacionales del Corredor Bioceánico	4th meeting of regional representatives	Chile, Tarapacá, 2 Nov 2023, 4 min, 75 views, 5 likes, visited Jan 2024
17.	Regional	Intensa agenda en "IV Foro Corredor Bioceánico"	4th meeting of regional representatives	Chile, Tarapacá, 29 Nov 2023, 8 min, 1.7 K views, 15 likes, visited Jan 2024
18.	Regional	Corredor Bioceánico avanza en la región	Development of the Corredor Bioceánico in the regio of Iquique	Chile, Iquique Television, 24 Sept 2024, 3 min, visited April 2025, 25 likes
19.	Regional	<u>Corredor Bioceánico, BIFIPV, Energía producida en Chile, Seminario para proveedores</u>	Public and private actors meeting on development of Corredor Bioceánico in Antofagasta	Antofagasta, Vision Sustentable, Febr 2025, 15 min, visited April 2025, 2 likes, 89 views
20.	Regional	<u>Corredor Bioceánico: avanzan puentes y rutas</u>	Minister of Transports and Minister Interior de Chile discuss the progress of Corredor Bioceánico	Chile, Iquique Television, 17 Jan 2025, 3 min, visited April 2025, 79 likes, 2,4 K views
21.	International	DESCUBRA TUDO sobre as Obras da ROTA BIOCEÁNICA - Conexão entre Brasil, Paraguai, Argentina e Chile	Explaining the Bioceanic Corridor programme to broad audience.	Engineer, Aug 2024, 17 min, 503 K views, 21 K views, visited April 2025
22.	International	<u>Saiba porque a Ponte da Integração entre Brasil e Paraguai ainda não abriu</u>	Explaining the progress of the Bioceanic Corridor programme to broad audience in Portuguese	Canal SSC, Sept 2024, 9 min, 201 K views, 3,5 K likes, visited April 2025
23.	International	<u>Chile y Brasil reactivan el proyecto de corredor bioceánico Sudamérica - Asia</u>	Explaining the progress of the Bioceanic Corridor programme to broad audience	MasContainer, 14 K views, Sept 2024, 4 min, 332 likes, visited April 2025
24.	International	<u>CORREDOR BIOCEÁNICO: La nueva ruta de comercio en Sudamérica</u>	Presenting the economic advantages of the programme	News La Republica LR±, March, visited April 2025 183 likes
25.	Regional	Avanza a paso firme la construcción del puente de la Ruta Bioceánica entre Paraguay y Brasil	Progress of the building of the bridge between Paraguay y Brasil	RCC Noticias, 6 K views, Aug 2024, 3 min, 189 likes, visited April 2025
26.	Regional	<u>Ruta PY15 - Corredor Bioceánico</u>	Explaining the progress of the infrastructure projects in Paraguay	MOPC Paraguay, 2023, 39 K views, 618 likes, 3 min, visited April 2025

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#	Level	YouTube	Content	Information of website
27.	International	Corredor Bioceánico Vial: El MEGAPROYECTO que revolucionará el comercio en SUDAMÉRICA #NewsLR	Explaining the economic benefits of the infrastructure projects for Latin America	News La Republica LR±, March, visited April 2025 66 likes
28.	Regional	Gran Chaco: Will a new road improve or destroy the 'green hell'? - BBC News.	Are cultural costs to the indigenous communities and the Mennonites who would like to live in isolation, is worth the economic profits?	Jane Chambers BBC

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