

Yves Schemeil

The Making of the World

How International Organizations
Shape Our Future



Verlag Barbara Budrich

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Preface

In a single day every one of us depends on dozens of IOs without being aware of it. In our world today there is no such thing as free speech or an individual act. Countless norms frame what we can do or say in any particular circumstance. While ordinary citizens believe they can oust rulers from power at any time, they are unaware of the invisible hand that guides them all day long.

Waking up, then using electric plugs and appliances puts you under the umbrella of ISO, which sets technical standards; whatever you wear has been bought or given to you because the WTO multi-fibre agreements made it accessible to you; the WHO has authorized any medicine you must take with your tea, coffee or chocolate—all respecting commodity trading standards, some matching fair trade labels like Max Havelaar; your food and beverages comply with the hygiene and edibility requirements from organizations like the HACCP and the Codex Alimentarius—and, if you are poor in a low income country, food is provided to you by the WFP, the FAO, UNRWA, OXFAM or any other humanitarian agencies; the music you hear while having breakfast conforms to the WIPO copyright system; the weather forecast depends on data collected worldwide according to WMO standards, before being passed to its headquarters—even in time of war and by all combatant nations!

Then, click and you are on the Internet, a miracle you owe to ICANN and ITU; inserting “emojis” in short messages on your Smartphone depends on the UNICODE Consortium agreement about their design and meaning; publishing a paper in a Journal relies on a specific authentication and registration number called “DOI” (for “digital object identifier”), which is given to authors by an international Foundation through a standardization system, itself established by ISO; if you receive traditional mail you owe it to UPU; transport to the workplace or abroad is governed by a number of automotive, rail or aircraft industries, plus regulations that prohibit certain types of fuel and impose security measures. Even your insurance policy has oversight, here the International Association of Insurance Supervisors. Indeed, every imported item you need comes to you because its trade is permitted by the World Custom Organization and environmental NGOs like Forest Stewardship.

Your working hours are under the aegis of the ILO, which regulates legal contracts and conditions of life must be. Accounting must be consistent with the templates of International Accountancy Associations. When your boss hires foreign people, she must comply with rules enacted by the EU or other regional organizations. Labour conditions must also meet the norms of the

UNHCR, the IOM, and various NGOs concerned with human rights and integration of refugees or repatriation of irregular migrants. Additionally, a policy of affirmative action and at the very least a concern for gender balance and equal opportunities are covered by the EU or UN agencies. Whether these organizations are public, private or both, they all affect your employment, your career, your promotions, and even your life expectancy.

How did this happen in such a short span of time without anyone being aware? Why are our freedoms restricted year after year through the proliferation of new norms, themselves enacted by new IOs without evident response on a national political stage? The answer is: because States through Inter-governmental Organizations (IGOs) or activists within Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) simply delegate power to the international organization of which they are members; because they tolerate its growing autonomy; because they accept its empowerment through networking, rather than shutting it down when its mandate becomes obsolete or its resolutions can no longer be enforced. When the environment of countries or parties becomes too complex to be faced alone, coalitions address wasteful overlaps or jurisdictional trespass and turn them into a productive division of labour.

This is the very argument of this book. It goes beyond most theories in use in the field of international studies—i.e., realist, neo-realist, institutional, liberal, and constructivist thoughts—or more fine-grained perspectives such as Rational Choice, Principal-Agent, Process-Tracing, Historical/International Sociology, “Practice turn”, etc. Forcing IOs within ready-made views of the world, however fashionable they may be, will not suffice to address them adequately. This is because we have no theory of international Organization as a *process* (in the singular, i.e. how interstate relations are permanently organizing) nor as a collection of existing *sets* of decision-makers (IOs in the plural). Were we to have successfully switched from “organizations” to “organizing”, then we would already have explained why this process is unintended and perhaps undesirable for most IOs leaders although they cannot stop or even slow it at will. Be they rational or emotional, nationalistic or cosmopolitan, performing or resilient, they all contribute to a deterministic process leading to an alleged better world, despite “proof” of the contrary—with the rise of risks and threats, failed states, civil wars, persistence of MAD, etc.

As a sort of control (or counterfactual) theory of this institutionalizing trend, I conclude with an assessment of our “inevitable” march through organizational inflation towards a world government (a hundred years from now?). Clumps of international institutions here and there will probably multiply, despite national sovereigns attempts to dissolve them. Will they reach a stage where the plasma is fully liquid—when the world has a unique and transparent set of transnational institutions?

I aim to provide readers with one convincing and very simple way to explain the intensification of such an organizing process. This purpose is naturally conducive to examining the expansion and sometimes death of various IOs, as well as their collaboration and competition, as it is sometimes contemplated in International Studies. However, it will also enable us to revisit Management and Organization Studies, hence focusing on hybridization and networking rather than inferring a ready-made explanation from popular theories of international regimes and complexes of regimes. Concepts that are less familiar to political scientists, historians, and sociologists will be mobilized—such as transformational leadership, ambidexterity, multi-stakeholderism, etc. Notions usually associated with national public authorities—such as “publicness”, global ethics, and corporate responsibility—will be discussed.

Here now are a few comments about what the book does not address. It is not about interstate cooperation, and it only superficially discusses the balance-of-power between states and IOs. It does not signpost the democratization of the world due to the increasing power of the “international community” or a worldwide “civil society”. It is not focused on geopolitical issues although geopolitics informs the book here and there—so if one is searching for a solution to the Greater Middle East or China Sea quagmires, it is not there (although such topics are not truly absent). It must be read in dynamics. Most of its propositions might be more relevant in the future than in the present. There is an extended time lag between causes and effects. A long intermediate period is necessary to switch from the anarchical world of states to a normative system of organizations.

Last but not least the book does not place the United Nations bodies front and centre as is done in most books on IOs. There is a good reason for this. The UN is but the front (and weak) side of a tentative political organization of the world, which may be out-dated. I am in search of the less visible though fascinating trend towards social, economic, cultural, and cognitive transformation in which the specialized agencies of the UN play a prominent role, but no more than many other IOs. There are those that were created long before 1945 and joined the UN later (like the WMO on weather and climate, the WIPO on intellectual property, or ITU in telecommunications); and those that will never be part of it (NATO, the ICRC). It is perfectly possible that at least some components of the UN system matter less today than other universal organizations created outside it, such as the WTO for trade deregulation or ICANN in Internet governance.

This book could not have been achieved and even conceived without decades of collaboration with dear colleagues across the world. Among them, some became close friends: I took my inspiration from our conversations. Reading their works and discussing their arguments made me elaborate my personal explanatory model. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein, Bob Reinalda, Louis

Bélanger, Eric Brousseau, and Jérôme Sgard did much to help me find my own way in the labyrinth of an all too abundant scholarly literature. They also gave me opportunities to convene seminars with them and with other specialists in IOs in various touristic and less attractive venues, like the IPSA, ECPR, EGOS, ISA, WISC, national PSAs, and “Think 7” (pre G7) meetings.

Such versatility was made possible by welcome funding from the Institut Universitaire de France, the Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Grenoble Ecole de Management, and my home institution and its lab, PACTE. I also owes much to Jean-Christophe Graz, Pierre de Senarclens, Rafael Biermann, Martin Koch, Fulvio Attinà, Dawisson Lopez, and my dear colleagues at Sciences Po (Grenoble and Paris): the list is too long to name them all but one, Jean Leca, my faithful mentor who, with Jean-Claude Thoenig, Jean-Louis Quermonne, and Alain Lancelot, believed in my potential, even when I was but a beginner. I cannot leave out those more recent friends who also contributed to whole sections of the book without being aware of it (among whom Meryem Marzouki, Francesco Amoretti, Mauro Santaniello, Nicola Palladino, Dennis Redeker, and many others, all committed to Internet Governance).

Stimulating students whose master and doctoral theses I had the privilege to supervise or read in Aix-en-Provence, Grenoble, Geneva, Beirut and Tokyo (among whom Clara Egger, Xavier Guillaume, Rachel Polaud, and Hala Subra) did more than they could possibly imagine for my argumentation. Likewise, tens of thousands of e-learners enrolled in my MOOCs on global studies and global politics on Future Learn and EdX/Federica: the chat on whose forums put a lot of pressure on me to carefully check even the most menial details and reply to contradictors.

Finally, Barbara Budrich convinced me that I had to publish this work—if only to take Barry Buzan’s suggestion seriously: at the end of a Stockholm meeting, while I was complaining about the difficulty to publish papers in which theory and data would cohabit within a limited number of pages, he said: “Well, you must definitely write a book!”). While I was reluctant to follow this advice (or simply procrastinating) Barbara put me on track. She remained remarkably flexible about deadlines throughout the process: I must warmly thank her for both part of this equation. Special thanks to Stephen Blanford (BA Jt. Hons.) for copy, linguistic and historical consultations, I learned a lot from him.

While the usual “demerits are mine, and merits are theirs” applies here as everywhere else, I shall now invite readers to go straight to the text with just this in mind: “if you find the book too abstract, tell me; if you judge it enlightening, tell potential readers”.

Yves Schemeil

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List of Acronyms

ABM	Anti Ballistics Missile Treaty
ACCTS	Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
BIRPI	United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual property
BIS	Bank for International Settlements
CFE	Treaty on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development (UN)
CVF	Climate Vulnerable Forum
DG	Director General
EBRD	The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEC	Eurasian Economic Commission
EFTA	European Free trade Association
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAC	Government Advisory Committee (ICANN)
GAELF	Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis
GAVI	The Vaccine Alliance
GONGO	Governmental Non Governmental organizations
HACCP	Hazard Critical Control Point—an FAO organization for the control of food hygiene
HELI	Health and Environment Linkage Initiative
IANA	Internet Assigned Numbers Authority
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IASC	Interagency Steering Committee (UN)
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICANN	International Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization

ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IETF	Internet Engineering Task Force
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization/International Governmental Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMC	International Meteorological Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migrations
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IMPACT	International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force.
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
IoT	Internet of Things
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
IPPNW	International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
IPU	International Postal Union
IR	International Relations/International Studies
ISESCO	World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISOC	Internet Society
ITC	International Trade Center
ITLOS	International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
ITO	International Trade Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
LDC	Less Developed Countries
MAG	Multistakeholder Advisory Group
MDM	Médecins du Monde
MNF	Multinational Firms
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MOST	Management of Social Transformations Programme (UNESCO)
NDB	New Development Bank
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OAS	Organization of American States

OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OIE	World Organization for Animal Health (Organisation Internationale des Epizooties)
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPCW	Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PR	Permanent Representative
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-Operation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization
SG	Secretary General
SIDH	Service International des Droits de l'Homme
SOLAS	Convention for the Safety of Life at Seas
TNC	Transnational Corporations
TRIPS	Trade-related Intellectual property Issues (WTO)
UfC	United for Consensus
UN	United Nations Organization
UN ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNPF	United Nations Fund Population Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations' Secretary General
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

VOICE	Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization (Weather, Water, Climate)
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

In moments of enthusiasm (1944–48 and 1989–1995) intergovernmental organizations have arisen by the tens and NGOs by the thousands. This raises high hopes about the birth of an international community and a global civil society. In nearly every realm of human activity IOs have imposed new standards, established new norms and enacted new rules. Paramount organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, and the EU have been increasingly active for decades. They have been joined by more contested institutions like the WTO or the International Criminal Court.

Since 2010 a reverse trend has seen some states switch from a cooperative game to a power play. Although few governments dare to openly challenge the global security system (as Northern Korea does), or the capitalist system (as Venezuela does) prominent members of the G 20—the club for the wealthiest countries—have recently abandoned their defensive strategy to opt for an offensive stance. By contrast, authoritarian leaders have abandoned isolationism and neutrality to go far beyond their hinterland. The transgressions of international rules by Putin’s Russia, Xi Jin Ping’s China, and Erdogan’s Turkey have replicas elsewhere in Europe, Asia, South America and the Middle East, where Saudi Arabia and Iran are at war by proxy.

None of this is new, however:¹ the history of international institutions always follows the same process, with bifurcations. The first stage of the world system is a conflict between two or more states. Alliances are built to deter foes and avoid war. Belligerence is nonetheless triggered by “desperados” (so called in the early 20th century) or “rogue states” (as they have been known since the beginning of the 21st). Then, destruction is so terrible that governments pledge to prevent war happening ever again. At that stage, organizations are designed to provide global public goods (like security for all, trade for the richest, and development for the poorest). Finally, protest against their alleged partiality or an excess of secrecy favours the creation of countless NGOs of all sorts.

Such cycles have repeatedly occurred: during the 17th century (the treaties of Westphalia), in the early 19th century (the Congress of Vienna), after the two world conflicts (the Peace agreements, the League of Nations, then the UN), and following the end of the Cold War (the WTO, the OESC, the

1 One quote will suffice to show how such trends give a sense of déjà-vu, since the following sentence was written 20 years ago: “Many states, notably the United States, now resist the creation of IOs and hesitate to support those already in operation, citing the shortcomings of international bureaucracy, the costs of formal organization, and the irritations of IO autonomy. This is an ideal time for students of international governance to focus on the other side of the ledger” (Abbott and Snidal 1998: 5).

OICW, the EBRD, and the ICC). Whatever the logic or the ethics behind verbal commitments to make Order lasting, entropy jeopardizes peace-making and redistributive institutions from the very first year of each successive phase.

Before announcing the end of the collaborative turn in international relations, it seems reasonable to invert the problem. Of course, mavericks contest the world system inherited from the late 19th to mid-20th centuries—the more so when they had played a major role in previous periods, like Russia and Turkey during the 17th and 18th centuries.

This is not the point, though; however hostile to a “Western” and “post-colonial” system they pretend to be transgressors cannot resist the pressure exercised by IOs through a mass production of norms. Some governments can be reluctant to comply but they are not free to discard them. Even proactive states that designed the system may try to pull out of a treaty they have drafted. Alternatively, they can block negotiation rounds. In the end, though, they will come back to the negotiating table when there are guarantees that the system will work more smoothly and fairly—a pledge that implies the creation of new institutional bodies. This is the story of trade deregulation, the upgrading of the GATT into the WTO, or the transformation of the European Common market into the EU.

The Institutional Puzzle

We are reaching a stage in history where the situation is neither new, nor more challenging than it was in the past. Of course, non-Western “big men” are bullying their peers to return to less regulated times when their troops could invade neighbouring territories and remain unpunished. What the strongest leaders cannot do is to claim openly that their hands are not tied by global norms and rules. They may criticize universal principles such as the responsibility to protect or gender mainstreaming but they cannot eradicate every embarrassing norm. They can mistake “human rights” for “Western rights”, hence refusing military intervention to rescue people under threat. This will nonetheless turn inconsistent when the victims of a potential genocide matter more to them than to other powers. At any rate, transgressors of international law must concede the validity of the Geneva Conventions on prisoners of war, and civilians in wars. And even when they pretend counterfactually that they respect such Conventions, there will be occasions to support prisoners of conscience, or provide aid to refugees.

In democratic countries the room for manoeuvre of properly elected rulers is drastically limited by the myriads of commitments made by their predecessors, which would take decades to dismantle. Whatever their efforts and

notwithstanding the mass support of voters tempted by a “demarcation” from the non-national instead of an “integration” to the world market and to global institutions (Kriesi et al. 2008) neither Theresa May nor Donald Trump could easily withdraw from the tangled web of international agreements signed by their predecessors.

Turning to the people, most citizens in the past were conscious of the big gap between their own political skills and the sophistication of their representatives in parliament or ministers in government, not to mention judges in courts. This is no longer the case. With the increasing quantity of information available on social networks, blogs, and websites, citizens get the false impression that they could manage a country as efficiently as experts do. They are convinced that they have enough insight into how governments and administrations work. But, of course, they do not! Making political decisions is much more complex than what people could possibly imagine.

Citizens feel even more estranged from international organizations than from national administrations. Although in the eye of the public IOs share with national bureaucracies a number of negative characteristics (lack of transparency, lack of practical experience of everyday life, lack of sincerity and even lack of honesty) they are off the radar of most ordinary people who feel less concerned about their outcomes than a handful of activists may be. At best, the myriads of IOs of every status are mistaken for some deceptive UN-style agencies. Everyone is sure that the UN struggles gamely with peace-making, peacekeeping and post-conflicts reconstruction. They suspect that IOs are the seats of behind-closed-doors meetings, informal arrangements, and unknown workload. IOs do not have a better reputation than national governments.

This is misinformation. The records of IOs are beyond doubt more impressive than states achievements. IOs frame or govern literally every act undertaken or opinion expressed in the daily life of ordinary citizens. Norms and standards apply to any kind of connection (plugs, chords, pipes, computers, telephones, and cars, as well as the Internet and the many uses we can make of it within ascribed limits). They condition the possibility or impossibility to convene meetings, which will be attended by how many people, in which room, with some tolerance or no tolerance at all for the possible presence of lead, asbestos, toxic particles, and for which number of attendants who will sit on flame retardant furniture, in venues that can easily be reached by handicapped people. They also dictate the edibility of food products, their price range, their composition and their type (fair trade, organic, gluten-free, etc.). Moreover, they compel critics to express their views in a politically correct way and impose a ban on potentially harmful attitudes when sensitive issues like race, religion, obesity, genocide, and so on are at stake. Even the most intimate acts of human life are under scrutiny, since schoolboys and girls as well as the weakest members of a family are

protected against bullying, inappropriate behaviour, and violence. In the case of Ebola, the interdiction by the WHO to bury kin is very invasive for local populations whose health authorities are only there for compulsory vaccines and temporary quarantines.

In general, people are prepared to accept global rules not by choice but by lack of familiarity with the way IOs work and the context in which they operate. They may have enough civic literacy and even some command of the idiomatic language of politics and diplomacy but they remain illiterate when confronted by the glossary that has currency within IOs. This deficit starts with acronyms (except for the UN, the IMF and the WTO). It peaks with a lack of knowledge about legal status, organizational chart and operational activities. While a surprising percentage of citizens interviewed in a survey are able to list 4 or 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council (Sche-meil et al. 2012), their awareness of what occurs elsewhere is very limited if not nil. Citizens who are very expressive in the public debate about refugees nonetheless continue to be unaware of the names and numbers of IOs operating in this field, their role and their achievements. Few people, if any, would be able to justify the intervention of the International Maritime Organization in the refugee crisis. They could not tell how the “IMO” differs from “IOM” (the International Organization for Migrations, itself deeply involved in the issue). Of course, contrasting the latter with the UN Higher Commissariat for Refugees (UNHCR) is beyond reach.

Transgressing states and protesting peoples know little about IOs. Such ignorance has severe consequences on the evolution of the world, while instead weakening a scientific field in which “international studies” actually “study” states rather than organizations. When they get scholars’ attention it is mostly as aides to States, or as ways to corroborate rational theories of IR (Glaser 2010). Few academics observe them from within, as organizational sociologists do (Ness & Brechin 1988; Reinalda et al. 2004). A handful of authors attribute them a propensity to build clusters overruling governments and citizens (Orsini, Morin & Young 2013). This book speaks of networks that could not be as easily disentangled as suggested by authoritarian leaders and authoritative authors. I try to fill the gap between sketchy political knowledge about IOs and their allegedly deep and real influence. I also help readers imagine just how much more intertwined the world could be when attention shifts from international organization in the plural to international organization in the singular (from static bodies of the past to a future-oriented process).²

2 In the last 25 years “What has emerged from the shadows of organizational theory to the forefront is the view of organizations less as entities or nouns and more as verbs, e.g. organizing” (Scott & Davis 2007) or “as embedded in dynamic processes... rather than static creations” (Ness & Brechin 2013: 16).

Methodological Solutions

Before going any further, a couple of comments about methodology must be made. Firstly, to give an objective account of the “real” world we need ontological assumptions. This is mine: procedure and substance are combined in any policy measure or act of speech. “Procedure” identifies decision-making designs, which open opportunities for agents to coin new norms and new rules. “Substance” is the final outcome of the organizational processes, targeting the common good. Even with benevolent intentions fierce opposition to the accumulation of power and the abuse of people’s rights is typically procedural. Even when scavengers keep the poor quiet redistributing wealth is a substantial goal. While obsession with the due process of law is one of the Greek city’s legacies, a focus on the substantive provision of goods can be traced to the Ancient Orient (Schemeil 2000) as if protection and provision were two sides of the same coin. Within IOs correct procedure is a prerequisite to fair substantial benefits that, in turn, justify that the rule be made properly and implemented by the book. Due respect for organizational processes seems rather formal. It nonetheless makes possible the coming of an international community acceptable to all.

Specific methods and techniques unfold from this ontological assumption. Outsiders like anthropologists or organization specialists need to be accredited before interviewing staff members. To understand what is concealed behind public statements we must access classified documents and be sufficiently aware of their meaning and context. Evidence can either be retrieved from IO websites or found through browsing IO libraries. It consists of minutes of proceedings, provisional drafts, non-tabled papers, and non-adopted drafts. Once scholars are admitted to the headquarters, they can observe behaviour and interpret statements.

To check with insiders (as “primary informers”) that our academic interpretation is close to reality, snowballing extends the list of people to be met. First contacts can introduce the interviewer to other officers who can in turn do the same. However, this strategy is mostly valuable if it is reproducible elsewhere: beyond the organization under review, investigators look for its social environment and the invisible network of international bodies to which it belongs. Such a process stimulates comparison. It facilitates causal inference until a predictive model can be designed from the expert’s field experience.

Testing the robustness of imaginary conjectures relies on foresight. We can predict that a weakened organization will make its comeback sooner or later in the great game of multilateral decision-making. In fact, there are a limited number of recipes for survival hence the solution eventually chosen by any staff rarely surprises scholars. However, two situations are prioritized

here: IOs whose very resilience is at stake and, at the opposite end of the scale, IOs that are so well established that few doubts can be raised about their future. Among the dozens of IOs directly or indirectly observed (either personally or through students' teamwork and other scholars' monographs), I have selected the most stringent cases to test my hypotheses.

In the first category (*challenged* IOs), the focus is mainly on the WTO, the IAEA, UNESCO, WMO, the WHO, IOM, and most Treaties Organizations. In the second group (*self-sustaining* IOs), major targets are the UNDP, UNEP, UNHCR, WIPO and ICANN. Note that NGOs (or quasi non-governmental organizations) are not the primary research target. This choice is deliberate, to avoid circularity since NGOs are embedded in organizational constellations rotating around IGOs. However some non-State actors are worth studying in depth, such as Amnesty, Oxfam, and VOICE, because they operate on a large scale worldwide with a variety of supports as well as resources accruing from their home government.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, causal inference will arise from a theory mix. Unfortunately, no theory could give me a satisficing explanation of the relationships I had empirically observed for years into dozens of organizations. Truly, agents face constraints and their deeds are framed by structures. This said, they always try to proceed rationally. If not, they must feel certain enough to overcome the many difficulties with which they are confronted daily. Since they are not fully constrained by the properties of the institution to which they belong they opt for the wisest decision at the time. To trace this stance to a sort of free agents' rational choice would be excessive. To see it with deterministic and structuralist lenses would miss all the peculiarities of personalities, moments, and historical paths. As will soon become obvious, neo-institutionalism (which relies more on IOs than on States) and constructivism (which links agreements to meaning) lack the strategic nature of IOs decisions.

While opting for one direction at a crossroads can be deliberate, the aggregated outcome of such options can look undesirable to some stakeholders (governments above all). So, my theoretical apparatus relies on a *limited rational choice model with uncertain outcomes*. Prediction cannot tell which alternative will finally be chosen; it can nonetheless say what "cone of possibilities" is open to decision-makers: several trajectories could unfold from the next move, as in a chess game.

The Network Growth Model

No theory actually predicts what kind of unit an institution will become in the future, how it will get there, within which global framework. Models of IOs trajectories are merely descriptive. Designed to reach a global explanation they eliminate some alternatives among others³. They often assume a rhetorical reasoning: IOs are administrations; administrations are bureaucratic; therefore, IOs are bureaucracies that supply the world population with new activities even when there is no demand for them (Barnett and Finnemore 2004). In a nutshell, IOs can invent new procedures but they cannot create smart solutions and transform the context in which they operate.

Admittedly, this explanation meets Karl Popper's requisites for a scientific theory of the social world. Avoiding incorrect predictions is conditioned to a preliminary elimination of errors one by one to make the realm of the untrue shrink. But what we need is a predictive model able to forecast what IOs will inevitably do most of the time all other things being equal. The only unknown parameter is when, exactly, their final resolutions will be released?

This is a delicate matter: social scientists have not yet endorsed modelling (and the explanatory parsimony at the heart of it) as an epistemologically correct way to work. It is therefore unlikely that they consider predicting as and advancement of research into historical and cultural processes.

There is one last question to ask: is it wise to write a book on the future of a multilateral multi-stakeholders world when leaders of democratic countries withdraw from international organizations and multilateral negotiations? When the UK leaves the EU while the US leaves TPFTA though not NAFTA and denounces INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) if not NATO, then something is rotten in the kingdom of Denmark (the world community).

Beyond the fact that such withdrawals may just be temporary suspensions of participation or attempts to reshuffle the international system without subverting it there are two more substantial answers to this question. To start with, military alliances have always been more flexible and less resilient than any other sort of international agreement. So, leaving one or shutting it down is not significant. The Americans dismantled SEATO, ANZUS and CENTO decades ago, while the Russians replaced the Warsaw Pact with the CIS. Hence, what happens in the field of security should not disregard predictions made in other sectors where global public goods must be provisioned. This

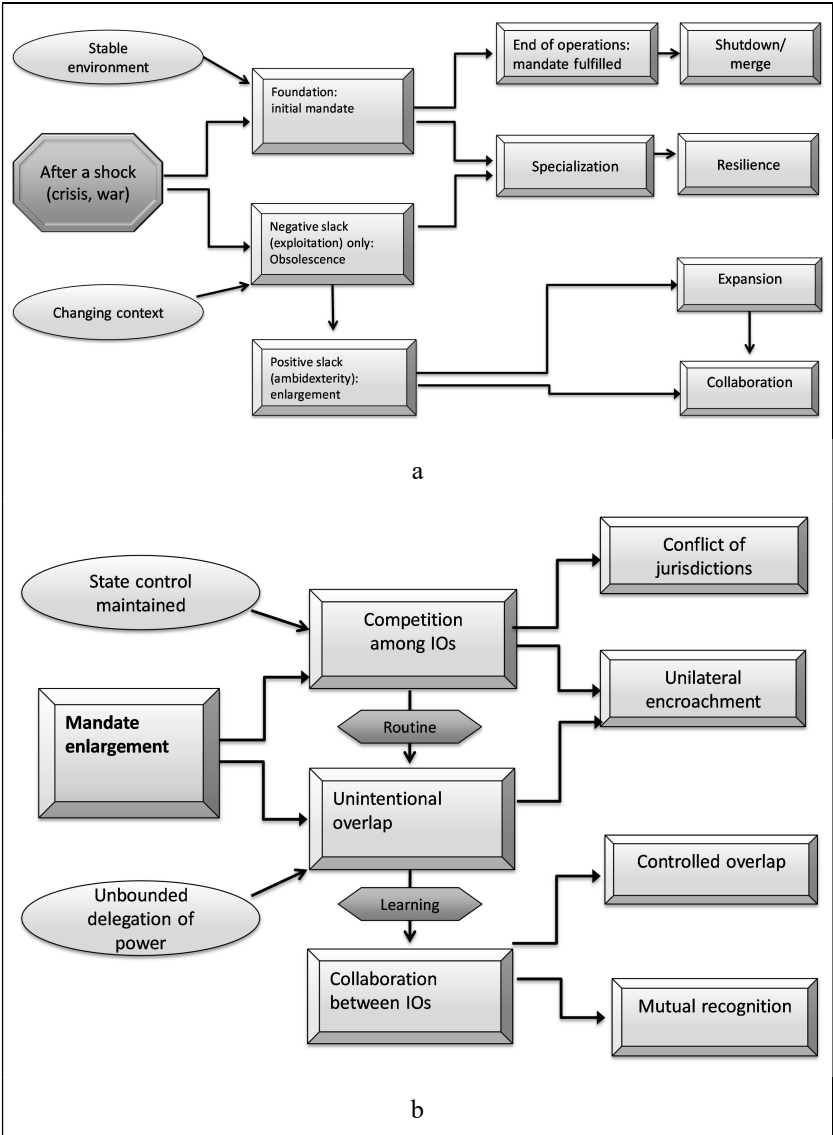
3 As in this seminal text: “[t]his type of constitutive explanation does not allow us to offer law-like statements such as ‘if X happens, then Y must follow’. Rather, by providing a more complete understanding of what bureaucracy is, we can provide explanations of how certain kinds of bureaucratic behaviour are possible, or even probable, and why” (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 701). Here we must go much further towards finding causes.

argument would not suffice per se to discard counterfactual observation. In reality, the best defence for the “network growth model” (NGM)—or the way I have designed it here—relies on the very theoretical principles on which it has been built.

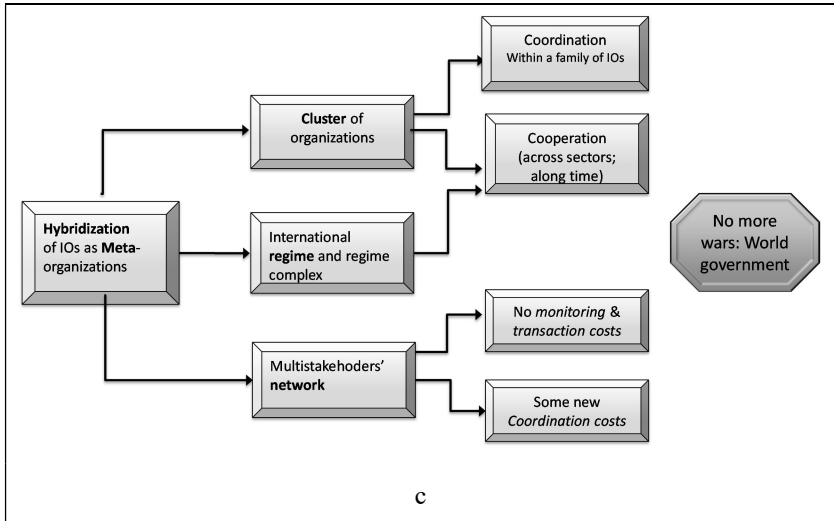
At this preliminary stage of discussion before entering into details in chapters 12 and 13 let us say that the NGM comprises several *bifurcations* that each generate path dependency. The three folders of graph 1 symbolize the race to networking as a prelude to the progressive institutionalization of the world. Assuming that IOs result from conflict resolution (Ikenberry 2001), a return to the situation *ex ante* once the environment is stabilized would normally bring two outcomes: either closing them because the goals for which they had been created are achieved or reshuffling their mission in line with their explorative capabilities. The second alternative occurs more frequently than the first: confronted by a change in their environment compared to when they were established, most IOs enlarge their mandate. Therefore, they inevitably stray across the perimeter of activity of other organisations. They can either increase their specialization to remain resilient or they can expand their mandate to better perform within a coalition of neighbouring organizations.

Staying on track increases the risk of being shut down or merged, whereas ever-expanding helps to resist change through collaboration with other IOs. In both alternatives, overlap results from expansion. “Ambidextrous” leaders who exploit their comparative advantage over rivals and explore future activities altogether know how to make the best use of any maladjustment of means and goals. They convert negative slack (waste and excess capacity) into positive slack (time to imagine new products and services). Prone to learn quickly, they can transform the conditions under which decisions are made and the norms orienting policy measures. At some point, they will switch from risk aversion to risk-taking and stop controlling their boundaries to start establishing joint ventures with peer organizations, other non-national institutions and non-state actors. Engaging in collaborative behaviour they end up becoming parts of new sets of IOs, which eventually may lead to a new stage in world history—a dream of no more wars come true with the birth of a world government.

Graph 1 can be read table by table (a, then b, then c) or synoptically (much like the Japanese or Egyptian scrolls). It represents several itineraries resulting from successive turns at each crossroads. Branching off from the main road depends, first, on the state of the environment (is it stable or critical?); second, on the style of leadership (is it structural or transformative?); third, on the relations with other stakeholders inside (its membership) and outside (its partnership) the organization.



Graph 1a and b. The Network Growth Model: An IOs race to collaboration—a triptych. Source: a) & b) adapted from Schemel, 2013 a.



Graph 1c. The Network Growth Model: An IOs race to collaboration—a triptych.
Source: c) ©the author, 2019.

A simple glance at this graph leaves little doubt about the relevance of leadership style: while the FAO was long stuck in a quagmire the IAEA managed to resist hegemonic pressures and competition with ad hoc inspection bodies. The former was plagued by the pusillanimity of its reactive head and so remained isolationist for decades; the latter was fuelled by the proactive behaviour of its Director General who greatly emphasised collaboration with other IOs much beyond its field.

It is obvious that turning liabilities into assets eventually depends on the flexibility of workload assignment under stress. Confronted by unexpected challenges, positions become vulnerable. Reshuffling the chart reflects environmental turbulence. Administrations, corporations, and intergovernmental organizations do it their way: national bureaucracies can resist change forever or nearly so; private firms must instantly adjust, moving people to other positions, buildings, and cities, or laying them off. As for IOs they give agents whose jobs are threatened leeway to invent goals and frame new norms.

Enlarging a mandate is not without risk. Most IO heads either stick to the Constitution of their organization or merely pay lip service to it. Enhancement can be rewarding when expansion satisfies a significant proportion of members' visions of the future of the organization. It may also be unavoidable: once similar activities have been pursued for a while by several IOs, division of labour becomes compelling whether or not it had been

planned at the outset. A good case in point is a refugee crisis, which involves several regional organizations (either European or Pan-American), domestic bureaucracies and NGOs, plus the IOM, the UNHCR, and many other IOs (more about that later).

Encounters with other staff, diplomats, advocates, lobbyists, and activists are subtly conducive to increasing collaboration. They also transform IOs, which become hybridized. Eventually, individual organizations will join a set of IOs called a “meta-organization” (the UN family, or within it, the Food group composed of FAO, WFP, Codex alimentarius, HACCP, the Joint FAO/IAEA program, etc.). This meta-organization can take different guises, such as an informal and temporary cluster, a simple or complex international regime, or a true network.

Eventually, a basic law of the transformation of discrete bodies into homogenous networks emerges from the heterogeneity of the field. Its explanatory variables are not “perform to overwhelm not to be shut down” but “learn to be resilient, adapt or perish, coalesce or collapse”.

The Spirit of the Book

Such keywords would probably suffice to make plain how and why this book differs from the excellent literature available after decades of ignorance. Let me nonetheless detail its added value.

Handbooks help to establish a new subfield and legitimate interdisciplinary investigation. In recent years, many have been published to which readers can refer for details as well as exhaustive reviews of contextual issues. Thanks to such achievements my current research can focus on specific questions without going in depth into syntheses. Exhaustive depictions of real cases would certainly give some flesh to the model to the detriment of parsimony. Since IOs and interorganizational cooperation specialists are members of an epistemic community worldwide they share the same background and have the same knowledge about the realm of our studies. Rather than completing the state of the art or reinforcing references to the same sources I offer a concise and topical discussion.

To succeed I need the cooperation of my readers. They are asked to fill the gaps in my presentation by digging into the encyclopaedic knowledge that has given visibility to this field and the community of scholars working herein.

Among the unavoidable sources of enlightenment about IOs and their mutual collaboration some are especially useful for their reliance on History or Organizational Studies. This is the case of Bob Reinalda’s Routledge History of International Organizations (2009), Routledge Handbook of

International organizations (2013) and Ashgate Companion to Non-State-Actors (2011). Rafael Biermann and Johan Koops' Palgrave Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relations in World Politics (2017) and Dennis Dijkzeul and Dirk Salomons' International Organizations Revisited (2022) offer extensive coverage to the cooperation issue. Bob Reinalda's contribution to the field is also manifest in the three-volume series of collective works he edited with colleagues from 1998 (Autonomous Policy Making within International Organizations, with Bertjan Verbeek) to 2004 (Decision Making within International Organizations) and 2008 (International Organizations and Implementation: Enforcers, Managers, Authorities—with Jutta Joachim and Bertjan Verbeek).

The following content has been thought out along numbers of international meetings in which presentations were prepared for delivery without being systematically published after the meeting. Therefore, I cannot easily refer to them, although I may on occasion put readers on to papers if they have been at the root of my argument or when they are freely downloadable. Working papers that were eventually published (quoted from their public version) and my own work in progress are both excluded from the quotations.

The countless student essays and PHD work supervised for nearly two decades are not always cited in full, unfortunately, although they have consistently contributed to the making of this book.

Part 1.
What IOs Are and
What We Think We Know

1 The Conventional Wisdom, First Cut: The Classics

International studies have been an academic discipline since the beginning of the 19th century. The subject has long been part of the legal field. Morgenthau himself defended his PHD thesis in International Law before writing his influential textbook in a department of political science. Paradoxically, accommodation by Faculties of Law helped to develop knowledge about IOs. Established by intergovernmental treaties, they had a constitution, staff members were hired or temporarily appointed according to specific regulations, activities were strictly framed by international agreements. After centuries of philosophical insistence on the right to war and the rights at war, expanding legal reflection towards organizations seemed an impressive breakthrough.

However, without sociology, anthropology, psychology, and public or business administration, building in new expertise in IOs soon proved unfeasible. Domestic politics has enough coverage in schools of government though the only focus of international specialists has long been the foreign policy of states. The nascent discipline had two main objects (IR factors and actors) and a single obsession (war or peace among nations).

An IO moment would come much later when each of these four issues was dispatched into two sets of problems. While *factors* combine context and conjuncture, *actors* may be states or non-states. While *war* can be just or unjust, cold or hot, cross-border or civil, *peace* is anything from low-intensity conflict to fair reconciliation. Above all, the first pair of concepts is now understood as associating two types of administrations (governments and organizations), which paves the way to public policy and Managerial Science specialists. The second means that discord replaces war, and collaboration is a substitute for peace.

In a nutshell, states prevent discord and IOs insure collaboration. Both types of unit evolve according to changes in their environment, which could draw them far away from each other. As logical as it may seem, this intellectual journey towards satisfying explanations has been very long and it is still unfinished. Along this path, scholars produce theory around principles that make classifications possible.

1.1 A Taste for Typologies

What is wrong with theories? Nothing! Except that they proliferate beyond reason in international studies. There are so many variants that instead of eliminating erroneous explanations of the empirical reality they sublimate them into opposed visions of the world.

What is wrong with theories of international organizations? Again, nothing but their puzzling rarity. Very few of them are actually adequate to scholarly needs.

To establish themselves as experts in the inter-national, authors must either replicate what their predecessors have already achieved, not only as a tribute to pioneers but also as a testimony of goodwill opening the doors of academia. Alternatively, they propose a new theory to seek recognition by peers working in the fields of natural and experimental sciences. It is no surprise that the progress of global knowledge is associated to theoretical rigor in the guise of long statements—compared to Morgenthau and Aron's times (whose masterpieces had so concise titles: "*Power in international relations*" / "*Peace and war among nations*"). It is taken for granted that to be accredited in universities any nascent knowledge must be stuffed with abstract comments.

However, typologies are not theories. Obviously, when a new science emerges from a previous lack of specialization of knowledge—say, biology and zoology—typologies are useful. When adequate knowledge about the real world is lacking we can at least rely on *categories* instead of looking for *propositions*. The problem with taxonomies is their propensity to generate new cells and new columns to match a new reality (or new findings about reality). They are dichotomies of the "either/or" type. To work on longitudinal trajectories we must convert descriptive tables into explanatory models.

Experiences with classifications in IR are deceptive. They are not fine-grained enough to fully catch the specificity of IOs. Consider the democratic / authoritarian regimes within the much debated "democratic peace theory". Or, alternatively, the groups of states defined by the Correlates of War project, which put heterogeneous states into the same box (Lebanon / the Netherlands). Stranger still, we are confronted with states as "(great) powers" versus states that have no leverage over world politics (putting Japan and Nepal into the same cell), mistaken for proof that the "polarization" theory is valid. Moreover, some typologies are merely geographic, e.g. continental vs. maritime powers (Schroeder 1989) or Southern vs. Northern countries (Acharya and Buzan 2010). Others remain purely historical as in the succession of world hegemony from the Greeks facing Persia to the Romans confronting Carthage; from the Spanish carving up the Americas to the French conquering Europe; from the British despatching the Dutch from the

oceans before being themselves replaced by the United States at war against the former USSR now Russia (Modelski 1962).

Such taxonomic attitude flattens the complexity of the IOs world. Organizations are considered “governmental” and “non-governmental” if not “interstate and “non-state”. Trouble arises from the necessity to fine-tune these blunt oppositions: nongovernmental actors are distinguished from quasi-governmental ones (QUANGOs, among which, regulators of privatized utilities); national administrations that play a leading global role (the Fed, the FSB) are distinguished from a set of heterogeneous bodies like business and trade unions, market-based firms or BINGOs; transnational corporations, lobbies, Funds, and Banks are confronted to advocacy coalitions and epistemic communities. As for governments, putting China and “Hong Kong” into the same group (the first as a “state” and the second as a “Customs Territory” as in the WTO) is not insightful. Distinguishing between the UN-group and non-UN organizations seems at first glance less debatable. However, once differences in genesis are considered, we quickly find that neither the WMO nor the WIPO were born within the UN family. As for NGOs, their extreme variety challenges our imagination: no one could seriously expect to shoe-horn Amnesty international and local humanitarians into the same box.

In a pseudo-scientific community in the offing, typologies are but proxies to theories. They proliferate with little rationale other than distinguishing some scholars from their peers. They also go much beyond the robust distinctions inherited from the Classics.

1.1.1 *Seminal Sources*

IR specialists had lived for centuries with a handful of books. Before Morgenthau and Aron their uncontested champion was Thucydides. Then legal experts, historians, and geographers came to the fore. Some were concerned with just war (war could be regulated, said Grotius). Others drew lessons from races to the bottom (war was as unavoidable as the fall of the Roman empire, quoting Gibbons). The latter group of scholars looked for natural links between states and their hinterlands (war was needed to strike a fair balance between countries, according to Ratzel). Such views were all about belligerence as if nothing else but bloody conflicts should deserve attention to study the interstice between sovereign states. Why could governments achieve an acceptable monopoly of legitimate violence at home without being able to replicate such success across borders? This enduring enigma had but a single cause for so long: national sovereignty.

In parallel with the emergence of such explanations outside political science (given this discipline did not exist as such before the second half of the twentieth century), domestic relations theories impacted analyses of

foreign affairs. It is nowadays fashionable to resurrect big names to provide answers—such as Hobbes and Kant who both have a theoretical explanation for the progressive disappearance of internal and external wars. Both constructed a theory of the delegation of force: the former, to a Leviathan; the latter, to a Federation of Republics. And both assigned this endgame to the unbearable aspect of permanent insecurity (in Hobbes: self-help is both risky and stressful; in Kant: the woes of war are so terrible and beyond any imaginable scale that nations eventually renounce to put a military end to conflicts). They play on a trade-off between security and sovereignty. For each gain in collective security people(s) must abandon an equivalent part of sovereignty. There is only one logical endgame: public (or international) institutions are created; individuals (or governments) now relieved from the permanent concern of protecting their own security interests transfer power to them.

The legacy of these classical giants is an equation: securitization = delegation to watchdogs + institutionalization to tame their hubris. This has been proven true domestically but is not yet a reality beyond state borders. IOs are second best; either to a Leviathan able to provide permanent security (inside) or to a Federation of Republics at the heart of perpetual peace (outside).

This unfinished journey from local stakeholders to global organizations has long been the mantra of IR handbooks and textbooks.

1.1.2 *What the Textbooks (Do Not) Say*

Many works on IOs assert that we are still in a phase of institution building. Much time will pass before we reach the shores of a pacified world, ruled by performing organizations that governments less and less control—if we are ever to overcome the doubts expressed by realists and neo-realists. Liberal-institutionalists claim that we already live in a very organized world, IOs being clearinghouses for governmental feuds or stock exchanges where offers and demands are posted. Alternatively, IOs can be arenas in which “speech acts” become reality in the guise of norms (a conviction shared by supporters of constructivism, practice turn, and the English School).

Across paradigms one concept predominates. Information is systematically associated with international organizations because IOs allow their members to communicate on facts that would otherwise remain hidden. By contrast, there is only a minimum leeway conceded to states representatives in return for a better view of the goals pursued by other governments. This is the delegation/information trade-off: the more power is delegated, the more information circulates. However, scholars overlook the possibility to retrieve information without relying on membership. Staff members can collect data

that are inaccessible to national administrations—as does WHO agents do when predicting the next influenza virus and having vaccines ready long before the epidemics starts.

As a result of this partial blindness, classical scholars do little to explain how an IO can change. Note that Information Theory itself is little mobilized in this debate despite the insistence on information sharing as a target of intergovernmental policies. Psychological and cognitive approaches are little solicited, while Organization Theory remains ignored.

What is lost in translation here (meaning translation from a national to an international idiom) is absolutely essential to an analysis of IOs: creativity versus routine; transformative leadership of powerful states vs. weak leadership of powerless institutions; and politics versus administration.

Admittedly, psychological work does not just address personal freewill. When applying political psychology to IR attributing change to individuals is but one avenue of research. There are alternative paths towards a more exhaustive discussion of the role of personality traits, feelings and emotions. Some will nonetheless remain inconclusive because they are too far-fetched when they refer to trauma, paranoia and schizophrenia and when they assign Global organizations a responsibility to provide happiness in order to accumulate leadership and legitimacy (Beyer 2017: 129, 183).

Cognitive approaches show that learning can be procedural, as in group-think. When choosing a policy, you stick to the group you suspect will make a wrong decision (Janis 1982). Routines prevail over change because they comfort people under pressure and forbid them to draw lessons from the past (Vertzberger 1990). This is particularly true with risk-averse people, whose dominant personality trait is conscientiousness or neuroticism instead of openness to experience, agreeableness and extraversion. Security seeking may take various guises, including procrastination—a tendency to postpone to tomorrow rather than make bold decisions.

1.2 An Exclusive Focus on IOs/States Relations

One research question haunts most textbooks: Why do States cooperate through IOs (Abbott & Snidal 2001)? The popular answer is that IOs are ancillary tools of governments, or “enabling structures” (Hall 2010: 217).

States establish them to make their ambitions visible to all; to tie their hands in public before starting to negotiate; to centralize policies and make them consistent; to handle them through a performing, neutral, and sufficiently independent administration (Abbott & Snidal 2001); to provide global public goods that no stakeholder could deliver singlehandedly.

“Beholders” (Gutner & Thompson 2010) and “Governors” (Avant, Finnemore & Sell 2010) are still in control. Or are they? In recent decades, new books have been specifically devoted to IOs, doing much to improve knowledge of their management. Although they are accurate and useful, they nonetheless fail to cover certain crucial issues.

It is well known that realism frames the debate as a matrix of theories and a source of inspiration for its critics (Keohane 1986 a). Anarchy is therefore assumed to be the rule, and security lies above any other international problem. Hobbes’ rationalist vision of a transfer of power from security-seeking agents to a collective body is allegedly not applicable beyond state borders. Mainstream theorists as well as those who challenge their views take for granted the existence of what I shall call “Hobbes’ constant”: just as nothing travels faster than light speed in Einstein’s theory, no power can be transferred beyond borders in Hobbes’ one. Thus, when there is collaboration it remains limited to discrete units that are considered equals (Waltz’s “like-units”) or confined to the least sensitive challenges (any sort of common good but security).

1.2.1 Cooperation Limited to States

The founders of realism neglected internal dissent. They consider heads of state as the only sources of foreign policy. Successors from various creeds assume that Permanent Representatives’ attitudinal inconsistencies across IGOs do not matter. Divergence is often observed between PRs and the rulers from whom they get their political mandate. Negotiators from different countries can therefore converge on solutions, and freely cooperate without any particular support from national leaders—noteworthy when they have been trained within the same field of expertise.

Whatever the variety of realism authors do not view conflict resolution within effective IGOs as the desirable outcome of enduring collaboration between States. Rather they see it as the temporary convergence of several national interests during the last steps of an international crisis. Aware of the necessity to work through IOs because no individual state can provide transnational Commons alone, realist and neo-realists scholars assign this specific mandate to the Great Powers. According to Waltz, they are not egoistic units protecting their national interests and rights since they also have duties and do fulfil functions in the world system. As expected from the creators of security organizations Great Powers endlessly create, maintain, and reorganize the world system. To do this, they solve global problems (the 4 Ps: Poverty, Population, Pollution, and Proliferation), having the responsibility to deliver peace as the paramount Global Public Good. In this framework there is little room for IOs, even the biggest and the most global (Waltz 2008).

Applied to Kosovo and Iraq, this paradigm explains why the US did not allow the UN to play its role in conflict management. The UNSC had no discretion to appoint civil representatives or military officers on the ground. Commanders of battalions took their orders directly from their national headquarters. Hence, efforts to rely on existing organizational assets were discarded. “Contact groups” composed of a few governments over which the US Federal administration kept great leverage were preferred to NATO’s logistical capabilities in former Yugoslavia and the UNSC’s mission in Iraq, respectively (Adams 2006; Taliaferro 2006).

Promoters of realist thought neglect hegemony (the huge US investment in the post war system) and neutrality (Swiss involvement in multilateral agencies) as drivers of institutionalization. Can we discard so easily the fact that two of the most powerful and least threatened states of the world consider IOs as precious securitization tools (Keohane & Martin 1995)? How to explain the determination with which American presidents (Clinton and the two Bush) tried to set up a large coalition of countries before intervening in Iraq and Kosovo? Why do the confederate governments in Bern and local Swiss authorities spend so much money on funding global IGOs and NGOs?

The realists’ answer is that IOs have but a limited influence on governments because they cannot solve the puzzle of the redistribution of respective costs and benefits among them. Consequently, international bodies have no specific impact on multilateral negotiations. In security issues, they assume that solutions cannot be reached though interorganizational cooperation because concessions to rivals would be too risky. Moreover, they do not believe that national leaders can trust anonymous networks comprising “interlocking structures”, which can easily escape their control (Mearsheimer 1990).

Trying to rescue realism as a foundational theory of IR Charles Glazer reviews the causes of resistance to seeing IOs as autonomous entities able to avoid cooperation traps. He opts for “strategic rationalism” not limited to states, although his theory “finds a far less central role for them than does neo-institutionalism”. He feels that the international context in which IOs operate frames their capability to deliver information on each potential adversary’s psychological intentions and material assets, the most precious outcome of any organizational process. States must send “costly signals”, something IOs cannot do because they will not be able to pay for them. Moreover, Glazer does not consider IOs as opportunities to change the decision-making system. Contrary to IOs norms that can change state *identities* IOs policies cannot modify state *interests* (assumed to be constant) because their enforcement capacity cannot compare with governmental power. “Political relationships” between states can be impacted by multilateral deliberations but not be the outcome of organizational activity. At best, security institutions themselves partially explain the decisions made (Glazer

2010: 161-171)⁴ because IOs can prevent “suboptimal behaviour that can reduce a state’s security” (Glazer 2010: 124-5).⁵ Overall, IOs are endogenous to state interests; they are not exogenous constraints on policies.

Empirical evidence supports this view: a number of IOs active in various fields do control some of their members on behalf of all the others. The Security Council enforces embargoes and blocks individual accounts. The IAEA traces materials that are essential for manufacturing prohibited atomic weapons. The Wassenaar Arrangement watches over exports of conventional weapons and prevents the involuntary dissemination of sensitive dual-use technologies. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) monitors illegal trafficking of protected species. The ICAO and the IMO inspect goods transported by air or sea. The FATF targets money laundering.

The way states and IOs together address border issues vindicates Charles Glazer’s thesis. There is a specialized agency for border crossings, the World Customs Organization (WCO, “for efficient and effective customs”). It organizes large-scale cooperation irrespective of differences in political regimes or economic systems. It also identifies corruption by setting “minimum rules of conduct that all customs officials are expected to obey”, which puts additional pressure on the internal affairs of its member states. Lastly, the WCO aims to harmonize customs systems, produce a uniform goods nomenclature and strengthen the customs capacities of its 183 member states by issuing best practices imposed on less virtuous members.

WCO activities aim to ensure that no illegal border crossings occur, while everything legal moves onwards quickly and easily. During the Brexit negotiations prior work undertaken by the WCO on “digital customs and data analysis” was used in an attempt to satisfy all European leaders (the 27+1) who wanted to keep control over goods crossing their borders without physical checking. In the Irish case this involved the so-called “backstop”. For a while, sophisticated systems were contemplated to avoid checkpoints between Northern Ireland and Eire. There would either be a land or a sea border between Ulster and the rest of the UK, guaranteeing to the EU that products would not get the European stamp unless they complied with Brussels standards.

Among many IOs in which state sovereignty is at stake the remit of the WCO is most devoted to border issues. The fulfilment of its mandate, however, depends on other IOs: to prevent counterfeiting and patent/copyright

4 “While recognizing a role for institutions, I give greater weight to the international environment... asking how variations in the environment would have influenced the relative desirability of the alternatives.” (p. 40).

5 “The deep sources of significant cooperation are found in states’ motives and their international environment, not in the international institutions that states have the choice to create and preserve.” (p. 125).

infringement the WCO implements rules established by the World Intellectual Property Organization (which protects inventors beyond their borders), calling on WIPO to help ensure the legality and effectiveness of interstate borders. For security matters, it collaborates with Interpol and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Both are involved in regulating border crossings: the former hunts criminals wherever they may be once an international warrant has been issued and irrespective of the borders crossed; the latter focuses on prosecuting traffickers of all kinds. During the pandemic of 2020-21, the UNODC was particularly on the lookout for smuggled medicines and counterfeited protective equipments⁶.

WCO surveillance of illegal crossing of sovereign boundaries is a striking instance of states losing control over the organizations they have created.

1.2.2 *Ancillary IOs?*

Charles Glazer's thesis is attractive but it hardly considers IOs as fully autonomous. Are IOs less prone to explore new "markets" for their products than to exploit their sources of strengths? Are they definitely unable to predict future developments and potential threats? Few authors swim against the tide of this common-sense view (Abbott & Snidal 2015; Reinalda & Verbeek, 2004; Joachim et al. 2008; and, to some extent, Hawkins et al. 2006)⁷. Whatever the source of their inspiration, many scholars consider IOs are controlled by their members (be they states, experts, or activists). Consequently, they cannot be supported by non-members such as observers, other IGOs, NGOs, BINGOs, etc. The best such partners can do is to raise additional funding through Private-Public Partnerships.

What is also missing in mainstream "companions" to students is a focus on organizational capabilities. Skim-reading these handbooks one has the impression that IOs can obtain recognition from their membership only. Were this true, it would rein in their freedom to move ahead without explicit

6 The UNODC found that "countries in Central Asia and the Balkans, as well as Italy, were seizing fewer illicit consignments of counterfeit medicines than usual. And African countries saw fewer roads and cases in air trafficking (for example, in Niger) and more trafficking by post (in Nigeria). Conversely, Morocco and Iran seized more trafficked goods at their borders—though Iran experienced a sharp drop in poppy production after the closure of borders with Pakistan. Other illegal drugs producers suffered from the pandemic due to lack of demand (as in Peru) or because police and customs controls were stepped up (as in Colombia). Countries specializing in synthetic drugs such as amphetamines (like Russia) suffered from the disruption of their supply chains for essential components (drug precursors)" (UNODC website).

7 "As in many private transactions, participation by even a partially autonomous, neutral actor can increase efficiency and affect the legitimacy of individual and collective actions. This provides even powerful states with incentives to grant IOs substantial independence." (Abbott, Snidal 2001: 5).

stakeholder consent. But this is too farfetched: IOs do build their own reputation so that acceptance of their decisions by their members can remain implicit. Understood as “conferred by others based on a subjective belief that an object is socially acceptable, that it is congruent with the norms of appropriate behaviour of those evaluating” (Biermann 2017: 339), legitimacy stems from the involvement of some proactive member states in IGOs or a few historical founding fathers of NGOs. Cross-national surveys show that IOs are more legitimate than national bureaucracies and representative bodies, although the latter alone can deprive an IO of its legitimacy.

How do IOs succeed in building such a broadly shared acceptance and how can they avoid losing it? How can they be steadily more legitimized rather than de-legitimized when their “followers” have contradictory views about what they should or should not be doing (Biermann 2017)? If we set aside an interpretation of legitimacy as resulting from a competition between IOs and their members,⁸ there are but two answers.

Firstly, IGOs (and even in some contexts NGOs) can open up to partners that are not under the control of their membership (a trend becoming noticeably more significant according to Tallberg et al. 2013). Upstream, they can include non-members in the decision-making process before the final decision is made. This goal can be achieved via “friends of the chair” (those stakeholders who support a policy measure discussed at the top of an organization). However, the group of final decision-makers will remain exclusive (not everyone can be admitted into the club). Alternatively, seminars for outsiders can be organized at headquarters. Their debates will nonetheless be framed by insiders from the staff. Such meetings can be convened by invitation, or be open to all. Assessing the degree and extent of the introduction of non-state actors into an interstate decision-making process may prove impossible. It may be easier for experts consulted for their knowledge than for demonstrators using collective power to penetrate the sanctified area where policy is made. At any rate, it is doubtful that IGOs staff will voluntarily renounce control over non-state actors’ contributions to internal debates among diplomats.

IGOs can more frequently mobilize non-state actors during the next phase of the process, the implementation stage. When a norm emerges from internal debate and a resolution becomes public member states must transform ideas and commitments into concrete measures. Apparent internal unanimity does

8 Biermann (2017: 347) gives an illustrative example of rival attempts by IOs and States to vie for more relative acceptability from larger supporting audiences: the IAEA did not find weapons of mass destructions in 2003 Iraq, contrary to the claims made by the Bush administration, and this undermined the overall acceptance of the latter’s legitimacy by the international community.

Table 1. Sources of legitimacy of an international organization

Type of legitimacy	Involvement of non members
	From maximum inclusion to maximum exclusion ; from fully controlled to uncontrolled opening up
Input legitimacy	<p>Deliberation upstream</p> <p><i>Inclusion</i> of other stakeholders <i>within</i> the formal decision-making process / or <i>confinement</i> at its fringes</p> <p><i>Large</i> deliberation → <i>Selective</i> deliberation → <i>No</i> deliberation with outsiders</p>
Output legitimacy	<p>Implementation downstream</p> <p><i>Transfer</i> (from one IGO to one member state) / or <i>outsourcing</i> (to one national group of activists/ experts that will pressure their home government)</p> <p>→ <i>Diffusion</i> (from one member state to another; from a network of NGOs to another)</p> <p>→ <i>Benign neglect</i> (full freedom to implement recommendations or not at the national level)</p>

not guarantee that members will all have the same goodwill to change domestic practice and national law without delay. When permanent representatives have informed their backstage units about their progress and been debriefed by ministerial elites back home, they can withdraw from their previous commitment. Governments may include politicians who are opposed to a specific measure. Bureaucrats can be reluctant to accept overload. Lobbies will try to protect their profits. The population will often remain unconvinced of the need to change behaviour—as with health issues, vaccines and epidemics. Hence, without local support emanating from volunteers and scholars who are the most concerned with a specific policy measure it is unlikely that this multilateral decision will be implemented fully and rapidly.

In sum, as shown by Table 1, each time IGOs associate non-state actors with their decision-making process, they comfort their *input legitimacy*; when they call on them only during the enforcement stage, they enhance their *output legitimacy*. In both circumstances they must strike an adequate balance between *inclusion* and *exclusion* (which often depends on membership stance), *freedom* and *control* (which relies on the staff).

Despite calls for more transparency and greater inclusion of “unlike-units” (Waltz) IOs agents fine-tune these two processes in order to monitor opening up and outsourcing mechanisms as far as they can. They actually behave as states do: to force a decision, they agree to share power in exact

proportion (no more, no less) to the gains expected from a loss of autonomy in making and implementing policy measures.

What they can expect from such limited sacrifice is better recognition of their very existence as *exogenous* actors in world politics (i.e., not *endogenous* to states) and greater legitimacy for their achievements. At least, they will be able to trace improvements in people's quality of life to their organizational activity. They can then convince most end-users of their policy measures so they, as agents of the Secretariat, must get full credit for such improvements rather than the membership.

Discussing legitimacy and recognition by other components of the world community is central to my thesis, because these two strategic resources condition IOs' potential gain in autonomy. To consider them objects to address without merely being a study of state behaviour beyond borders theoreticians must be convinced that IOs are not mere extensions of national governments. Their autonomy is revealed by the degree of acceptance among the people they serve, which in turn depends on being legitimate enough to impose new measures.⁹

There is a convergence of the academic and the practitioner, as feeling recognized for work done is a prerequisite to "social" consideration. The "society" implicitly referred to here is the community of world citizens and possibly the transnational community of diplomats. Look at the EU today and you will see how far it is from such recognition. Although the EU is often taken as supranational rather than merely intergovernmental there remains a weakness to this paramount structure even after decades of tentative legitimization.

Why is this so? Because *legitimacy* goes with *leadership* so were rulers of IOs to remain "stewards" for heads of state and government they would never become "leaders" and "key players" (Reinalda & Kille 2017: 217). Hence the quest for legitimacy would remain meaningless. Stewards just do it. They do not seek recognition for the job. When they do, recognition accrues to the anonymous body of executives and even to the organization as a whole (Reinalda & Verbeek 2014), or to a "cartel of Executive Heads or representatives of international bureaucracies" as in the UNAIDS story (Cox & Jacobson 1973: 381, cited by Reinalda & Kille 2017: 226, 233). Without leadership IOs would have no room for manoeuvre to act independently.

On a scale going from service to membership, to bold "individual initiatives that may sometimes resemble 'personal ambition' and end up as 'personal rivalries'" (Reinalda and Kille 2017: 232), most IO Heads remain closer to the left end of the axis while a few dare to go right. Would this be for fear of "the leadership craze", a trend that can "boost the self-esteem of

9 Legitimacy also matters to collect assets, as noted by Ness and Brechin 2013, p. 27: "greater legitimacy does typically translate to material resources by signalling to others the organization's appropriateness".

managers and legitimize their work through turning managerial work into... a culture of grandiosity... labelled and understood in impressive and extraordinary rather than mundane or precise ways” (Alvesson 2019: 27)?

In the real world, most IO leaders try to be modest. People like Pascal Lamy (WTO, 2005 to 2013), Mohammed el-Baradei (IAEA, 1997 to 2009), and Gro Harlem Brundtland (WHO, 1998-2003) were charismatic but disconnected from the field of their organization and suspected of having their own political agenda. This is certainly why a frequent reluctance to claim personal influence on organizational decisions can be heard when interviewing them.

In Selznick's classic words, organizations are “recalcitrant tools of action” that must be “transformed from simple tools of their creators into collectivities that are at least partly ends in themselves” (Selznick 1957). This is because “organizations matter, and the specific characteristics they develop over time play a large role in determining both what they will do and how effective they will be.” (Ness & Brechin 2013: 19, 29).

1.3 To Sum Up

My point is hopefully clearer to the reader now. While we have numerous publications on *interstate* cooperation there are very few available on *interorganizational* cooperation (discussed in the following chapter). This is nonetheless the central question addressed in this book. I shall do it with a methodological norm in mind: substituting *arrows* (like the ones in causal and longitudinal models) for *cells* (as in 2x2 tables).

This will help us turn upside down the common-sense hierarchy with states being above IOs. We shall see them as sources of original data instead of viewing them as disseminators of information about their members' respective intentions. This will help to assess their capability to make new norms and convert them into shared values and enforceable rules.

In a nutshell, this book replaces an anarchical playground for governments with an IO-centric multi-stakeholder collaborative network.

2 The Conventional Wisdom, Second Cut: The Mavericks

Science is split into thesis and antithesis, mainstream and critical thought, conservative and revolutionary, etc. Thus, all sorts of realism are conducive to their opposites—all kinds of institutionalism and constructivism conceived to replace them. When switching from the former to the latter signs, symbols, ideas, intentions and identities replace material and objective structures. True, in these new streams of research states are flanked by organizations that no longer depend entirely on their creators but IOs are still viewed as far from acting independently from their constituent members.

While attention is growing for IOs in both groups of scholars, there is no “organizational turn”. IR specialists continue to ignore the history, theory and sociology of organizations. The first issue of *International Organization* was a breakthrough, showing that a focus on such objects was growing in international studies. However, with the board undergoing several reshuffles the editorial policy alternatively favoured statistics and facts or rational choice and equations. There are few or no experts of Organization Studies on its board although James March and Johan Olsen did publish an important paper there on non-domestic issues (March & Olsen 1998).

Some IR scholars made impressive efforts to increase specialization, which translated into a cascade of titles on IOs and the creation of an IO section within an International Studies Association plus the publication of handbooks in the same realm. They definitely contributed to bringing IOs back in, and with them new thinking about organization as a social and global phenomenon made manifest by the use of imperfect contracts and principle/agent theories. However, real conversion to organizational thought was still to come.

2.1 Rejuvenating Old Paradigms

When Nobel Prizes were awarded to authors considered as close to political science, contributing to the building of neo-institutional economics (like Oliver Williamson, Douglass North, and Elinor Ostrom), research into IOs became trendy. *Agency* was now added to *structural* constraints. According to Bélanger (2011: 9), “a large body of literature has looked at how, by internalizing prosocial preferences, relying on private adjudicators, and making

use of other decentralized reputation mechanisms, enforcement can frequently be obtained in the absence of a central government”.

Before the emergence of these new paradigms apparently more adapted to the needs of theoreticians, mavericks had already infiltrated anarchical realist theories. Rather than being inspired by Law, the initial source of inspiration in international studies their promoters came from economics (e.g., Robert Cox) or were looking to economics for guidance (e.g., Robert Keohane).

All of them started from the same premise. We must abandon anarchy, sovereignty, and structural constraints on the distribution of power and privilege reasonable decisions effected within institutions or between organizations. As with realisms, though, institutionalisms relied on shared ontological assumptions about the rationality of agents.

One must remember the major assumptions of *Rational Choice Theory* (RCT): *utility* (costs/benefits ratio, utility curves, risks/rewards balance); *transparency* (information is shared equally by all stakeholders); and *transitivity* (preference A supersedes B which itself prevails over C, etc.). Contrary to interests, ideas, beliefs and values are either neutralized or neglected in RCT. Models unfold from logical and not psychological or sociological conjecture as if every decision-making dilemma has a mathematical solution. The endgames are “payoffs”. Collective decision is allegedly the unbiased outcome of an aggregation of individual choices. Explanation rises from a comparison between *predicted* and *observed* behaviour.

However, no agent is fully rational, intentional and selfish. While such principles are at the roots of “thick rationality” what is fundamental in the real world is “thin rationality”, which is always “bounded” (Simon 1957, 1976, 1985). As information is costly, actors optimize their satisfaction instead of maximizing their utility. They do not balance benefits versus costs but maximize their satisfaction or minimize their frustration. Given rationality precludes cooperation it is conducive to defection (Page Fortna 2003) and free riding (Germany, Japan, and the American nuclear umbrella; BRICS and the European reduction of gas emissions).

Even if individual decision-makers were perfectly rational the aggregated outcome could nonetheless remain irrational (Arrows’ theorem), intransitive (Condorcet’s paradox), undesirable (Boudon’s composition effects), and unpredictable (Fearon’s irrationality of war).

Lastly, strategic calculus is not always selfish. People and governments may pursue altruistic goals like social solidarity or humanitarian compassion.

IOs are sensitive to all these biases, of course. Firstly, even as the alleged champions of mutual information described by liberal institutionalists they cannot guarantee that information will be equally shared. There is asymmetric or even “private” information, tactically hidden to interlocutors who are unaware that others are aware that they themselves do not know. At any rate, information is never exhaustive. It can be incorrect, biased by fake news and

disinformation not to mention misinformation and useless news.¹⁰ Secondly, behind individual decision makers there are rival groups with incompatible cultures. Each role is fulfilled according to management specialists' prescription, for sure, but in a political organization every agent is constrained by psychological frames. Lastly, agents do not actually negotiate. They would rather bargain and blackmail. While negotiation is grounded in reason, bargaining and blackmail are mostly emotional.

All these biases to RCT come from distortion of the theory in the real world. Such distortions weigh more on IOs than on states because IOs are supposed to compensate for states' selfishness, amorality, lack of affect, and insufficient or incorrect information. Thus, if IOs membership were itself impacted by the usual limitations to rationality, "rational" arguments to build new IOs or reform existing ones would be less convincing.

Can *Game Theory* rescue rational views about IOs? The answer is yes when it is iterative. When games are played in sequences of N rounds, within the same context and with the same partners, then each player's priority goes to the protection of their self-image. In the long run reputation matters more than performance: cheating might be successful once but, thereafter, partners' suspicion of cheating will make it useless. *Reliability* eventually trumps *rationality* within groups of executives from IOs staff and permanent representations belonging to small communities of expatriates in international cities.

The great comparative advantage of staff over membership lies in the capability to make decisions under the shadow of the future and without any pressure from any electorate (voters and party leaders in a democracy) or selectorate (top brass and oligarchs in an autocracy). Information is better accredited by the prospect of benefiting from new stages of negotiation, which makes room for progressive refinement and necessary revisions.

As iterative games are cooperative, calculating the ratio of selfishness over the pursuit of public interest as many scholars do (Biermann 2017: 262), is not a necessary condition to assess the usefulness, impartiality, and specific added value of IOs compared to their membership. IGOs in particular are definitely helpful to provide member states with new information they could not collect themselves.

10 This said, sharing and displaying information remains a comparative advantage of IOs over States, as stated by Lake, 2007: 234: "It is hard to imagine that states could acquire the same information on the nuclear programs of others without the IAEA or some similar organization—or that information by one would be accepted as credible by the others".

2.2 Bringing in New Paradigms

For those scholars who draw their inspiration from another variant of rationalism (Contractual Theory) non-exhaustive information is traced to organizational slack and not to purposeful strategic calculus. Within the framework of the “rational design of international institutions”, information must theoretically remain incomplete because completeness is not only too costly to be worth seeking, adjustment needs be possible when confronted by unexpected contexts. Provisions for waivers, exemptions and pull-outs may well trigger decisions to join IOs but they cannot guarantee that a ready-made solution exists for each change in the environment.

2.2.1 *Contractualism*

Contracts cannot have provisions for every conceivable situation despite efforts by their writers to anticipate possible sources of feud between parties and make drafts more all-encompassing. Incompleteness must be accepted and addressed *ex ante*. The problem is “how to sustain the cooperation when even the more comprehensive arrangement cannot *ex ante* foresee all future states of the world and thus cannot pre-emptively suppress the need for... adjusting and supplementing the rules” (Bélanger 2011).¹¹ As a practical consequence of this theoretical trap institutional frameworks must offer solutions for necessary adjustments between unequal contractors. IOs will inevitably and step-by-step re-design their contracts to fill the gaps.

Substituting a theory of incompleteness for the classical paradigms of the realist or liberal kinds also solves the enforcement puzzle. Even when their constitutions offer space for dispute settlement mechanisms, IOs are not weakened by their all-too-famous low enforcement capacity, compared to states’ armies, justice, and police. On the contrary, IOs are consolidated by more discrete contractual incompleteness. Each time the current situation diverges from provisions their creativity is stimulated and third parties, institutional arrangements, or coordination mechanisms are required. All three come with multilateral organizations rather than bilateral negotiations.

In a nutshell, states remain in charge of dealing with anarchy when enforcement issues are central but they give more leeway to IOs when incompleteness becomes challenging. In such cases IOs are no longer sub-contractors to which some cooperative mandate is granted but autonomous agents able to fix issues that were not foreseen at the time agreements were

11 The sources of this theoretical advancement are Hart 1995, and Williamson 1985. Per Bélanger 2011, p.10: “the problem of incompleteness arises, for its part, from the inescapable fact that all contractual agreements are incomplete”.

signed. However, this transfer of sovereignty to more adaptive institutions is not easy.¹²

In other words, practical coordination compensates a lack of textual precision and the unpredictability of agents' behaviour deriving from it. Strategic and managerial arguments nonetheless point to the risk of incompleteness in IO-building. Confronted by the unknown, designers of organizations focus on structure rather than agency because "agreeing on pooling and committing resources rather than agreeing on actions or transactions (exchanges) is in itself a response to uncertainty" (Grandori & Furlotti 2018: 4). Such institutional options empower those units that are most likely to pool stakeholders' assets and mitigate unpredictable risks. In this process, multilateral organizations built on contractual relationships ("associational", "procedural", "constitutional",¹³ and "polyarchic") are favoured. Bilateral interstate relations remain more "transactional", "substantive", "operational" and "hierarchical" (Grandori & Furlotti 2018: 5-6). When asking "which forms of governance, intended especially as forms of *contracting*, can permit and sustain... discovery processes, by providing adequate cognitive space as well as *incentives to invest resources* in its exploration" the answer is: formal albeit flexible multilateral institutions.¹⁴

Additionally, the fact that IOs mostly arise from contractual considerations is related to the famous transaction costs issue. Paraphrasing the Coase research question that led to his famous 1937 theorem ("if markets are so good at allocating resources, then why do firms exist?") we could ask: *if anarchical conditions are so good at allocating power, then why do IOs exist?*¹⁵ As an answer we conjecture that IOs are conceived to fight moral hazard, asymmetric information, and sub-optimal apportionment of property rights with minimum transaction costs. IOs are inevitable when investing money in a context of *absolute uncertainty* since returns will only be known *after* shareholders have blindly shared investment costs. Ex ante none of them is able to forecast the potential risks associated with disproportionate investments. There is no guarantee that the actual share of the benefits accruing to

12 "While it is relatively easy for states to design institutions that efficiently take care of compliance problems and even to 'delegate out' this responsibility, they have a much harder time with the institutional mechanisms they create to manage incompleteness. Consequently, the shortcomings or mere absence of these mechanisms are taking their toll on the overall efficiency of the agreement and eventually lead states to use ad hoc—and *suboptimal*—strategies to infuse some of the *coordination* needed to assure the maintenance of *institutionalized cooperation*" (Bélanger 2011: 2, my emphasis).

13 If, as assumed by Grandori, 2018, p. 6, constitutions are "agreements or contracts (*cum trahere* means pulling together, after all) constituting actors and systems", it follows that IOs are best positioned to bring stakeholders together into the same associational framework.

14 This analysis contradicts works that endorse informal institutions like the G 7 (Morin et al. 2019) in face of the unknown.

15 The original sentence is quoted in Aghion & Holden 2011: 181.

each investor will suffice to protect their capital (Aghion & Holden, 2011: 185).

Here is the opportunity for states to gather and expect greater benefits from *pooling* rather than *delegating* competencies. Since each government alone cannot fill the gaps between constitutional texts or Treatises and daily activity within an IO they need to share resources with peers to make their policies effective. According to Lake, “[i]n delegating to IOs, states grant an organization contingent authority to perform certain limited tasks. In pooling authority within IOs, states transfer the authority to make binding decisions from themselves to a collective body of states within which they may exercise more or less influence” (Lake 2007: 220).¹⁶ Resources, information, and authority that have been transferred “from member states to a collective state body” are therefore shared. This is especially true when IGOs have increasing numbers of members that delegate more and more powers to the Secretariat.¹⁷

In such cases, their Constitutions or bylaws are *imprecise* and *incomplete*, because interpretation will always be needed when context changes. This is the very reason why “states uphold the unanimity requirement” (Gastinker, Schmidtke 2019: 12-3).¹⁸ Since most IGOs have a large membership their staff can trade off better managerial efficiency against the costs of complying with unwelcome binding decisions made by their members. Pooling resources waives the costs of having one’s hands tied. Whereas states tempted to go it alone must make public announcements that make it difficult if not impossible to pull back from their own commitments, their permanent representatives are relieved of this obligation when they get along with peers within IGOs.

So, incompleteness in contracting inevitably leads those states that are eventually “integrated” into an institutional “integrator” to opt for authoritarian and vertical coordination. Under one condition: that decision-making structures and arbitration mechanisms are designed to protect them against being “hold-uped” because “non-cooperative behaviors are punished by severe penalties” (Brousseau & Fares 2000: 3, 12). This offers additional support for the decision to build IGOs. They are so big and largely oriented

16 In other words, in the first case “the IO presents a proposal to states, which they can then accept or reject as their interests dictate. Even though the IO in this instance may reach a collective decision, that proposal is not binding without further action by the states. This remains a case of delegation, not pooling... Pooling occurs only when the collective decision is binding for member states”, i.e., in the second case (Lake 2007: 232).

17 “The causal mechanism at work here is the need for multiple actors to agree on a common treaty text, which is aided by ambiguity and the ability to interpret the text in more than one way” (Gastinker & Schmidtke 2019: 27).

18 “Our results show that incompleteness is shaped by delegation, pooling, and the number of founding states. IOs with secretariats that have been transferred greater decision-making authority show higher levels of incompleteness” (Gastinker & Schmidtke 2019: 27).

towards the Commons that member states take the risks engrained in incomplete constitutions to increase their share of the expected joint profits. In short, compared to national states, IGOs are optimal governance units, which “economize on the governance costs they bear” (idem).

In summary, the contractual theory of the firm predicts that, to solve the contractual open-endedness issue that makes stakeholders focus on process rather than results (Marks et al. 2014: 9)¹⁹ agents must take uncertainty for an opportunity rather than a liability. They must find confederate solutions, in particular when the scope of the unknown is large and issues are complex. They must combine precision ex ante with adaptability ex post.

At that stage, these arguments support the “inter-organizational turn” in IR (Biermann & Koops 2014) rather than interstate coordination paradigms because empirical surveys evince the potential for improvement born by contractual incompleteness. Hopefully, “highly incomplete contracts can produce sustained positive feedback that can lead to institutional change” (Marks et al. 2014: 20).

2.2.2 *Principal/Agent*

In so-called Principal/Agent Theory (P/A) scholars study the contract signed between one or several Principals and one or several Agents instead of looking at dyads. So a new issue is introduced—“monitoring”, loosely coupled with “enforcement” (from which it differs slightly) or even “oversight” (Pollack 2007: 3). P/A tenets add new costs to those entailed by the temporary abandonment of clear juridical competencies. When ex ante incompleteness leads to reinforcing controls ex post a considerate drafting of the status that makes the birth of an IO possible becomes a priority.

Doing this P/A goes further than previous research. It does not review interstate forms of cooperation at cruise speed when constitutional texts must be interpreted. It lists the requisites of the initial delegation and assesses how these requisites can then frame future collaboration. This shift is welcome. As noted by a prominent scholar, “within complex organizations, interpretation of rules and their effective implementation require delegation... But delegation to agents implies potential shifts in power and problems of control” (Keohane 1984).

As understood in this literature “delegation is a provisional grant of authority from a principal to an agent that empowers the latter to act on

19 According to Marks et al, 2014, p. 9 “A contract is highly incomplete if it commits states to a vague purpose—e.g. a ‘community of peoples’ or ‘ever closer union’—to be achieved by unspecified actors through an open-ended process. The focus is on the process, not the result, because the result is indeterminate. Cooperation is framed as an evolutionary process that is revealed only over time.”

behalf of the former. This grant of authority is limited in time or scope and must be revocable by the principal” (Hawkins et al. 2006). Therefore states are the principals that entrust IGOs as agencies and assign them a specific mandate. While national governments are the agencies of their own citizens IGOs are the agencies of their member states. Since delegation results from a chain of contracts, the longer the chain (depending on the number and heterogeneity of sovereigns and the resulting dilution of authority), the more incomplete the delegation contract (Lake 2007: 230).²⁰

What are the consequences of the “contracts” signed between states and IGOs within P/A? Three behaviours can be inferred from the incompleteness of initial contracts: “agents interpret and reinterpret rules”, “increase their permeability to third parties” (Hawkins et al. 2006: 208) or “buffer principal monitoring using dualism and ceremonialism” (Hawkins & Jacoby 2006).

On paper, while states provide for “discretion” they do not encourage “autonomy”. Once agents are no longer under control principals should logically withdraw their mandate. Well aware of this undesirable possibility agents should in turn carefully avoid open confrontation with their principals, even when they have enough freedom to make autonomous decisions. As a consequence, agents acquire discretion (which can be recognized) if not full autonomy (which must remain concealed). As “the range of independent action that is available to an agent and can be used to benefit or undermine the principal, discretion is something the principal intentionally designs into its contract with the agent” while “autonomy is an unavoidable by-product of imperfect control over agents” (Hawkins & Jacoby, 2006).

However, renegotiating the delegation contract or controlling its implementation imposes costs on the principal. Realists and institutionalists assume that the relationships between states and non-state-actors are durable whereas the actual balance between principals and agents is asymmetric and unstable. Some freedoms are broadly conceded by the principal to the agent while others are rejected.²¹ Leeway is increased in international relations when there is room for several delegations rather than just one because for each global agency there might be several principals, e.g. in the UN. Thus multiplied, principals will score more or less high in their attempts at controlling their agencies. In fact, “multiple” principals—like member states, trade unions and business associations within the ILO—seem less effective than a “collective” principal like the EU within the WTO (Lake, Mac

20 Lake overcomes two major barriers on a road towards the autonomy of IGOs. He convincingly shows that: 1) sovereignty is divisible, now as in the past when no IOs existed; and 2) delegation chain is as long domestically as it is externally.

21 As per Aghion & Holden, 2011, p. 186 “for a principal P to delegate formal authority to an agent A involves a cost and a benefit. The cost is that the agent may choose a project that the principal does not like. This is the *loss of control effect*. The benefit is that delegating formal authority to the agent encourages that agent to invest more effort in information acquisition. This is the *initiative effect*”.

Cubbins, 2006). Additionally “chains of delegation” may result in complete loss of control by the paramount principals at the heart of the process, as happened to Russia and China in the 2011 Libyan case. The chain started from a delegation by the Security Council to the General Assembly. It then stretched to Regional Organizations like the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League, followed by NATO itself empowering the UK and France.²² A fear of such dispossession now blocks other transfers of competence by UNSC permanent members with a veto right.

What is missing in P/A applied to IOs is a proper addressing of what happens downstream. Implementation differs from enforcement since policies decided within an IO may become reality without membership pressure. This is due to social, cultural, and political factors that must be taken into consideration as intervening variables (more about that in the next section).²³

Do other theories grounded in contractual activity fill the gap? Well, *New Institutional Economics* (NIE) offers alternative entries to the States/IGOs problem. Here, the contract implicitly links an elite to the masses. The elite captures whatever rent is available due to the geographical position of the territory they control, its natural resources, or tribute resulting from imperialistic expansion. This rent is then redistributed among its members according to an accepted key. Finally, whatever remains goes to the people who receive what is necessary to make them accept this imbalance and no more. When the masses contest the way decision-making about rent apportionment is made, a progressive opening up is likely, although it will be likely limited to property rights and control of revenues by the oligarchy (North et al. 2009).

What matters for IOs analysis is the delegation of capabilities from the elite to the masses. Once initiated the process is self-sustaining. People will demand more and more resources and political rights. National States cannot respond adequately to every single demand on the back of increasing globalization and so individuals soon turn to the hegemonic country whenever possible. Alternatively, they try to have the best practices of other states adopted by their national government. Eventually they will realize that only international institutions can give them justice. Overwhelmed governments with too many constraints cannot favour individual rights over collective

22 Drieskens & Reykers 2017: 282-284 see three contracts in this case instead of one.

23 Here is one of the reasons why “the red herrings, the critiques that arise from a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of what PA approaches and their practitioners actually argue”, miss their target because agents do not “slavishly follow the preferences of their principals” and do not differentiate between bureaucracies and courts, hence IOs cannot “enforce” governments’ decisions. The more so when what can be called “a true trustee—one to whom political principals had ceded a complete and irrevocable transfer of political property rights” does not exist as an independent category in theory as well as an independent agent in the real world (Pollack 2007: 5-12).

efficiency. Consequently, their policies are unable to stop the *spiral of rights claiming*. They must defer the issue to multilateral organizations.

IOs can effectively convert individual demands into collective norms. Their normative activity promotes personal rights against recalcitrant rulers, cheating lobbies, and excessively cautious national courts. Eventually, the vicious circle of pressures leading to concessions that fuel new demands—a process that inevitably weakens the wealth as well as the legitimacy of the State—is replaced by a “virtuous loop” in which welfare and democracy will increase simultaneously (Brousseau et al. 2010). As governments’ legitimacy will grow accordingly, they have a stake in this delegation of competence to IGOs. Rather than being a loss of national sovereignty there is a gain in international recognition. When norm-making is delegated to IGOs, the initial contract between national elites and the masses is extended to the whole planet. As a constitutional pact, which topples all other contracts, legalizes, and internationalizes them, it alleviates national states’ workloads and establishes a new world society (Brousseau et al. 2013).

Whatever the branch of Contractualism discussed here, they all rely on the very rationality that was at the core of less sophisticated streams of research like RCT and Game Theory. Their storytelling is simple. Agents make educated guesses; if not fully rational their decisions are at the very least considerate and reasonable. Of course, their choices are framed and bounded by social institutions and formal structures like the rule of law and decision-making protocols. To relax such constraining factors contractualists show that agents play the games by the rules. When the chessboard is junked by agents inventing their own rules, other theories arise in the field of IR studies. They all contribute to the advancement of Organizational Theory (OT).

2.3 Discovering Organizational Mechanics

As states are political institutions ruled by governments and public administrations they are rarely studied with the toolkit of organization theorists. Just some of their components are investigated with OT methods, like parliaments, parties, or bureaucracies, while the rest are considered opaque. Once the importance of other actors in IR is recognized Organization Studies are brought in. This applies to IOs, which are organizations rather than institutions—the latter being characterized by roles, norms, and rules while the former have offices, resources, and staff (Jönsson 2017: 54-5).

Hence, the “organizational turn” in IR becomes tangible, albeit incomplete. The other loopholes come from a focus on the *boundary* between IOs and their environment, to the expense of their internal *performance* and

their *resilience* capabilities—an alternative wording for the canonical distinction made by scholars between an “open”, “rational”, and “natural” system perspective, respectively (Franke & Koch 2017: 171-2).

2.3.1 *Neo-institutionalist Views of Bureaucracy*

When seriously used in IR, OT predicts that when confronted with overwhelming pressures in a rather informal landscape, stakeholders tend to invent their own rules. Consequently, every sort of bureaucracy will 1) create its own workload and 2) become self-referential.

A good case in point is the recent crisis at the WTO. Viewed from the outside, in the context of the pressure exerted by the 45th President of the United States, Donald Trump, it looks very much like an instance of his attacks against multilateralism. The reality is more complex. Since its inauguration in 1995 the Appellate Body had established itself as the supreme authority in trade conflict resolution. It adopted its own rules of procedure and interpreted them more and more freely. This created a new situation in which states’ representatives felt they had not joined for such an extended mandate of the seven “Justices”—with Americans contesting this designation, preferring to call them “members”, hence denying the Appellate Body the status of a supreme court. Self-extended rules of procedure now allow judges to pursue their activity past the end of their mandate, provided the case come under discussion at least one month before the end of their term rather than closing the review of a case in due time (much beyond the 60 days recommended time and the 90 day limit).

Other States, like Japan, Brazil or China have relayed American grievances. Some have even been outraged by the behaviour of a Korean judge who had reproached both the complaining and defending parties altogether for the paucity of information sent to him. He therefore asked them all to complete a form comprising 100 questions. Finally, he attached a 50 page long personal opinion on the issue to his final decision. True, in a world of legal precedents and law building of the kind EU members favour, such an attitude is not unusual. To American negotiators, however, it is symbolic of WTO judges’ over-confidence in their right to make their own law, which will be referred to in domestic courts. As this activity goes beyond *norm making* and into *rule making*, the USA and a number of other states are concerned about the slippage of the Appellate Body. They wish to retrieve their former control over it (interview, WTO, 16 March 2017)).

This example shows that any uncontrolled organization tend to increase its autonomy and expand its mandate because bureaucracies do just that. Even in a forum such as the WTO that should be dedicated to international trade negotiations in which the role of the internal bodies of the organization

should be minimal states are unable to prevent a drift away from the initial mandate by the Secretariat and the dispute settlement units. Actually, it took years before the problems raised by the increasingly independent behaviour of the Appellate Body's members started to be discussed, and many more years might be required before a solution is found. From a social scientist's perspective, international bureaucracies are full of apprentice sorcerers.

In recent decades sociologists have tried to analyse such processes. They explained bureaucratic expansion as a tendency to "define new categories of problems to be governed" and a resulting focus on rule making. When "experience... has become encoded in rules" it can be passed onto new generations of staff members. The accumulation of rules makes bureaucrats and their organization more authoritative. They add their own interpretations to the organization's body of norms. As rules are allegedly impartial, making new norms increases agents' "ability to present themselves as impersonal and neutral—as not exercising power but instead serving others". In the end, rules are both *constituent* of each IO and *constitutive* of its staff's behaviour and identity as experts in a field. This is why trustworthy agents "tend to make the world amenable to intervention by bureaucrats themselves", who in turn "expand their control" over it (Barnett & Finnemore 2004: 17, 21, 45).²⁴ The two scholars have observed a growing organizational autonomy from the membership because IOs agents are not only reactive but proactive and creative as well. In fact, "IO staff are likely to try to adjudicate between different interpretations held by members. They can use the autonomy generated by these divisions to offer an authoritative response" (Barnett & Finnemore 2004).

Barnett and Finnemore's book was trailblazing on the road towards a consistent organizational perspective on IOs. However, something was still missing, because they saw each IO as living in isolation from its peers.²⁵ Here is how Ness and Brechin summed up the remaining gap:

"Yet while Barnett and Finnemore (and others) have succeeded in demonstrating the independent bureaucratic capacity of IGOs separate from states, they do not fully explore the *competition and cooperation* among the IGOs given scarce resources or the broader environments in which IGOs and states are both embedded" (Ness & Brechin 2013: 19, my emphasis).

24 "There is also a moral dimension to claims to expertise based on technical knowledge and professional training. Professionals and experts believe that as repositories of socially valued knowledge they can and should be trusted" (Barnett & Finnemore 2004: 24).

25 Another caveat in the book is the disappearance of member states from the bureaucratic wholes to which they belong "according to normative preference, not empirical reality"—"normative" i.e. fighting against state-centric theories, hence risking irrelevance. According to a critical reader "when pendulums swing back, they swing too far" (Biermann 2017: 246).

To retrieve these missing links, Ness and Brechin signal a new insistence on fluidity, porosity, and interconnectedness in both OT and international studies.²⁶ In their famous 1988 article, they had already called for a review of ways to deliver a good or a service through a “coordination of tasks, involving hierarchy, specialization, authority and responsibility based on *rational calculation* and technical expertise (plus) an *appropriate and original technology*” (Ness & Brechin 1988; my emphasis). This implies that each individual organization selects specific assets that give it an identity although, to be exploitable, they must be pooled with the resources of other IOs. As Grandori and Furlotti noted about corporations, “interfirm formal agreements, as much as internal ones, are likely to have *coordination* functions and not only conflict resolution functions” (Grandori & Furlotti 2012, my emphasis).

The World Bank and the forestry division of the FAO (the two examples given by Ness and Brechin) have performed less when addressing, respectively, population control and forestry than more specialized organizations like the UN Population Fund and CARE, which had developed portable technologies (non-coital contraceptive or transplanted trees) better adapted to the problems they faced than rationally calculated investment returns (WB) and maximized profits from the industrial exploitation of timber (FAO).

2.3.2 *Organization Theorists Step in*

Viewed as organizations operating in a changing environment, IOs are no longer Weberian bureaucracies (rational, ideally organized, static, and functionally oriented towards specific activities). They look closer to Durkheimian structures (human, dysfunctional, dynamic, led by agents motivated by sociability rather than efficiency and ready to change instead of maintaining their work habits). In short, switching from one conception of bureaucratic organization to another is like passing from pathologies to innovativeness (Grandori & Furlotti 2012).²⁷

26 “Today, organizations are seen as much more porous and ever changing. Instead of closed-bounded systems, they are now seen as nearly borderless”(Ness & Brechin 2013: 30).

27 These two authors develop a model in which “*contracts and the related non-contractual documents effectively formalizing the governance of economic activities are:*

– (Hypothesis 1) *richer in constitutional provisions, and relatively less operationally specified, when they regulate more uncertain activities*, as in the case of activities characterized by higher research intensity, creativity and innovativeness.

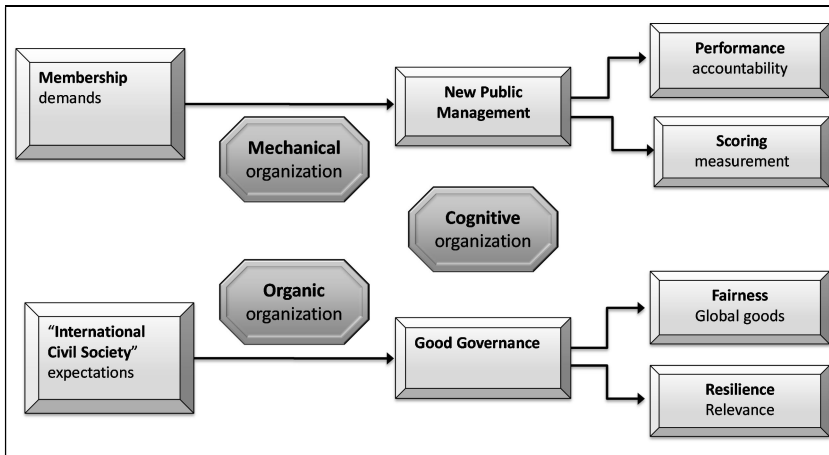
– (Hypothesis 2) *more elaborate in both their constitutional and operational components, when they regulate more complex activities*—i.e. systems of larger size that encompass a higher number and a greater diversity of matters and partners, and employ larger amounts of resources” (Grandori & Furlotti 2012: 15).

Pathologies are well known: global inefficiencies, excessive caution and compartmentalization, rigidity, inertia and lack of responsiveness, insulation from the environment, red tape, routines and decisions made “by the book” (or, on the contrary, against the rulebook when “deviance is normalized”), plus internal controversy and means mistaken for ends (Barnett & Finnemore 1998). Other shortcomings have been found in surveys of national administrations like global confusion, systematic parochialism, futile competition and messy aggregated outcomes (Allison 1971 quoted by Biermann 2017: 256-7), and there is no reason why they would be absent from international agencies. IOs are not immune from such woes, of course, but they can turn the maladjustments that are mechanically produced by bureaucratic activity into creativity, as will be shown in detail in chapter 5. For the moment, let me just say a few words about this process.

Institutions learn collectively. Their heads may have a personal vision of their own future while staffs try to create new collective values. Although contradictory, both trends imply that slack (a temporary lack of proportion between planned work packages and adequate human resources) will be converted into research and development (future consumption motivates current investments). This is the famous debate about “exploration” versus “exploitation” (or R&D vs. production lines) in the literature about “ambidexterity” (i.e. the ability to do both simultaneously).

Management Studies have recently shown that even the best performing mechanical implementation of organizational charts could not guarantee sufficient resilience because contextual change is a source of concern regarding agents’ future activities. To address this issue adequately, scholars have replaced a formal, hierarchical, centralized, and just-in-time organizational process with a more substantial, horizontal, decentralized, and endowed with excess capacity model referred to as “organic”—as opposed to “mechanical” (Michaud & Thoenig 2009). Note that “waste” (of resources, time, energy) can be counterintuitively considered as an asset. Suboptimal behaviour is actually inevitable in an organization to: a) draw lessons from the past; b) avoid dead ends; c) imagine new goals; d) make new norms; e) find new sources of value. Such a reflexive activity takes a heavy toll on the agents’ agenda so the time spent is considered a loss for the organization—a liability that mechanically weakens its overall performance.

From this angle, IOs combine performance (less than wished) and resilience (more than expected). Their agents and leaders add some spare time to their current activities to reach new power configurations and deliver new public goods. The infamous “green rooms” that made the WTO so unpopular simply made this idea a reality. The decision-making process was slowed down for a while and then accelerated once a consensus was reached. This is the reason why they disappeared in name only to now be replaced by “groups of shared initiative” as we shall see in chapter 15.



Graph 2. Contradictory pressures on IOs and their respective achievements

Of course, IOs have been challenged by the New Public Management turn. Promoted by their membership NPM is focused on performance, compliance, and secrecy. Additionally, IOs also had to accommodate demands for more resilience based on transparency, democracy, and accountability, which emerged from an “international civil society” in the offing. Asked by their members to become more productive and effective they were pushed by the public to be more relevant and helpful. While the first trend limited their room for manoeuvre and made the sphere of their action shrink, the second stimulated their autonomy and their expansion. Consequently, bureaucrats were cross-pressured. In some cases they were paralyzed. In other contexts they boldly moved ahead (graph 2).

During this process, the number and variety of IOs dramatically grew. This is evinced from empirical observations but is also a cause of possible epistemological traps.

2.4 To Sum Up

Against the classics, critics of realist and materialist conceptions of international relations have developed new paradigms based on considerate if not fully rational motivations.

From rationalistic views to the sociology of bureaucracy, behaviour has been analysed through the lens of strategic decisions. In brief, theory switched from structure to agency.

In this process, the famous “like-units” that populated the serious games of Waltz and his successors have become increasingly dissimilar. Services to states have been progressively replaced by autonomous decision-making, which governments may consider hostile.

Consequently, the decision process itself seems more complex than ever. The classics had excessively simplified their theoretical models of causation: being empirically parsimonious helped them reach some understanding of a chaotic world. The mavericks turned to more complex explanations, desperately trying to include in their models all possible varieties of institutional designs and decision-making processes. In the end some may have lost sight of the main drivers of change.

Thanks to both, classics and mavericks altogether, we know much more about many more IOs. However, our attempt to deliver a general law of evolution may be hampered by proliferation and diversity, as if we were always lagging behind schedule and condemned to miss a train we are chasing along the platform.

This is the very dilemma we must address in the next chapter.

Part 2.
IOs as Complex Organizations

3 Homogenization and Hegemonization

States are big or small, strong or weak, endowed with natural resources or not, with shorelines or landlocked: despite their great variety they are the basic entities of the globe. Change may occur across time, with city-states transformed into federations or empires. This notwithstanding, each unit is always steered by a central government embodying the sovereign power of its people or their divinity, ruling over a bounded territory, and receiving official recognition from peers. The Westphalia's revolution was about precisely that: equal consideration for all, over and above any differences.

By contrast, international organizations remain at the pre-Westphalia stage. They have little in common—a rather embarrassing observation for scholars who try to change the focus from independent states to autonomous international organizations. Any theory of IOs expansion must therefore confront this major difficulty. How to give a global explanation to the institutionalization of the world when its actors are so diverse and when so many types of non-national bodies are at its heart? Or, to put it simply: when IOs are much more diverse and more numerous than states have ever been can we nonetheless claim that there is a general law of their evolution?

Some jurists may reply that intergovernmental organizations are created by treaty and composed of sovereign states. However, this assumption is not always true, as shown by ASEAN.²⁸ Legal experts also say that every non-governmental association is the product of private initiatives, but this rule has countless exceptions. The only juridical aspects IGOs share beyond any doubt are: first, their legal personality, which enables them to make public commitments if not binding decisions; second, their status as non-profit units. Unfortunately, viewed from an organizational, political or even psychological angle these common features do not suffice to put them into the same box.

Sociologists come to rescue and focus on organizational structure. According to them an intergovernmental organization exists as soon as there is a *permanent secretariat* appointed by states and not only a head meeting irregularly with some aides. Again, this is not a general rule. There are exceptions, including ASEAN again. During the first period (1967-76) it had no staff. A permanent secretariat was established during the following years (1976-92). It then had to be restructured and its competencies enlarged after

28 ASEAN was launched "in August 1967 in Bangkok by the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand... *The Bangkok Declaration is not a traditional international treaty which binds the parties, but rather an impetus for voluntary cooperation*, describing in a general way the aims and purposes of the association, with a fairly light organizational structure" (Reinalda 2012: 222, my emphasis).

1992 (Reinalda 2009). Hence, this regional organization could work with no full-fledged administrative apparatus for decades.

Specialization endlessly requires new structures. The most recent creation within the same family of organizations unfolds from a common matrix. Organization Theory points out a Russian dolls syndrome (Blavoukos & Bourantonis 2017: 304, 309, 314). A good instance of that is the UN Security Council (“doll” 1, the biggest) from which the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has emerged (“doll” 2), and then a Mediation Support Unit (“doll” 3), which helps Special Representatives of the UNSC (“doll” 4), while at the end of the line the UNDP provides logistics (“doll” 5, the smallest).

Suppose IGOs were all parts of the UN-family, it would be easier to find at least one common factor operating behind their apparent nuances and giving them some uniformity. Even in this case it cannot be proved: UNESCO and UNDP, UNDOC and the WHO, are not homogenous entities. They act internationally as “unions”, “departments”, “programs”, “conferences”, “summits”, “banks”, “funds” (e.g., the GREEN Climate Fund or the Global Environment Fund), etc. Even though they all are components of the UN they nevertheless display a great variety of types.

This diversity increases when other labels are added to the list like “protocols”, “COPs” (i.e., “conferences of the parties”, as with climate change and biodiversity issues), MOPs (“meetings of the parties”, as with economic conjuncture within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe). There are “clubs” like the G4 within the WTO (the EU, the US, Brazil and India) or the G7 within the same organization (the 4 plus Australia, China and Japan [not to be confused with the global G7], Young 2010: 125). The most recent club is the G 20. We should not forget “contact groups”, “dialogues” (for instance, the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue was launched by Canada in 1990), “missions”, “forces” (or “task forces”), “institutes”, “boards”, “offices”, “commissariats”, “bureaux” (as in the twin predecessors of WIPO, the “BIRPI”), “frameworks” (e.g., the Manila Framework issued by APEC in 1997) and so on and so forth.

When the roster includes “transnational” non-state actors, its scope expands dramatically. First, there are NGOs of every creed and nature. As we have seen some are QUANGOs (quasi NGOs) or BINGOs (Business NGOs). There are also GONGOs (governmental “NGOs”, i.e. those that are either controlled or sponsored by states or associations and are funded by the public institutions of their home country, see the Swiss Terre des Hommes). Others are “foundations”, “think tanks”, and “pacts”. We should not forget “agreements” like the GATT and, later on, the Dayton and Rambouillet ones on former Yugoslavia or the Wassenaar Agreement on double-use weapons. “Arrangements”—e.g., the Multifiber Arrangement—and “alliances” (either specialized, like the Climate and Clean Air Coalition or universal, like “Glo-

bal Alliances”) also matter.²⁹ The only outsiders to exclude from the list are rating agencies (e.g. Moody’s, or Quacquarelli Symonds) and that is not for the lack of internationalization since most of them have branches nearly everywhere. It is organizational characteristics that are absent. They have no cosmopolitan administrative staff, only experts living in various countries who are consulted online or mandated to evaluate a particular context.

This much needed organizational support can come from national ministries of foreign affairs and their dedicated bureaux. There is no need to opt for a specific organizational design. The GN (G7, 8, 77) and BRICS, as well as groups such as “Cairn”, “Visegrad”, “Normandy”, etc., are not staffed. We ignore them because our attention “has been focused almost exclusively on formal IGOs (FIGOs)—official interstate arrangements legalized through a charter or international treaty and coordinated by a permanent secretariat, staff, or headquarters”. However, “FIGOs are just one point in a full range of international institutions... Informal intergovernmental organizations (IIGOs—which are at the lower end of the institutional spectrum) are also ubiquitous in international politics but they have not been subject to the same rigorous theoretical analysis as formal IGOs”. Were this true, outcomes would pertain more to “soft law” than to mere Law (Vabulas & Snidal 2013: 193-194) although matters arising from the meetings are carefully overseen and even evaluated by “research centres” (like the one in Toronto).

Browse the whole list of possible units operating internationally and you will also find every kind of grouping. Firstly, “advocacy coalitions”, “epistemic communities”, “public policy networks”, and “public private partnerships” coexist. Secondly, “interest groups” which are PTOs (i.e., Private Transnational Organizations) flank state agencies, while Electoral Management Bodies (or EMB) monitor democratic elections worldwide.

Thus “NGO” is as vague a term as “IGO” may sometimes be. Some units in this category demonstrably pursue advocacy goals while others specialize in confidential lobbying.

To make things even more complex, most IOs networks are duplicated: there is a *global* and a *regional* set of parallel organizations (the UN and the African Union, the Arab League, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation; as well as the WTO and MERCOSUR; WIPO and EAPO—Eurasian Patent Organization); an *international* branch and *local* offices; a *universal* union and several *functional* agencies (ITU and ICANN; the WB and the BIRD). In all, some 40 Regional International Organizations (or RIOs) are found within the lines.³⁰ They actually do proliferate, as shown by the 2020 RCEP bringing

29 Like the Global Alliance for vaccine and Immunisation, cited by Jönsson 2017: 60.

30 RIOs “have a distinct physical location or website, a formal structure (i.e. a legislative body, executive, and administration), at least 50 permanent staff..., a written constitution or convention, and which have a decision body that meets at least once a year. 35 RIOs fit all

together in a free trade zone ASEAN and Oceanic countries (albeit with India absent), an easy substitute for the Chinese-led PTPGP for the Pacific (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership)... itself a proxy for the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement that was stillborn in 2016 after Donald Trump came to power in Washington.³¹ For any rational observer, being lost in enumeration is inevitable.

There is also a slight possibility that duplication opposes “not-for-profit”, profit neutral, and “for profit” stakeholders. In the realm of health a paramount agency like the WHO traces potential epidemics and then identifies vaccines. The pharmaceutical industry produces and sells them to national governments. The Global Fund against Malaria, Tuberculosis, etc. or the Covax alliance finance aid, which implies that their activities will be self-sustaining, given overhead costs will simply be covered by a preferential interest rate ceiling.³² Even among mainstream IOs some specialize in documenting issues and bringing scientific or statistical evidence to the fore (like the OCDE, UNCTAD, and IEA) while other are more intrusive and can compel member states to change policy.

To increase variety, if possible, in some regional or functional IOs a new format becomes increasingly trendy: the « + » adds a country which remains outside the organization although it has much influence on its members, e.g., “ASEAN+” (South Eastern Asian states plus China, Japan and South Korea), or “OPEC+” (the historical founders of the organization plus Russia). This addition is not only a matter of architectural design. Naturally, China and Russia are too big to be fully integrated into any regional organization without breaking its initial equilibriums. For similar reasons, Turkey (with a population over 85 million) could one day be in the same position with the European Union and we could then see an “EU+”. Such an explanation has its own limitations, though: it does not give proper account of the Shanghai Organization’s success, a coalition of powerful and powerless states grouped together, within which China and Russia cohabit with Tajikistan and Kirghizstan.

Perhaps fluctuating coalitions of countries with flexible boundaries and variable life expectations will make this depiction even more complex inserting one IGO (a temporary alliance of countries) into another (the intergovernmental organizations to which these states belong). This may well be the case of the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA, the Australian-Japanese alliance signed in November 2020, which is inserted into the

or all but one of these criteria, including two that no longer exist, COMECON and the first East African Community” (Marks et al. 2014: 15).

31 This RIO lasted for 11 months, from 4 February 2016 to 23 January 2017.

32 Biermann et al. (vii-xiii) list 263 IOs, though some are missing (like the Codex Alimentarius).

regional Quad with the same partners plus the US and India). Sometimes, they are also suggestions of IGOs in the offing, as in the successive Central Asia and Eurasian trials to establish economic or defence unions between successor states to the USSR (Laruelle & Peyrouse 2012).

Thus, there is much diversity: contrary to biodiversity “organizational diversity” is not threatened. This, however, is not the end of the story as behind such pluralism similarities nonetheless emerge: firstly, stakeholders themselves address heterogeneity frontally; they try to homogenize every unit, organize a division of labour among them, or just simplify the taxonomy. Secondly, the normalization process concentrates power into a few decisive hands. Then, hegemony emerges as a solution to excessive diversity of status and increasing fragmentation of mandates.

3.1 Diversity

A metaphor is useful prior to considering what non-national organizations active beyond borders have in common: celestial bodies vary considerably from meteorites to comets, and from stars to planets, not to mention black holes. Planets themselves vary in nature (gaseous or rocky), their rotation speed and trajectory, distance from their sun, etc. Therefore, looking for a global causal explanation of the universe cannot rely on the *classification* of such units. It must, on the contrary, focus on the *processes* that made all this possible in dynamics, for instance in energy, gravity and relativity.

The same reasoning applies to IOs diversity: in a taxonomic spirit, it can be assessed per various standards, like the scope of IOs activities, the size of their membership and its political nature (democracies, autocracies), funding, and of course geography. In fact, the number of classification standards is already excessively high and increases exponentially with new publications in the field of IR. However, it can also be measured according to relationships with member states, size, seniority (since historical ties do matter), and evolution. In the same vein scholars checking for “contractual dynamics”, rank the EU on top of the list with the old NAFTA at the bottom; they also select “delegation” to secretariats as another decisive variable, which puts the European Union ahead of every RIO, while the South Asian SAARC is the least prone to delegate (Marks et al. 2014: 9, 12).

3.1.1 *Standards of Classification*

Of course, the most spectacular sign of diversity is *membership size*: how to compare an NGO led by a handful of dedicated militants meeting in a couple of office rooms (like Pugwash, a Nobel Peace prize winner) to the ILO (an organization which encompasses the whole world, and associates labour unions with business and governments)? It is of note here that some NGOs tend to coalesce in order to look less ridiculously tiny while others opt for a constellation of international headquarters and regional or national independent branches, e.g., Amnesty. However small some of these branches might be, the whole looks big enough to impress governmental partners (Wong 2009).

Another criterion is *seniority*, although claims for anteriority are always debatable. The Rhine Commission is conventionally mentioned as the first Intergovernmental Organization that is still active. Diving into the genesis of the World Meteorological Organization nonetheless shows that it emerged in the 18th century, when philosophers from several European countries intrigued by weather cycles met to set standards of data collection used in weather forecasts.

The genesis of extant IOs and their respective *evolutions* are explanatory variables per se. The history of epistemic communities evolving bottom-up into big IGOs, which then expanded to the whole planet and included all governments, has little in common with top-down created institutions like the IMF, established in a couple of weeks by political plenipotentiaries from the Old and New World in Washington.

Even without tracing the process back to when everything started (the 18th century treatises of Westphalia, then Utrecht), and evolved (the 19th century courts) or were consolidated (the survivors of the 30s, like the Pan-American Organizations and the Geneva-based Bureau International du Travail, now ILO), it is clear that institutions born out of 1945 differ from the post-1989 tide in many aspects. While the former were framed by an ideological conflict, the latter surged from the alleged end of ideologies. As a consequence some IOs exited the stage in the nineties. The anti-Communist Leagues and the military alliances of communist countries were replaced by “organizations aiming to gather ancient Soviet Republics without depending on Moscow”—the 1999 GUAM being a good case in point.³³

Some IOs have been created after an economic crisis rather than after a war. OPEC and the International Energy Agency were both born or empowered in the aftermath of the 1973-74 oil crunch. The Shanghai

33 Alexandre Baounov (Carnegie-UK) in: *Courrier International*, 1565, 29/10-4/11, 2020. Instances of anti-Communist Leagues of the fifties are the Ukrainian-led 1946 Anti-Bolshevik Block of Nations (ABN), and the 1954 Asian People Anti-Communist League (APACL), which brought together Southern Korea and Taiwan.

Cooperation Organization and BRICS have flourished after the emergence or liberalization of new market economies.

In the end, IOs estranged themselves from the original model. The Bretton-Woods institutions, NATO, the WTO, and the International Criminal Court refer to five different conceptions of what multilateralism can be.

To make things more complex, diversity is internal as well as external. This is due to the existence of professional subcultures coexisting within the same organization or competing across several organizations (Barnett & Finnemore 1998). As telecommunication engineers and software experts each have their own vision of the world, collaboration between ITU and ICANN is difficult. Viewed as representatives of their national states these experts just convey instructions received from their headquarters. Perceived as members of professional communities, they tend to rally behind the values defended by their peers even when they are mandated by another government. Hence, the decisive factor is less the ideal-type of IO—a specific configuration of all possible variants—than the mechanics steering the trajectory of real organizations muddling through the wake of other IOs with which they sail towards the same future despite their different origins.

This is not to say that diversity must be discarded as irrelevant. It is just a means to put it into context—a context in which every IO is driving towards some core *attractor*. Assuming irreconcilable diversity as a thought experiment makes it easier to assess the attractors' capacity to shave off differences.

Scholars have reviewed major cleavages that could explain the diversity of formats. Take the *strategic intensity* of each issue. Is it constitutional or operational? Does it have an impact on hard/high politics like securitization, growth and development? Or does it pertain to softer fields like culture and the environment? Surprisingly, attracting resources, generating economies of scale, and dispatching activities on the field are at the core of staff concerns whatever their type of activity. Successfully provisioning an army with weapons and equipment or timely sending psychiatrists into refugee camps to help traumatized children are both conditioned by the same protocol.

There is another explanation to such convergence. Staffing follows organizational rules. As shown by Reinalda in his *History of International Organizations* once you have multilateral meetings a Secretariat and Headquarters are required for the follow up to the decisions made,³⁴ and then Departments or Divisions are created, some regional and other functional. In the Middle East, the Arab League acts collectively within the UN General Assembly and above the Gulf Cooperation Council or the Arab Common Market. The 54 members of the Islamic science, education and culture

34 According to Reinalda, 2009, p. 1 “the term institutionalization is used as an indication of organization building, in particular by providing continuity and assigning this task to a specific body, which in international organizations... is usually the permanent secretariat.”

agency, OAPEC at 10 (the Arab OPEC), the Arab Women Organization and the Arab Towns Organization (among others) complete this set. Some regional organizations do not stem from a replication of existing universal IOs, though. Having more limited goals they operate on a narrower scope. This is, for instance, the case of the Turkic Council.

As seen, we can opt for paramount dichotomies that oppose universal and functional IOs (the UN vs. the WTO), global and regional (the World Bank vs. the African Development Bank), and forum and arena-type (ICANN vs. the EU Parliament). In the same vein, another option would group IOs by families (mainly UN or EU, and non-UN or non-EU related). Some encompassed organizations would be “nested” into encompassing ones, a framework that works with regional organizations finding a niche within world institutions (nesting pointing here to “the embeddedness of an organization into a broader setting”). Drawing IOs family trees instead of ignoring their genesis reduces heterogeneity.

Within each of these families of IOs, specific routines and protocols travel from the most advanced to the least adaptable. There is a striking parallel between administrative and deliberative processes.

3.1.2 *From Diversity to Similarity*

That diversity persists whatever the context is understandable. Just like national administrations and private corporations, international organizations are vying for unrivalled competencies, and sometimes for more trivial “market shares”. Hence they must find their own place in a competitive world.

One recipe for originality is to get recognition for ownership of a concept (e.g. “Handicap International”, now “Humanity and Inclusion”). Although the UNHCR faces competition from IOs rescuing distressed people it retains a monopoly over legal expertise and knowhow in camp logistics (building shelters, distributing food and medicines, taking care of sewage systems, etc.). Every operator will continue to have recourse to it, as long as it remains the source of best practices in this sector.

Despite efforts to establish themselves as significantly distinct from organizations operating in the same field or allies with complementary activities most IOs are drowned in a sea of homogenization. As noted by DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 148), “we seek to explain homogeneity, not variation”, hence “[w]e ask... why there is such startling homogeneity of organizational forms and practices” and not “[w]hy there are so many kinds of organizations”.

I shall repeat the question for IOs, inspired by the two authors who assert that “[i]n the initial stages of their life cycle, organizational fields display considerable diversity in approach and form. Once a field becomes well established, however, there is an inexorable push towards homogenization”.

3.2 Similarity

As noted by prominent international scholars writing in the same field, we can identify what IOs have in common instead of looking for their idiosyncrasies. As a way of organizing an anarchical world rather than as a set of IOs, International Organization generates “extensive schemes of cooperation to safeguard peace and security”. It can “solve common problems” and “sustain common values” (Alderson & Hurrell 2000).

However, the keywords included in such a definition and their interpretations are debatable. Should global organizations fight for fairness or equality? Is democracy universally valid? Are other priorities like reaching a more acceptable balance between North and South legitimate? Can we actually list common values on a planetary scale? Consequently, it seems presumptuous to put all IOs in the same basket.

However, mechanical convergence or emulation may be observed on the ground. Scholars like Balint et al. (2008) have analysed IOs from various angles: “functional adaptation, path dependency, isomorphism or policy windows”. The last two processes “provide a more promising basis for understanding at least parts of the empirical development” of the European Commission since it “started as a public administration in the Continental tradition and over time partially moved towards the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian models”.³⁵ This occurred despite the fact that “most member states have remained pretty stable over time”, in contradiction to the path dependency model and an indirect proof of isomorphism understood as the “international spreading and diffusion of policy innovations and reform concepts”.

Isomorphism is encouraged by a growing attachment to benchmarking as in the Open Method of Coordination coined by the EU in 2000, which defined its “purpose as ‘mutual learning’ with instruments that measured developments using standardized indicators, benchmarking, comparison of ‘best practices’, progress monitoring and so-called peer reviews” (European Council, 2000: Section 37, quoted in Nedergaard 2006: 424).³⁶ Note that such homogenization is easier when members share common values or are quite

35 On these various administrative lineages see Kickert 2008.

36 Best practice can be identified as follows: “countries learn from other countries that are perceived as more successful in a particular area ... countries that ‘have good results’ or ‘good economic performance, appropriate economic reforms and policy measures taken’; countries with ‘innovative policies and actions’ where you are struck ‘by some ideas you would never have thought of’; from countries that are ‘the most advanced in my area’; when they have ‘effective policies in crucial areas’ or are ‘ahead of my member state in implementing specific policies’; ‘when they have solutions to problems we need to solve’; when they have ‘succeeded in building stable policy measures’; have ‘more sophisticated administrations’; or simply have the ‘best practices’ ” (Nedergaard 2006: 429).

similar in size, culture, political regime,³⁷ etc. The Nordic countries have an OMC subcommittee, which adds a regional touch to such convergence (Nedergaard 2006). The reason for such popularity is simple: “To increase their legitimacy and ensure their persistence, organizations embrace rules, norms and routines that are widely valued in their organizational environment” (Knill and Balint 2008: 679).

Drawing on DiMaggio and Powell (1991), Balint, Bauer and Knill put legitimacy ahead of efficiency: responding to member states’ pressures to adapt brings recognition even though it is neither urgent nor efficient³⁸. They also review the three sorts of isomorphism found by DiMaggio and Powell (“coercive, mimetic and normative”). *Coercion* emerges from members’ pressures. *Mimetic* behaviour is a rational reaction to uncertainty about the best practice when “organizations imitate the structures of other organizations which they perceive as particularly successful”.³⁹ Norm *alignment* results from similarities in professional standards as well as “common understandings and perceptions of policy problems and solutions” (Balint et al. 2008: 66). Despite legal means of enforcement, norm alignment works because “in practice it is difficult in the long run to resist standards even though they are voluntary. One important reason for this is that an organization’s own members may refer to such standards... The demands to adopt a standard may also come from the environment of the organization” (Ahrne & Brunsson 2008: 11). In every case alignment implies importing a process or policy from one IO, as the outcome of a policy transfer well analysed in the literature.

Similarity can also result from “policy learning”, when collective knowledge is enhanced. Best practices may then be picked out from several possibilities. Therefore, they will come from various sources rather than a single identified matrix. As noted by one scholar, “policy transfer denotes a process by which a policy from one polity is explicitly used as a blueprint for drawing-up a policy in another polity... Conversely, policy learning implies gradual processes of realization, where cognitive categories are redefined on the basis of new knowledge”. It is of note that learning is not limited to

37 The assumption is that each country “learned most from countries where they ‘admire their systems and values’; where the ‘principles and systems are in many respects similar to ours’; where representatives have a ‘similar approach as we have’; where they have ‘different approaches to similar problems’, etc.” (Nedergaard 2006: 429).

38 Elsewhere, Knill & Balint claim: “organizations base these decisions upon the relative legitimacy gains to be derived from the varying options for isomorphic change” (2008: 685).

39 Reviewing reforms of human resources management in the EU and the OECD, Knill and Balint come “to the conclusion [...] that the different mechanisms of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism do not provide a sufficient explanation of the variation in human resource management structures found” (2008: 681-685).

successful cases; it may as well result from an experience in “policy failure” (Nedergaard 2006: 426-7).

However, this does not suffice to explain the overall change at the level of the EU in its entirety. It is for instance fully possible that “[a]ccording to the perspective of functional efficiency, organisations adjust their structures and routines in the light of new challenges and problems”. If so, they will tend to opt for the same answers to the problems they must all face. It may also be true that to be successful “isomorphic change requires a certain degree of homogeneity of the environment. In case of high heterogeneity, by contrast, no clear predications are possible” (Balint et al. 2008: 60-61).⁴⁰ This is additional evidence that belonging to a family of IOs matters. Some IOs can learn most from the “*most similar*” organizations rather than from the *best-performing* ones. They can combine both factors in learning more and faster from those which are the closest (Nedergaard 2006: 437-8).

For a fresh look at old issues let us assume that whatever works for countries should also work for IOs. For instance, showing that IGO member states become progressively similar can explain why several of them tend to be mimetic. Consider the hypothesis called the “convergence factor”. As stated by Bearce and Bondanella, stakeholders “interact(ing) on a regular and sustained basis take on new identities and interests”. In this case national interests are neither defined domestically nor constant over time. The same could help to make sense of “Europeanization” a cross-national stream that can ipso facto apply to trans-organizational “modernization”. It “consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion, and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms” (Radaelli, 2004: 3). The point here is that organizational drivers are determinant even in the absence of strategy.

Taken for granted formats, templates, protocols, routines, and ethically correct behaviour can provide homogeneity. By contrast, deliberately suspicious strategy can make heterogeneity resist. Typically, however, conscious action brings similarity: it may either unfold from homogenization—itsself stemming from leaders’ converging attempts to normalize their activities—or emerge from the strategic calculus of a Hegemonic leader.

40 In this case, the authors were not able to “link the observable reforms to new challenges”. As summed up by Michael Bauer (2008) in another paper published the same year about the EU and the OECD, “Knill and Balint ... suggest that... (a)ccording to the isomorphistic expectations, the occurrence of change in line with new public management in the case of the OECD was over-determined. That this change did not materialize points to the fact ‘that isomorphism theory needs to be complemented by arguments with regard to the conditions under which organizations adopt policy innovations which diffuse internationally’ (Knill and Balint 2008: 687)”.

3.2.1 Homogenization

Let us examine the top-down alternative, *homogenization*.

It may surge from a confederative strategy. The UN, for instance, has never stopped bringing organizations under its umbrella that were born long before 1945 or were created outside it. The most famous are the WMO (“invented” during the Enlightenment); the WIPO (a late fusion of the two “Bureaux” of Paris and Berne on copyright and patents, respectively); the ILO (formerly a tripartite “Bureau International du Travail”); and the IAEA (launched by President Eisenhower with an agenda focused on a trade-off between military and civil atom usage). In recent decades all these organizations have become UN agencies and had to add the peace palms icon to their own logo. However, the UN could not absorb the WTO and ICANN—two IOs that play a major role in international governance nowadays.

The UN accreditation process also plays its role. To be recognized as legitimate partners and get the necessary clearance to participate in some if not most debates, heads of NGOs opt for low-profile strategies. They display professionalism, accountability and transparency. They model their organizations on templates that the UN or the EU promote even if only to be funded by national institutions, which makes them most similar to each other (Cooley and Ron 2002; Egger 2013). Asperities are erased because rhetorically expressive units are less likely to be accepted on the precincts of the UN and UN-related agencies where their representatives need to get a number of badges to pass the checkpoints. Consequently, they smooth distinctive signs of protest against the world system that singled out their NGOs. Although militants can sincerely think that such euphemistic attitudes are unavoidable in the short run while hoping that protest will again be legitimate at a later stage, distinctions are progressively levelled up.

The bottom-up process—*socialization*—is much documented.⁴¹

Newcomers and inventors of organizational formats may bring with them a breath of fresh air and innovative styles upon creating a new IO or accessing an established one. They nonetheless learn how to behave themselves and embody international codes of conduct or ways to argue in multi-lateral negotiations. Sooner or later they opt for mimetic attitudes and isomorphic structures. Best practices are picked out and then copied-pasted. Guidelines are considered inspiring enough to be respected although they are

41 As elegantly put by Hooghe 2005, 863: “Socialization refers to the process of inducting individuals into the norms and rules of a given community. The mechanisms by which this occurs may range from the self-conscious (for example, normative suasion) to the subconscious (for example, social mimicking or role playing), and from the instrumental (for example, shaming), to the non instrumental (for example, communication). Socialization demands that individuals change their preferences in accordance with organizational norms.” Suffice here to replace “individuals” by “permanent representatives” to an IO.

not compulsory. Internal audits play with the belief that there are considerable benefits for an IO to resemble its most successful peers. All this pushes IOs under stress towards importing policy recipes and structural changes.

Note that socialization is achieved when the norms and forms of other organizations become non-debatable.⁴² This can happen before coalescing with peers or after admission within their circle of influence.⁴³ It can also be intermittent. Socialization to international norms and behaviours works efficiently when coinciding with domestic socialization (Hooghe 2005⁴⁴). Perceived affinity is therefore an important driver of similarity. Newcomers must justify their level of similitude and this is easier among like-minded units,⁴⁵ in particular when governments are involved.⁴⁶

In short, once a new organization is recognized as legitimate socialization alone may not suffice to harmonize positions and ways-of-doing. It takes some *conditionality* to reach this end.

If institutions are “promoters” and not only “sites” of socialization (Checkel 2005: 806) alignment must be effective before any recognition of newcomers by existing groups of IO can occur. In reality, any applicant must adopt the rules of the most legitimate IO of the group it tries to join. The recognition of an applicant desperately needing⁴⁷ to become part of the same international milieu is conditional on what staff members of the targeted IO

42 Because alternatives to the question asked by Jeffrey Checkel (2005: 802, “When do international institutions create senses of community and belonging?”) exist, see Hooghe, 2005, p. 863: “When does international socialization work, and when does it not? When do alternative processes of preference formation predominate? Can international officials learn international norms outside the international organization?”

43 A process evidenced for states recently admitted into an IO (Checkel 2005; Kelley 2004).

44 “Countries vary widely in the degree to which they centralize or decentralize authority. Notwithstanding the US and Switzerland, citizens of federal societies may have fewer inhibitions concerning supranationalism and multilevel governance” (Hooghe 2005: 869).

45 See Kelley’s table, p. 712.

46 This would unfold from a successful test of the isomorphic conjecture made by DiMaggio and Powell (2008: 105): “*The greater the extent to which the organizations in a field transact with agencies of the state, the greater the extent of isomorphism in the field as a whole*”.

47 This is because utility maximization plays a role in the socialization process: “it is often a combination of utility and socialization that brings an individual to support organizational norms. Initially, when a person joins an organization, incentives, persuasion, and mimicking may all nudge them toward particular preferences, so that it is impossible to distinguish socialization from utility. In the long run, individuals may internalize norms” (Hooghe 2005: 872). As stated by Checkel (2005: 809), conditionality relies on incentives or constraints: “Intergovernmental reinforcement by reward refers to a situation in which an international institution offers the government of a target state positive incentives—rewards such as aid or membership—on the condition that it adopts and complies with the institution’s norms. This is a classic use of political conditionality. Transnational reinforcement by reward refers to the same process, but now directed at nongovernmental actors in target states”.

consider as desirable changes in the definition of interest and the identity of the candidate (Kelley 2004). Moreover, it is likely that looking for a position in a group of states and IOs presupposes some propensity to support international norms and culture (Hooghe 2005: 888⁴⁸).

To sum up, the main drivers of homogenization in the IO world are confederation, accreditation, socialization and conditionality, as well as a transfer of structures and policies, plus norm alignment.

3.2.2 *Hegemony vs. Harmony*

We can now turn to cases when similitude stems from hegemony. Dominant powers select the most efficient templates that are also more convenient to their diplomacy. Then, they try to impose such formats on newcomers and partners with whom they build a new organization. For this reason, the USA has bypassed established IGOs twice: in intellectual property, the WTO shortcuts WIPO; in the Internet, ICANN successfully side-lines ITU. China today opts for another strategy. The Chinese government creates new organizations that will allegedly be more sensitive to its claims and ambitions—for instance, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

This is no surprise: the USA and their countless influential NGOs are good candidates to be the homogenizers of international agencies. China with its noisy GONGOs (for “Governmental Non-Governmental Organizations”) fully funded by their government is an alternative to American supremacy. From time to time demonstrators from either state subvert their agenda and monopolize the space granted to representatives of accredited NGOs. The pressure they exert does not depend on any attachment to the contested Organization: while the Communist Party of China turns to proxies to invest in the functioning of the UN, the US Federal administration divests from it: however, civic movements timely replace the American government and stop its potential loss of leverage. In short, North American NGOS are leaders in protesting and behave as norm-makers worldwide. Other regional influencers attempt to compete with them and model their lobbies on the institutional design of the most legitimate associations.

There are three other vectors of similitude generated from above: *shortcutting* extant IGOs; *framing protest* thanks to friends of a government who head pseudo-“independent” NGOs; and *apportioning* a territory plagued by a recent war. Each of these processes can be independent from the others, but they can also be aggregated. The UN may be part of a grand coalition of military winners occupying a liberated country under the leadership of a

48 As bluntly stated by Liesbet Hooghe: “there is some circumstantial evidence that self-selection nudges up support for Commission norms. Indeed, individuals who choose to work in an international organization are likely to be favorably disposed to the organization’s norms”.

Hegemon. For the sake of efficiency this state can rely on countless NGOs, more or less loosely connected to it and the UN, with different levels of accreditation as in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Eastern Timor, Somalia, and Mali.

Overall, such streams of harmonization and homogenization are progressively formatting organizational processes and structures. However, hegemony may also lead to dissimilarity. This occurs when governments create new organizations with the assumed goal of completing crisis resolution tools or when they indulge in forum shopping.

The recent proliferation of Funds may be understood as reinforcing existing instruments to fight pandemics, mitigate climate change and prevent environmental externalities or compensate for their negative impact. Alternatively, Funds are assigned a specific task that the biggest IGOs themselves cannot fulfil satisfactorily. They collect huge amounts of money in a short span of time. There is another side of the coin, though. The governments of powerful states intentionally use Funds to dispatch resources among distinct bodies in order (a) not to concentrate “excessive” power in any one of them; (b) not to put all their eggs in one basket; and (c) not to set an example and then be pressed by NGOs to reproduce it in other fields. In doing this, they contribute to the diversity of IOs instead of promoting their similarity.

At first glance, the alleged rationale for establishing Funds is directed towards mere efficiency plus a touch of fairness. They are dedicated to one specific and temporary mandate. They are managed by at least two states and often many more. They are policy-oriented only and do not draft reviews, label, certify, rate or accredit others. They do not produce and interpret data. They do not arbitrate between conflicting parties. Moreover, they open new doors for weak governments of small states to be represented at top decision-making levels in fields where their populations are both very much concerned and distinctly powerless (Hensel 2012).

This is not the whole story of Fund proliferation in recent decades. They might of course look like sound instruments of better governance—some of them might even be—while actually conveying the influence of the G7 (or G20) powers. Were such conjecture valid this new format would only duplicate existing structures. Each Fund would flank a specific operational organization as if they were conjoined twins. Therefore, what could be taken as a contribution to heterogeneity (Funds are not like ministers or firms, they are closer to banks and insurance companies) would eventually be an exercise in homogenization (Funds are but outsourced extensions of one or several IGOs). They do exist because great powers need to have two levers of control instead of one. Consequently, leadership, management, and institutional designs are dealt with as if Funds themselves were operational IGOs.

In the end, Funds are like any IGO: institutionalized structures of co-operation. All require the same levels and the same ways to delegate

competencies while ensuring additional flexibility in spending money. They also balance centralization (a necessity reckoned to make IOs more effective), and decentralization (a guarantee of member states' independence). They elegantly make state and non-state actors work together quite well while making the latter increasingly resemble the former. They make financial fungibility even easier than within regular IGOs by voting through pluri-annual budgets. In short, they are clones of operational IGOs. As such they do reinforce similarity within the large population of international institutions instead of bringing more dissimilarity.

At that point, it should become clear that no IO could be understood in isolation from its organizational environment. Each is actually part of a set of other IOs, which compel them all to synchronize their activities. Hence, diversity is not always a woe. It may either bring cacophony or contribute to harmony, as do all instruments in an orchestra when its members and its conductor mutually adjust their performance. A necessary condition to achieve harmony is for each component of the organizational set to behave mechanically without making any effort to adjust, just like musicians playing a symphony in a concert hall. We shall come back to this point in chapter 12.

In the meantime, suffice to say that every IO resembles every other because each is a *locus* of global decision-making with a *focus* on international negotiations, as well as a *nexus* of an emerging global power.

Additionally, they all indulge in at least one of these three functions: *regulating* (the Rhine commission, the IMF, the IAEA); *coordinating* (NATO or the European Commission); and *standardizing* (ITU, IPU, the WMO, and ISO).

In other words, notwithstanding their dissimilarities IOs share at least three particularities: they are *normative* (making norms but not binding rules, or rarely); they are *performative* (telling fairness, equity, and principles of justice such as “most-favoured nation”, “specific and differentiated treatment”); and they are *redistributive* (they provision global public goods).

Even if we agreed on such statements, some room for diverging interpretations would remain. For instance, the old divide between “states” on the one hand and “international civil society” on the other continues nowadays to oppose “expert” agencies (suspected of bureaucratic woes and bad politicking) to “protest” movements (expected to promote the Commons).

This gap should not be exaggerated, though. Even technocratic or apolitical IOs “speak the truth to power” (interview, IAEA top manager). Although power is to be found within civil and secular governments it may therefore lie in the hands of chief of staffs or top clerics.

Given no IO is operating in a vacuum, and none is designed without any reference to historically established patterns that have been tested for decades, inventors of new IOs have such models in mind, and this assumption limits their attempts to be original.

Leaders of NGOs may of course try to be more innovative themselves. They sometimes succeed in reshuffling the landscape of organizational work within their field of intervention, as is the case of Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Greenpeace, and the Forest Stewardship Council. They are to IGOs what start-ups and modest co-working spaces are to established corporations and their impressive headquarters, respectively. Of course, the sacrosanct division between public organizations and private firms has not disappeared just because collaborative and horizontal working methods were recently invented.

As for substance rather than format every IO must at least present its goals as contributing to the common good. Contrary to business associations or labour unions IOs cannot pursue private interests. If they do they must disguise their selfish goals and pretend to help humanity as a whole (Elster 1998). For leaders of organizations acting on behalf or in support of for-profit groups this constraint is noticeably demanding. They do not have a “communication department”, only an “office of public relations”; they must avoid clearly visible “conflicts of interests”; and they must turn to philosophers, historians or anthropologists to justify their long-term and grassroots commitment to justice and progress for all in argumentative texts.

Beyond observable legal and political differences there is increasing organic and functional similitude. No new IOs were born independently of already operative units. Their inventors just copied/pasted existing templates, imported current guidelines, and opted for what they considered as best practices. For the moment, their intentions can be set aside. They inevitably converge towards greater resemblance whether it is through a realistic “strategic calculation” or a more altruistic response to “normative suasion” (Checkel 2005), or mere pragmatism.

This is because a permanent secretariat that is active between plenary sessions is always needed, if only to implement resolutions passed. Then, minutes of the meetings will be needed. Archivists, translators, jurists and speechwriters will be in demand. Security guards and clerks of all sorts will become unavoidable. Designing mediation processes or even mediation centres will be considered. Internal and external auditing will follow suit. When this process is completed a fully-fledged IGO will emerge with its bright new rhetoric made of promising statements (“trade is leading to peace”), its norms (“fair trade, not free trade”), and its smart mottos. Consider these two instances: “weather, water, climate” is a consensual way to make hydrologists and climatologists forget and possibly forgive meteorologists’ initial arrogance at the WMO; “atoms for peace” is a touching effort to conceal that banning the dissemination of nuclear weapons was the initial *raison d’être* of the IAEA.

If this is not actual harmony, it looks very much like it.

3.3 To Sum Up

Any theory of IOs expansion must answer two questions. How can there be a single explanation of a multiple process if organizational types are so heterogeneous? How does one correctly assess the direction of IOs journey when the scope of alternatives can bring them from homogeneity to hegemony?

To avoid the latter, harmony between dissimilar bodies—not all created by a treaty; not all composed of sovereign states—is required. If it ever happened, it would stem from the necessity to work together, which in turn presupposes some formal parallelism of formats, and a public-oriented spirit.

Hence, to predict the evolution of IOs towards further convergence, their architectural designs matter more than having them dispatched in taxonomical boxes. The balance between centralization and decentralization will be examined in the next chapter to offer a further examination of homogenization versus fragmentation, this time viewed from within.

4 Centralization and Decentralization

A world composed of national governments is in essence an exercise in the global decentralization of locally centralized units. A world comprising international organizations is an attempt to centralize already decentralized units.

IOs are decentralized by default: contrary to states they all have national and regional branches. They are further decoupled into international headquarters and activities on the ground. This distinction is itself duplicated when expatriates are opposed to local staff. Lastly, IOs establish new organizations issued from them and not from groups of states or groups of activists. Nearly three quarters of all IOs actually comprise “second-order IGOs created through actions of other IGOs”. They handle specific activities with enough discretion and informality to fulfil a contract that ties them to a parent organization itself established by treaty (Shanks, Jacobson & Kaplan 1996: 594; Vabulas and Snidal 2013).⁴⁹ Such changes occur when “traditional” IOs subcontract and even “agencify”. In other words they open semi-autonomous, specialized and decentralized agencies since “most new IOs are established by pre-existing ones”; such “spin off IOs... may include... banks, courts, laboratories and libraries” or be “a joint IO with the parent IO”. There are “emanation IOs spawned by other IOs”, which might announce “the decline of traditional IOs” (Park 2018: 8, 238).⁵⁰

Evidently, there is much more to say about the process of segmentation of decision-making processes within IOs. Centralization is not only the product of interorganizational collaboration, it stems from the political necessity to reach consistency and remain in control of every agent. It also comes from the need to reconcile understatements in the city in which the IO has its seat with blunt press releases in cities where ministerial meetings are held.

On the other hand, decentralization is not mere anarchy between like-units but a tool to de-multiply the negotiation scene into several independent or pseudo-autonomous stages. This is a guarantee of success in contexts

49 As noted by the authors: “Emanations... and traditionally created IGOs are not always of equal weight, but both connect states through an overlay of institutional rules and a commitment to shared goals; and both indicate the same sort of assumed obligation” (Shanks et al. 594).

50 “An example is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF). The ARF is a unit within ASEAN that provide an independent forum for the 10 ASEAN member states to engage with 17 other states in issues of regional politics and security’ (Park 2018: 8). A more complex case is the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), emanating from a coalition composed of the WHO, the World Bank, and UNAIDS or the 177 UNDP branches.

where quagmires on one particular issue could impact on the solution to another conflict if such independence of debates did not exist.

Therefore, this is a more complex discussion than the chapter title suggested, the more so when the formal/informal divide is added to the centralized/decentralized one.

4.1 Headquarters Matter! On the Importance of Being Central

Historical landmarks (the Geneva Palace of Nations) and buildings designed by famous architects (the UN in New York) adorned by monumental sculptures rich in symbols are attractors for people working within or with an IO. They accommodate hundreds of agents, sometimes as numerous as people on the ground. IOs' staff members and diplomats often retire in the international city in which they were active, which increases the level of cosmopolitanism and global expertise available on the ground.

4.1.1 *Where is Actual Power Located?*

Ideally, the seat of the organization is a prestigious address, often located in an international city with a bright inter-organizational past like Geneva, Vienna, The Hague, Paris, London or Brussels. For New World cities, harbouring a well-established IO is an effective public relations instrument. It helps capital cities become world cities like Cairo (Arab League), Singapore (ASEAN), Montevideo (MERCOSUR) and Nairobi (UNEP).

The link between a prestigious location and a praise-worthy image may nonetheless fail to work. Take the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that settled in Minsk after the fall of the Soviet Union but is now housed in a far from remarkable building. This flat imitation of ancient Greek and Roman temples in raw concrete is itself located in a town that had been destroyed during the war and rebuilt in its aftermath with few architectural gestures. As is predictable, this initial choice did not contribute much to the reputation or effectiveness of the organization.⁵¹ Another case in point is the unsatisfactory arbitration following which UNEP was settled in a peripheral city in the South to accommodate demands voiced by developing countries to

51 This said, "the CIS has been moribund in promoting regional economic integration directly". Indirectly, however, it "has contributed to more recent cooperation efforts in the region by laying an important foundation and enabling the creation of meaningful sub-regional arrangements" (Chacha & Kobayashi 2018: 523). Moreover, Minsk has been home to the Eurasian Economic Union since 2014, on an equal footing with Moscow.

rally the project, instead of being located in an already global city in the North as demanded by sound reason (Ivanova 2007).

A weak IO can be empowered by its urban and political environment. With their seat in Washington the Bretton Woods institutions matter more than would on paper a contested IMF, a confidential IFC (which provide credits to the private sector), or a technical BIS (for international monetary settlements). On the other hand, UNESCO survived repeated attempts to shut it down due to its location in a universally assumed “cultural” city (Paris). IOs with a seat on the shores of Lake Geneva’s “international district” unconditionally benefit from joint financial support from the State of Geneva and the Swiss Confederation.

Newcomers to this exclusive circle like the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, invest in capacity to host international conferences. It has already played host to the WHO 2018 Global Conference on Primary Health Care and the Central Asia Summit (also in 2018) as well as the negotiations of the Contact Group on Syria. Such meetings, and the possible headquarters of new IOs that would unfold from them, are held in this “show city” (Canclini 2005; Fauve 2014; Fauve & Gintrac 2009). Although Kazakh initiatives have been instrumental in new treaties being signed, among them the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union signed in Astana on 29 May 2014, they have been much less efficient in attracting long-standing inclusive IOs. The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia comprises a mere 27 states (Makasheva 2015).

The lesson to draw from Kazakh efforts to establish their capital city as the seat of new organizations is clear. Competing with historical international cities on the one hand and capital cities of hegemonic powers on the other hand is beyond the reach of outsiders. Washington hosts the global financial institutions; Moscow harbours the commercial and security institutions of “Eurasia” like the Eurasian Economic Commission. For the same reasons Beijing takes great care to welcome headquarters of recent IOs like the Shanghai Cooperation organization, or the New Development Bank (commonly known as the bank of the BRICS), and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank meant to implement the Belt and Road Initiative.

Concentration in a handful of spots is logical. The relative density of IOs is a guarantee against political risks. However criticized an IO could be, other IOs will quickly come to its rescue. It is also easier to let people circulate between organizations when they are many. Cairo is not simply just home to the seat of the Arab League. Several other IOs are present in the Egyptian capital, including the Arab Court on Human Rights, the Arab Women Organization, the Arab Organization for Industrialization, the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, FIBA Africa, and most UN agencies’ regional branches. Such big cities are *diplomatic hubs*. Evidence of their special status is the frequent choice made by staunch adversaries to start

bilateral negotiations there—the best example being the numerous “Geneva Conferences” held.

4.1.2 *Day to Day (Bureaucratic) Work vs. Solemn (Ministerial) Events*

It is often said that IOs tend to depoliticize hot issues in order to solve them in a piecemeal way (Petiteville 2019) because “experts tend to forget their national origins” (or are required to do so according to the WTO’s constitution, a fact about which permanent representatives freshly elected to the Executive Council are reminded). Hence, experts succeed in “solving three-quarters of the problems without any political intervention” (interviews, WTO). However, such depoliticizing is partial: it occurs in some fields but not everywhere; it covers a large proportion of the negotiation rounds except the ultimate ones. At that point, politics inevitably makes a great comeback. While their own experts are debating technical matters governments eventually understand what is at stake. They intervene strongly in technical discussions, as seen during the Uruguay Round and the GATS (Drake & Nikolaïš 1992).

The staff themselves do not aim to consciously depoliticize issues. They wish to be the guardians of neutrality—a claim that plays its role in their opting for technocratic management because it is seen as bringing a comparative advantage to bureaucrats over diplomats.

That said, it is true that a great majority of the questions debated are technical. To back delegates lost in technical debates experts chosen for their professional capabilities find a consensus on most problems because the justification for their position appeals to the logical understanding of their fellows. Then, policy makers enter the discussions and “hot potatoes” circulate from meeting to meeting until a plenary session addresses them.

In their view, the daily activity is much less strategic than a disputed plenary. The proof of that is the absence of ambassadors from countries that lack large teams of specialists who would never miss a truly “political” meeting. Conversely, when ambassadors attend a session their very presence signals that the issue is becoming more strategic for their capital city. Such characteristics of expert negotiation are particularly visible in the negotiations on trade facilitation processes at the WTO (box 1). As I was once told during an interview “the fact that the broader Doha agenda became lighter in terms of work commitments meant that we get more attention from higher-level players, such as ambassadors who previously did not have to time to be that closely involved” in committees and subcommittees.

Box 1. Expert and political issues in Trade Facilitation Negotiations at the WTO⁵²

“The WTO negotiating mandate is relatively limited compared to how trade facilitation is understood in other intergovernmental organizations. Members decided to keep the scope of their rule-making exercise in Geneva to tight conceptual limits. Existing procedural rules for the conduct of the negotiations are largely accepted as they are, without raising decision-making aspects in the Negotiating Group. Members focus on developing a new substantive Agreement of Trade Facilitation rules” [avoiding politics does not mean that substantial issues will not be addressed by experts].

“The TF negotiations don’t lend themselves to the traditional tit-for-tat bargains. We basically try to reduce inefficiencies instead. As a result, there is hardly any ideological opposition to the measures discussed” [hence it is a regulatory and not redistributive negotiation].

“While many of the issues debated are rather technical and therefore sometimes even considered to be boring, they don’t raise any agitation. Capitals still have to be consulted for instructions but many Geneva-based representatives actually have quite a bit of leeway. There is also room for tactical considerations... This can be seen, for instance, when experts in Geneva are able to quickly react to a new proposal. While such feedback is then typically labelled as ‘preliminary’, it still suggests a certain room for manoeuvre” [the less strategic it is, the more room for manoeuvre permanent representatives enjoy at headquarters].

“The way in which we negotiate leaves a little bit of leeway: members manage the negotiations. They are free to structure their arguments in a different way. What one hears from technical experts in our Negotiating Group is not always identical to what ambassadors might say in a plenary session”. [Here lies the difference between expertise and political skills].

“One characteristic of the TF meetings is that they are very inclusive. The ratio of open-ended meetings in which everyone can participate to smaller group sessions is higher here than in many other bodies. Meetings take place in various configurations, sometimes on an ad hoc basis. At some point, everything has to be brought back into the broad open-ended setting” [eventually politics makes its comeback].

“The [present] Draft consolidated negotiating text of the Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation⁵³ which contains Members’ proposed legal language still contains almost 700 square brackets which mark areas where they still have to clean up the text.”

52 Interview with Ms. Nora Neufeld, Trade Facilitation Committee, WTO office 1164, 31.1.2013, between 11.30 and 12.40.

53 Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation, TN/TF/W/165/Rev.14, 17 December 2012, e.g. §3: [“3.2 [Developing] countries which are Members of a customs union or involved in regional integration [may] have the option of establishing and operation one or more enquiry points at the regional level. The establishment and operation of a notified regional enquiry

Overall, rather than looking for full completion of a global agenda with extensive press coverage, the effectiveness of an IO will eventually be measured by one standard only: the number of brackets discreetly waived in texts under review during closed-door sessions. For scholars this personal account is objectively accurate. In fact, each policy measure entails countless details and can block the discussion for a while. Experts who want technical considerations to prevail over political goals must debunk them. They confessed to me that 80 to 90% of divisive issues are merely technical, which does not guarantee any consensus will be reached on the remaining 10 to 20%.

Staff members prepare the documents that will be presented during final sessions, which are attended by the highest authorities i.e. ministers, during an intergovernmental conference at the highest level (abbreviated as a “ministerial”) that takes place every three or four years in various venues. Alternatively, such drafts will be remarked upon by state representatives in yearly rituals like the Davos forum. Such meetings attract attention from the media. Journalists will ask embarrassing questions, politicians’ answers will offer them sound bites for worldwide dissemination. Hence, political gestures and ideological claims are unavoidable. Heads of state or heads of governments issue public statements that tie their hands before the negotiations start. Cooperative gains are put aside. What must be shown to the respective national audiences of the delegates is that they are really working for their compatriots’ welfare. Their priority is now to campaign in their domestic constituency if not to build a career that requires an acceptable record in major IOs for, say, Indian voters.⁵⁴

Contrary to the work silently done at headquarters, a ministerial held far away will be noisy, expressive, and hectic; it will display a lot of ideological concerns; consequently, there will be large and sometimes violent demonstrations against decisions announced and not yet made. Instead of sound arguments that are acceptable to reluctant opponents in confidential settings, denunciations and accusations will be openly spouted. Contrary to the win-win ideal of day-to-day negotiations, there will be winners and losers.

Among famous ministerial summits the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle prompted spectacular mass demonstrations by 40,000 anarchists, student activists, militants Unions and Black bloc groups, with hundreds of people being arrested. Protests also led to violence in Geneva during the 2003 G8 meeting. Sometimes, there might be bloodshed, e.g. Genoa during the 2001

point would satisfy the requirements for the establishment and operation of a national enquiry point under paragraph 3.1.”]

54 As Indian delegates often do, with illustrative examples in the UN and the WTO (Jenkins & Mawdsley 2013). According to Rob Jenkins, the Indian mission and ambassador to the UN have far more autonomy from Delhi than the South African or Brazilian representatives, which allow them to keep an eye on their future political career back home (seminar at the CERJ, Paris, 8 January 2013, on “India and human rights at the United Nations”).

G8. This is almost as if politics avoided at home was eventually fuelled by the announcement of future ministerial conferences somewhere else.

4.2 Bottom Up, Top Down, or What?

Organization Studies have long been divided into partisans of vertical command and promoters of horizontal circulation of suggestions. As we shall see in the next chapter the quest for better management makes scholars balance between a military chart and social forms of collaboration among specialized units operating on the same level. International Studies add a supplementary challenge to this task because national governments stand in the middle of the road up or down the hierarchical ladder.

Take the WMO. The Directors of a National Meteorological Service represent their state. Since they do not live in Geneva but in their own nation's capital, their relationships with other Permanent Representatives to the Organization are sketchy. However, there are transitional periods when some do not head a National Meteorological Service because they chair a WMO body and cannot do both at the same time, for instance when they are honorary NMS directors. In addition, the current activities of the WMO and most of its meetings are conducted and financed by each Member on a national basis. Collecting, processing and sharing data is a national affair.

This is not the end of the decentralization story. Beyond International Headquarters and national bureaucracies regional affairs and operations on the ground also matter.

4.2.1 *Regional Offices and Field Operations*

Headquarters are important because they accommodate knowledgeable people who can tell the history of their IO, shape its organizational culture, and check the legality of its decisions. Despite their claimed humanitarian considerations legal specialists ensconced there can constrain field initiatives meant to fix emergency crises. This was particularly obvious with the UNHCR when its staff decided not to help internally displaced people. Hesitation was due to intractable conflicts between “pragmatists” who were “primarily on the ground” and “traditionalists” who were at the time the most legal-oriented staff members (Freitas 2004: 130-131).⁵⁵

55 The facts of this matter were confirmed to me in a personal interview, in 2013, with former senior UNHCR agent J.C. Concolato.

Aside from the Headquarters/Field operations divide, relations between regional seats and the place where the Secretariat is established are less well documented. Regional branches are needed for functional reasons (IOs global seats are too big and too far away to address local issues) and for political considerations (there is a trade-off between endorsing locating the headquarters in a Western city and installing regional bureaux in the Southern hemisphere).

Home, there are more translators in many more languages (at least in the three or four official languages of the IO); debates and motions are recorded and archived; documents are held in a specialized library, and made accessible whatever their cost (which can be high); press releases are frequent but also better controlled or less misunderstood by journalists who are more familiar with the organization because they are assigned for long periods to the city in which it has its seat. Their longevity depends on the number of IOs requiring media coverage. In Geneva, Vienna or The Hague this number justifies a full-time position as a foreign correspondent of a big newspaper.

Regional branches typically resemble headquarters in many aspects. They have sophisticated management capacity, a large staff, and a nexus of diverse organizations cohabiting in a regional capital such as Beirut or Ouagadougou. Hosting regional offices of major IOs is quite an asset for small countries because it shows that they matter regionally. Consequently, their governments tend to be more tolerant towards a free press and local NGO activists who get most of their much-needed resources from their collaboration with IGOs. Within the WMO, for instance, six Regional Associations (and eight Technical Commissions) have won their autonomy. They elect their own Presidents or vice-Presidents and constitute their own Working Groups in parallel to the Geneva structure.

Sub-regional level is another story. Finding people who have the capacity to relay official statements to local authorities in good faith, with enough independence of opinion, and sufficient political freedom to avoid censorship is not guaranteed. Contacts with NGOs are more dangerous for journalists than connections with IGOs. In authoritarian regimes they are exposed to surveillance and their jobs are threatened. They can even be jailed for collusion with “enemies of the state”. Urgent tasks absorb all available energy. Agents are constantly remapping the zones and itineraries that are dangerous for them, along which they can be shot, bombed, abducted, etc. They look for the most robust and secure transportation systems that their restricted budgets allow them to afford. They must charter lorries, planes, and boats to convey medicines, surgeons, money and food, taking all this to people who are really in need. They have to keep stressed populations calm, mediate between contenders, and serve as reliable intermediaries between representatives of victims and officials of the country. All this must be done without the

capability to enforce their rules. Local staff must endlessly negotiate with heavily militarized gangs, and buy their protection.

In short, the local offices of global IOs are confronted by myriads of unexpected problems with three consequences that make them differ from both world and regional headquarters. Firstly, people assigned to local branches must ignore that part of their activity is made possible by illegal means or performed by people living on the fringes of the law. Secondly, different staffs in different places may react to identical challenges differently and this inconsistency cannot contribute to establish a non-disputable legitimacy. Thirdly, once logistics problems are fixed agents have little time left for imagining their future.

In summary, the degree of predictability decreases as operations move from being global to regional and, eventually, local. Agendas are less and less stable, which is clearly an argument for those who seek to favour centralization.

By contrast, with greater decentralization risks are split into less stringent challenges with the hope that what plagues an IO here will be compensated by its resilience there. Thus, there are clear advantages in each context (centralization or decentralization). However, this does not preclude other ways to hedge against the risk of ineffectiveness, uselessness, quagmire, or buyout from an inimical branch.

One avenue to obtain more insurance against such risks is to establish a *dual decision-making system*, thus splitting it into two different channels (one official, one unofficial). The alternative is to *duplicate the decision-makers* themselves (one is a manager, the other a diplomat).

Several IOs have opted for *dualism*. Preliminary moves are unofficially and even confidentially negotiated before these tentative attempts at resolving delicate issues are relayed (or not) by official decisions and resolutions. This superposition of informal and formal channels of decision-making can be completed by the juxtaposition of bureaucratic and political leaders at every level.

The WTO is by far the most advanced institution in this field with two parallel circuits—the official and the unofficial (see Figure 1). This can be traced to the GATT. At the end of its existence, the “green room” had gained considerable fame as a bone of contention between small and great powers. To understand why, we must keep in mind how they worked in the sixties. In order to list and to settle sensitive issues, the SG of the GATT and the Council Chair invited delegates who were for and against a text, in addition to some prominent neutrals to meet in a ground floor common room that had once been painted in green—a room seating 35, adorned with American colonial-style furniture and portraits hanging on the walls. Delegates exchanged views as plainly as possible on an informal basis. Then, they were joined by the remaining members and met as a Plenary (the General Council).

Note that equivalents to “green rooms” exist in other IOs, although they are less visible. Within the discrete and much less protested WMO, the actual selection of the permanent representatives who will sit on discussion groups and chair committees—a choice allegedly in the hands of restricted subcommittee members—is jointly made by the President of the Council and the Secretary General for each meeting (compared to year-long appointments in WTO bodies). In the WMO, permanent representatives attending the meetings of “steering committees” or presenting “working papers” in technical committees are carefully selected to make everyone politically happy while keeping a high degree of scientific sophistication. A subcommittee of the Executive Council acts as a coordinating committee—in French, it is called a “bureau”—whereas the constitution does not mention the practice, inaugurated in 1955 by the Second World Congress. This “Working Committee” is more exclusive than the “Committee of the Whole”: it includes the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary General, the Presidents of the six Regional Associations, the Russian and American ambassadors (a legacy of the Cold War) plus a few guests selected every year among the most prominent heads of delegations—as diplomats singled out by the Secretariat for their blunt statements about the case under review. Like WTO green rooms, these Working Committees always include the most adamant opponents to a proposal (the hard-liners). They meet twice a year, in January, and immediately before an Executive or a Congress meeting (to prevent or settle last-minute crises). Moreover, in the first Executive of the year and on Congress day, this Working Committee appoints the chairs of every other Committee and sub-Committee, even the Financial Advisory Committee (FINAC). Members of the FINAC come from the “core membership” (the group of the most important countries in meteorology). Selection of guests is also governed by a sincere effort to represent all regions, and countries of all sizes, with special attention to governments of a LDC that could not be included in the discussions and must then accept more prominent Members “representing” them.

In the WTO, the main goal of the General Council was, and still is, to deal with Treatises-related matters and financial decisions. Periodically the General Council becomes an assessment panel (the Trade Review Board) or an arbitral court (the Dispute Settlement Body). Beyond these three official identities the Council is also convened unofficially as a conference called the “HODs” (for “Heads of Delegations”). HODs have no legal existence, they provide no official translation service, and they draft no minutes of the proceedings. They nonetheless matter because they give governments an opportunity to assess the scope of their divergences and test the persuasiveness of their arguments behind closed doors, before espousing them in public.

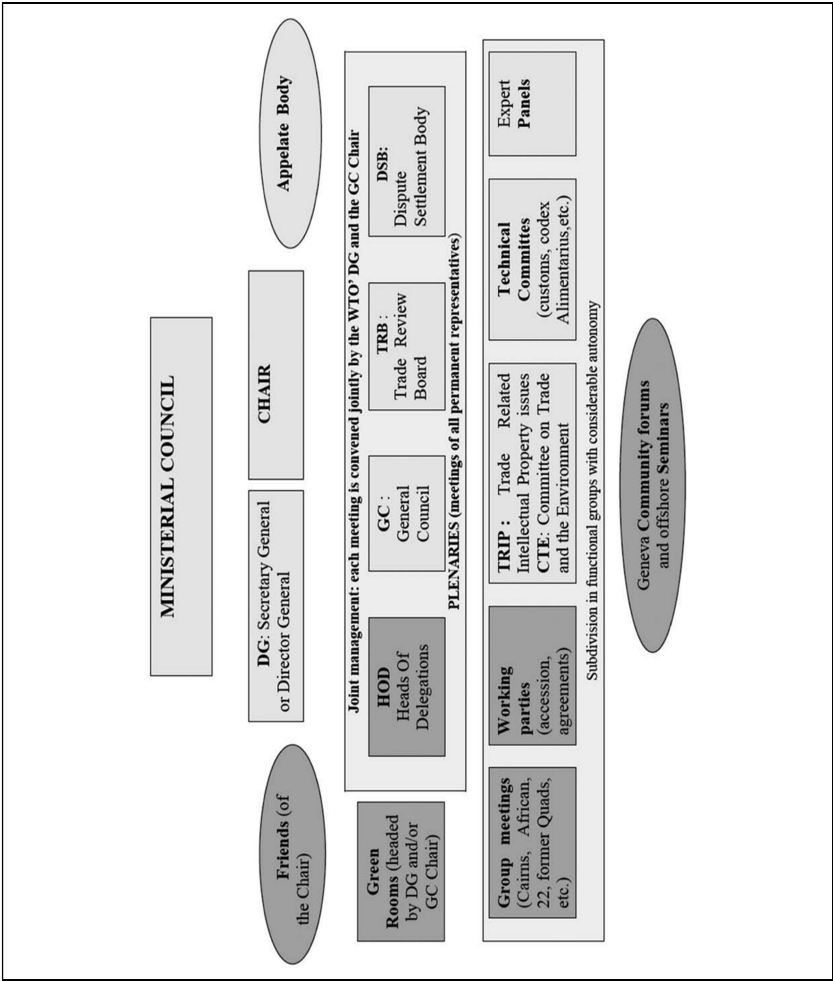
Such an opposition between formal and informal units is an equivalent to the checks and balances system through which constitutions govern the relationships between the Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary branches of government. Despite the absence of an appropriate legal status, this duplicated decision-making system is operating at each level of the WTO from the top (the meetings of the permanent representatives in four different guises plus the green room system) to the bottom (the “workshops”, “groups”, and “seminars” flanking more official “committees”). The latter have a legal existence because they are the locus of coordination with other agencies. Among them, the famous TRIP (an acronym for the “Trade Related Intellectual Property” agreements) is worth noting, with its impressive bureaucratic apparatus and its own communication policy. Although less salient, other mixed bodies comprising WTO staff and other agencies’ heads play a prominent role: for instance, the “Committee on Customs” and the “Codex Alimentarius”.

Duplication occurs once every unit has met. Each has two heads, one functional and the other political. Some groups are etched in stone from the inception of the organization. Others have been recently created to address unexpected problems. They are all chaired by a *tandem*, i.e. one person from the Secretariat and another from the Council. While the chairperson is always a Permanent Representative (or a Minister), the secretary is a bureaucrat who is competent in the issues addressed. Together they trace the roots of potential or actual disputes, review possible solutions, and draft a feasible agenda.

When the Council is not in session, the DG and the Chairperson of the Council are jointly in charge of the “housekeeping”. The arrangement works quite smoothly when each Committee chair and his or her partner in the appropriate section of the Secretariat cooperate fully. This teamwork provides for delays if either of the two heads fears the last minute intrusion of an unwelcome PR who could indulge in filibustering. It allows suspension of formal meetings for more consultation, off-the-records statements while in session, and last-minute adoption of new items on the agenda. Once the debate starts, the member of the Secretariat in charge of each particular Committee facilitates agreements, invites PRs to assess the impact of their policy preferences and makes room for more “brainstorming”.

To top this smart pattern, the Council that holds its sessions in Geneva with few recesses is itself duplicated by a Ministerial meeting convening every two or three years elsewhere. At this highly diplomatic level “Rounds” are launched every decades or so.

The duplication process is detailed in Graph 3. First, informal meetings coexist with official sessions. Second, at every decision-making node staff members are working in close partnership with political representatives of member states (meetings are co-organized and co-chaired). Third, confidential



Graph 3. A dual decision-making process⁵⁶

56 The first “Friends of the Chair”—those who supported the GATT Chairman in 1984-85—still meet today (Croome 1999: 317). According to this model, “the Friends of such and such proponent or such and such proposal” are now flourishing (“Friends” sympathizing with the Indian PR’s initiatives will eventually be known as “the Indian Group”, etc.). “Friends” often meet outdoors, with no formal assistance from the Secretariat (although the Director General might be present). When convening indoors, any informal group can benefit from the logistics of more formal bodies (except for translation services). People from the Secretariat know how to behave in each context, how to become active and how to remain discreet at meetings to which they are informally invited although not on duty (Croome 1999).

negotiations at headquarters are balanced by much publicized ministerial councils in spectacular venues as well as increasing concern for outreach towards NGOs, civil societies, experts, etc.

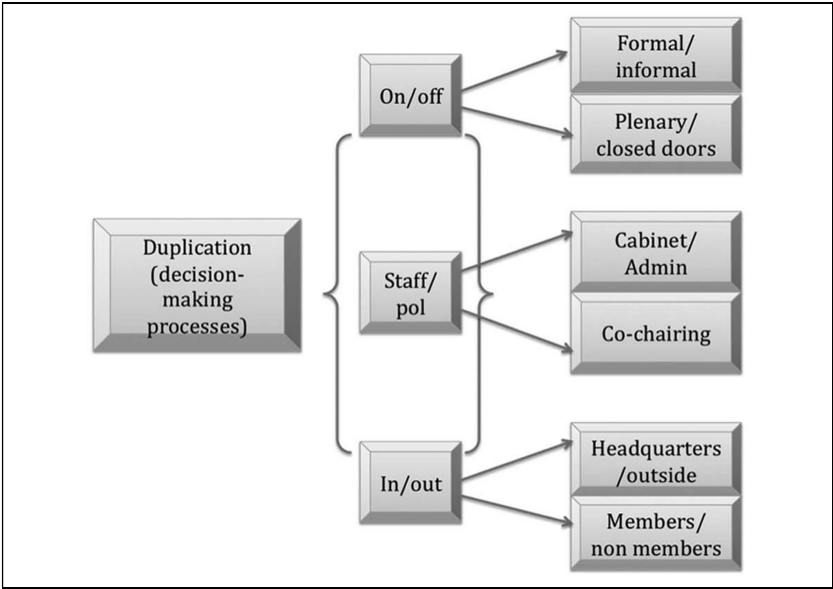
Most IGOs combine sources of legitimacy with factors of efficacy. They use and abuse behind-closed-doors sessions with no transcripts or translation. In recent years they have also flanked the administrative caucuses of functional and regional directors with a political cabinet, which is a sort of think-tank devoted to the Director-General (the first beneficiary of this innovation being Pascal Lamy). Strategic decisions about the agenda of the next ministerial summit and the improvement of communication channels are now attended to in this “core group”.⁵⁷

Once again, the WTO is a perfect example of such arrangements. In Graph 4 its real structure, partly concealed from the public, is schematized in a significantly different way from the official chart displayed on its website. Divisions belonging to the official organization are in light grey boxes; those facilitating its proceedings are represented in dark grey. Elsewhere, compromises are discreetly negotiated and trade-offs are achieved. Concessions are ultimately made on minor points with the hope that they will be rewarded later on a more strategic issue. A current loss can lead to a future victory.

Although less spectacular than within the WTO the same two processes may be observed within other IOs. WIPO for instance has sub-organizations for its “Bureaus” and its “Treatises” (e.g., the “Brussels convention”, the “Nairobi Treaty” or the “Madrid agreement”). The WMO is even more illustrative. To compensate for the exclusiveness of its Executive Council with its strategic subcommittees Congresses are rather inclusive. Their successive meetings take the shape of “Committees” (“A”, “B”, “C”). Each specializes in particular issues—they are so specialized, indeed, that the technical aspects of the questions raised in each could deter many potential participants from attending sessions. Duality is also the rule for the circulation of information within the organization. The “pink papers” issued by the WMO's Secretariat coexist with “white” or “blue” sheets rife in debates in other bodies that are either more technical (commissions) or more political (a plenary) (Schemeil 2004).

To sum up, the balance between centrifugal and centripetal trends is but an unstable equilibrium. Dualism and duplication may facilitate the management of IOs. They can help to increase their performance and their resilience altogether, but they also require strong leadership to avoid fragmentation, as we shall see in the next chapter.

57 Lamy and his successor Azevedo inaugurated their mandate “with strong membership support and the help of a solid political cabinet”. I was told that the latter “fuelled the system, like an engineer who is able to tinker an agreement, a *Primus inter pares* to whom business men and women come to find out what leadership skills he may well have to be able to succeed”, which his predecessor did not (interviews, Secretariat, 14 October 2014).



Graph 4. The WTO’s duplicate decision-making system

When successful, dualism combines the advantages of split debates and plenary sessions, respectively. As a source of red tape, it nonetheless entails heavy transaction costs and gives protesters opportunities to ruin previous arrangements that had been so hard to achieve.

Duplication can itself be viewed as a smart way to associate talents and empower people but it may well be criticized as a deceptive waste of time and resources in an IGO. By contrast, leaders of NGOs are the most insistent on the necessity to decentralize even though the process might be deceptive since they “often espouse decentralization in theory while perceiving difficult challenges of actually implementing decentralization” (Long Tran 2020).

A more radical way to avoid this centralization/decentralization dilemma is to spread the centres themselves to such an extent that full decentralization occurs without having been planned. This is called “multistakeholderism”. Although it is difficult to give it a “clear and consensual definition” and despite the fact that “the question of how multistakeholder cooperation should be structured in order to produce concrete outcomes has found no definitive answer” (Belli 2015: 4-5), each agent concerned with a problem and having a stake in its solution has his or her say in the way it is addressed. The neologism is a pun on “multi shareholders” in the world of finance and equity. The “ism” points out either a new mantra or a new ideology, depending on the insistence with which it is proposed and defended in multilateral venues.

4.2.2 Multistakeholderism

One particular aspect of decentralization that matters more than any other for the point of this chapter comes from the Internet. This is the realm of a participatory ideology starting at the grassroots with ordinary people or “end-users”. They are supposed to be enlightened and empowered by their own contribution to the functioning of the whole system. In such a case either there is no real “centre” or it is more difficult to organize the debate from the top.

Take the constellation of Internet-related bodies (which will be addressed in detail in chapter 8). One of them, in particular, is illustrative of my argument about decentralization: the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).⁵⁸ The link between this body and multistakeholderism was made clear in a statement by the Board Chair, Stephen D. Crocker, in October 2016: “This community validated the multistakeholder model of Internet governance. It has shown that a governance model defined by the *inclusion of all voices*, including business, academics, technical experts, civil society, governments and many others is the *best way* to assure that the Internet of tomorrow remains as free, open and accessible as the Internet of today”⁵⁹.

The IGF is itself segmented into several venues and sections, among which are the “National and Regional IGF Initiatives”, “Dynamic Coalitions”, and a “Remote hub”⁶⁰ welcoming online registered and self-organized participants— not to mention the usual Working Groups, Events, or sub-Forums that are found in any IO.

The main body is the “Multistakeholder Advisory Group” (MAG) since it is the centre of gravity of every other group: “all MAG members serve in their personal capacity, but are expected to have extensive linkages with their respective stakeholder groups” (IGF 2019). MAG meetings may be face-to-face or virtual. Rotation of MAG members every year is compulsory, to

58 Following on from the UN-sponsored World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) summits in Geneva, 2003, and Tunis, 2005, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was established to foster an inclusive global architecture in information and communication technologies, which consists in “the development and application by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet”.

59 ICANN (2016): Stewardship of IANA Functions Transitions to Global Internet Community as Contract with U.S. Government Ends (my emphasis).

60 “Hubs are local meetings that take place in parallel with the IGF. People can watch the webcast of IGF sessions together and send interventions (via text, audio or video) that can be answered by panelists in IGF. In addition, hub organizers can hold debates to discuss the themes introduced at the IGF from their local perspective. Several training sessions for Remote Panelists and Remote Hubs will be held during October-November 2019” (IGF 2019). Hubs are self-funded.

avoid any accumulation of power by some, which makes it purposefully look like Athenian democracy.

Whereas the classic architecture of any IO is roughly characterized by divisions and committees, this new design is particularly imaginative and user-friendly. The vocabulary itself is carefully chosen to give an image of novelty, display a concern for outreach, and show a proactive stance. Meetings are often online. Equality of participation is targeted with a luxury of normative statements about the social and national gaps to be filled.

The new mantra is “say what you think”. Everyone everywhere has the same right to contribute to the debate. The main point is that, not surprisingly, the price to pay for such an opening is the absence of resolutions at these levels: the best such meetings can manage is to “inspire” actual decision makers (IGF 2019) and make policy “recommendations” in far from a constitutional, legal, and/or organizational language.

Even more interesting, Dynamic Coalitions⁶¹ prove that ideas emerge at the grassroots, anyone being able to put them forward in an open access meeting as if the blood of the Internet Governance were pulsing through these “coalesced” veins. Of course, such segments are specialized, but all in all they cover the whole spectrum of Internet issues.

Often following up on occasional experts’ workshops such as “open consultation” meetings, groups may eventually propose Global Good Practice Papers, as shown by the dynamic coalition on “the Internet of Things” (IoT). In this last domain, a special group was established in 2010, two years after the idea was launched, as a joint achievement of academics, governmental representatives, ICANN, EU or Europol members, NGO activists and members of the Internet Society, plus people from the private sector (e.g. insurance companies). Its aims are to bring ethical norms and security protocols to the IoT (i.e., privacy, cultural difference, cyber-attacks), to face “net neutrality challenges”, promote “zero rating”, and fight for “digital inclusion” (IGF website, 2019).

Such coalitions rely on the assumption that there is a consensual solution to every problem because economic calculation and moral considerations can be reconciled. Therefore both private and public can reach win-win solutions. In short, while “dynamic” plus “coalition” suggests that they bring political input into the debate, discussions will eventually be depoliticized.

61 “The concept for IGF Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) first emerged at the IGF’s inaugural meeting in Athens in 2006, with a number of coalitions establishing themselves at that time. They are open, multistakeholder groups dedicated to an Internet governance issue or set of issues” (IGF 2019). “These coalitions are informal, issue-specific groups comprising members of various stakeholder groups ... government, private sector, technical community as well as civil society” (<https://www.iot-dynamic-coalition.org/welcome/about-us/>), plus “all service providers in the value chain [i.e. device developers and manufacturers, network access providers, service/app providers, and end-users]”: <https://www.iot-dynamic-coalition.org/dc-iot-meetings-at-igf/13th-igf-paris/>

Table 2. List of Coalitions accepted at the 2019 IGF Forum in Berlin

Dynamic Coalition	Title
Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability	IGF 2021 DCAD Challenges & Opportunities for PWDs in a Post Covid World
Dynamic Coalition on Children's Rights in the the Digital Environment	IGF 2021 DCCOS Regulate or prevent to protect children – a false dichotomy?
Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity	IGF 2021 DC3 Sustainable Funding Models for Community Networks
Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values	IGF 2021 DC-CIV Internet Regulation during Crisis One Year Later
Dynamic Coalition on Data Driven Health Technologies	IGF 2021 DC-DDHT Health Matters: Data & Technology In The Healthcare Sector
Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance	IGF 2021 DC-Gender Tangled like Wool: Gender, Social & Digital Inequalities
Dynamic Coalition on Internet & Jobs	IGF 2021 DC-Jobs Changing Jobs & Skillsets Post COVID - How Internet can Help
Dynamic Coalition on Internet Rights and Principles	IGF 2021 IRPC The Charter at 10: Achievements, challenges and what's next?
Dynamic Coalition on Internet Standards, Security and Safety	IGF 2021 DC-SSS DC-SSS: Making the Internet more secure and safer
Dynamic Coalition on Internet Universality Indicators	IGF 2021 DC-IUI UNESCO's call to all stakeholders to support ROAM and the DC
Dynamic Coalition on Network Neutrality	IGF 2021 DCNN Device Neutrality and Interoperability for Internet Openness
Dynamic Coalition on Platform Responsibility	IGF 2021 DCPR Platform Interoperability: Understanding a Complex Issue
Dynamic Coalition on Public Access in Libraries	IGF 2021 DC-PAL Public Access: Driving a Community-Based Development Model
Dynamic Coalition on Schools of Internet Governance	IGF 2021 DC-SIG Rising to current challenges facing Schools of IG
Dynamic Coalition on Small Island Developing States in the Internet Economy	IGF 2021 DC-SIDS The Pandemic Internet: Ensuring SIDS do not fall behind
Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media	IGF 2021 DC-Sustainability Internet governance and news media sustainability
Youth Coalition on Internet Governance	IGF 2021 YCIG Youth in the decision-making process: hear us!

Fragmentation comes from this absence of self-claimed ideological groupings as if diverging interests either did not exist or could be erased by discussion. As if “negotiations”, the core goal of multilateral organizations, never occurred within these subgroups. Hence, they can endlessly multiply. New units will not segment global policy but rather contribute to it since they rely on goodwill not politicking. This is either Utopia or “permissionless innovation” (Mueller 2015).

However, this cannot last forever for at least two reasons. Firstly, although “policymaking should be grounded on the possibility for all interested stakeholders to express their concerns and provide their expertise through transparent and participatory processes” it is doubtful that Internet governance can be due “to the sole reliance on the *multiplicity* of stakeholders rather than focusing on the *heterogeneity* of stakeholders’ interests”. In fact, “excessive focus on stakeholder categorisation rather than on the interests that those stakeholders actually have in the process outcomes risks being counterproductive or even misrepresentative” (Belli 2015: 1-2 & 6, my emphasis). Some are experts (hence, their “participation is justified by discursive legitimacy and resource-based power”) and others are not (Belli 2015: 2). Some are “techies” and others are just rank and file “users”. Some represent more than one constituency, hence more than one interest (as academics, consultants, researchers sponsored by firms, etc.), and others have no followers.

Secondly, centralization and decentralization processes must be assessed for their contribution to sound management (or governance) of a specific set of issues. This implies that resolutions can be achieved and then implemented, whereas the reality is much different. Among scholars working on the IGF, a majority has claimed that the IGF is “a decision-shaping rather than decision-making forum, or a forum where issues of Internet related policy are being discursively constructed” (Epstein, Rauth, & Baumer 2014: 145).

The lesson to draw from such statements is simple: decentralization can remain symbolic rather than tangible; multistakeholderism can conceal the absence of real “heterostakeholderism”; claims that the Internet must remain “global, diverse, and inclusive” (to quote ICANN’s head Steve Crocker in his “Cheers to the Multistakeholders Community” 2016 statement) cannot hide hard facts—the people most concerned are also the most multi-participative. Consequently, decentralization processes result in a re-centralization of decisions made by a handful of experts.

4.3 To Sum Up

The governance of each sector is cross-pressured between centralization and decentralization trends. Even the most unified, homogeneous and consensual IO is split between poles.

It turns out, though, that dichotomizing such complex machineries may be useful for the organizations that, at first glance, seem plagued by dissent. Opponents to a decision are rarely heard because the decision-making process is divided into dualist and duplicate negotiation systems.

Therefore, de-concentration of power may suffice to avoid silent monopolies (e.g., ITU) as well as noisy cacophony (e.g., ICANN), without reinforcing firewalls or opening up the glasshouse to anyone.

As we shall see in chapters 8 and 15, the claim that “the coordination and management of the Internet’s unique identifiers is now privatized and in the hands of the volunteer-based multistakeholder community”, which is altogether “more accountable and more transparent” than extant intergovernmental bodies is a false promise (Crocker 2016). Rather, it is clear that improvement in the management systems of IOs such as ICANN does not rely on a mere dynamic equilibrium between centralization and decentralization.

What ultimately matters is less architecture than the stamina and charisma of the people who adapt it to new contexts; for instance, the growing popularity of new public management norms. This is what chapter 5 aims to show.

Part 3.
A Predictive Model
of IOs' Behaviour

5 Explanatory Factors and Drivers of Change

Most theories of operational systems like a market, a political regime, or an international organization assume that they are separated from peers by clear-cut boundaries, as if their performance relied on their respective independence. Neighbours are considered as parts of the rather blurred “environment” of each organization, interfering with it from time to time.

Accordingly, theories place sources of change beyond the boundaries of each system and not within its core as if its sustainability could only be threatened by external innovations (a new technology), challenges (climate change) or shocks (disasters).

Such a view stems from neo-Darwinian approaches of the “population ecology” type. Given scholars review populations of IOs at the level of the whole world system and then single out the most resilient, they say something relevant for the thesis of this book about organization creation and mortality (Ries 2017).⁶² However, they are mute regarding human responsibility in successful or failed adaptation: why do some organizations adjust and survive while others do not?

To understand organizational change we must focus on one particular source of evolution. The philosophical principles that underlie policy measures do not remain the same across time. For instance, freedom of choice may overcome solidarity while performance may be more attractive than resilience, or vice-versa. Placing emphasis on liberty and scoring rather than insisting on fairness and sustainability came with the increasing popularity of New Public Management among public sector leaders in the last decade of the 20th century. It may equally well disappear with its demise.

It took a lot of charismatic and transformative leadership to adopt and then disseminate NPM norms and processes despite the inertia of higher civil servants and IOs staff. New principles are not able to travel from one system to the next without bearers, be they “mediators” (e.g., continental Europe’s theories of public action) or “boundary-spanners” (e.g., “trust entrepreneurs” in Brugger et al. 2017: 416; Schilke & Cook 2013).

In a nutshell, change requires a combination of anticipated external sources of disturbance with an internal perception of its inevitability and enough vision to foster great transformations. However intuitive this assumption may seem, it must nevertheless be reiterated: to break the “iron

62 According to Ries 2017: 163, “Selection is the natural process of sorting out all those organizations that no longer appear to be capable of adapting to changing environment needs. If the structure, mandate, and working habit of a single organization within a population cannot keep up with others, it will be sorted out.”

cage”—which, in international studies, isolates governments—organizational boundaries must be conceived as permeable. Consequently, despite multiple memberships in several if not in most IOs, national states will not be considered here as endogenous to these organizations but as parts of their “environment”.

5.1 External and Internal Change

Compared to a situation in which an organization is long established the perimeter of action, the “natural” targets, and the standard operating procedures of a new organization will not remain constant forever. The relation between the initial objectives and the appropriate means to reach these goals is consequently unstable. This common sense statement is particularly true with IOs, even more so than with states or firms, because there is maximum instability when relations between stakeholders go transnational.

Of course, past routines or taken-for-granted behaviours will not disappear immediately once the challenge is identified. After all, professors go on teaching students *ex cathedra*—since the invention of Zoom, Teams, etc.—, they have also been learning online as if nothing had changed. Physicians still consider patients as passive despite their propensity to actively collect information online. While for doctors their illness is a series of curves on a screen, patients all go to the Internet and check if their symptoms are shared within a “community of sickness” before chatting about diagnoses and prognoses with peers. Likewise, tied-up diplomats meet in person whereas the beneficiaries or victims of their decisions exchange views online with no dressing code or hierarchy, even under heavy fire (the case of Israelis and Lebanese during the 2006 confrontation, when the former invaded the latter’s territory).

How long will these compromises last? Classical procedures and new uses can cohabit for a while and then one best way must eventually triumph. Bureaucratic routines may coexist with innovative processes before best practices overcome the old ways of doing (Schemeil 2022).

The quality of leadership is crucial to assess the rapidity and scope of change in any organization. The fact that this must be discussed here is *per se* proof that things have changed since foundation because, when the activities of the new IO started, its heads were executors of their founders’ will and not independent executives free to choose their future.

5.1.1 *Environmental Constraints and Opportunities*

Change stems from push-and-pull processes. First, members put some pressure on IO staff to stream management lines, increase efficiency, and diminish costs. Governments do this within IGOs while volunteers call for reformed management styles within NGOs. Second, successful IOs issuing best practices (BPs) attract heads of less well performing organizations who use them as guidelines to improve their own activity.

The combination of NPM and BPs triggers a series of adjustments in different directions. Some of these are technical, e.g. the calculation of pay-rolls or modifications in recruitment protocols. Others are more substantive adaptations like the creation of a political cabinet or the reshuffling of local branches. However, they all have the same impact on the circles of executives steering the organization. They must show evidence of their leadership capabilities and be proactive rather than reactive. This often goes against their founding members' will. Permanent representatives would prefer to be chaired by insipid characters from small and neutral countries with a reputation for caution and moderation.

Until flamboyant directors came into power such as the Egyptians Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the UN and Mohammed el-Baradei at the IAEA, and the wise men universally praised—like Kofi Annan from Ghana at the UN—emerged, little prospecting was done within their organizations. These three men made plans to tackle new issues or deepen the impact of their actions. For doing just this they were either fought or side-lined by the US administration. A fourth hard-liner, Pascal Lamy led the WTO from 2005 to 2013. He tried hard to get the organization out of the quagmire in which it was stuck, to no avail: not only American diplomats but also heads of emerging powers found him too proactive and his action was considered excessively expressive rather than instrumental and incremental. Lamy was an incarnation of what French top bureaucrats are conventionally suspected to be (interviews 2014).

In the American view and on paper, IOs need accountants rather than leaders. Risk-taking is banned even if high risk might bring high reward. The most independent people are mediators or facilitators between negotiating parties. They are expected to be “honest brokers” whose hands are bound by pledges of neutrality when governments disagree even though a non-arbitrated dispute may lead to a dead-end.

If there was a demand for reform it should come from the biggest stakeholders. As powerful rulers want change they give some leeway to managers expected to comply with their demands rather than boost their own career. Heads of IOs do not live in a context of permanent fear, however. They may also take opportunities when they exist, as they do in the environmental sector. Starting from the general notion of a clean environment, UNEP

invested heavily in banning the “twelve bastards” (toxic metals, ores, and chemicals that make work conditions unhealthy). Focusing on shipwrecks and the release of waste at sea, the IMO launched a “polar program” to keep arctic coasts free from human pollution. Watching over “world heritage”, UNESCO has extended it to the protection of natural landscapes, making it custodian of the aquifers.

5.1.2 *The Growing Popularity of NPM Among IOs Staff*

Managers feel or fear that they have no option but to adopt NPM. In recent years it has become so fashionable that IO heads could be accused of procrastination if they did not pay lip service to this new organizational culture. Norms enacted by those pro-NPM are strong enough not to be discarded easily. They are taught in management schools and implemented within national governments via “the rationalization of public choice”. When heads of IOs lead people from several nationalities with different if not diametrically opposed administrative traditions (the British, Napoleonic, continental German etc.) are pressed to align on one of them, a “universal” NPM can provide a welcome emergency solution.

“Small is beautiful” is one of the principles on which NPM relies. This motto invites a return to the good old days when the first international organizations were established. As told by Reinalda the story of their secretariat may be summed up as follows: “when activities increased, the secretariats would grow and express specific wishes about the competence of staff members, as part of bureaucratization and professionalization processes that also enhanced the leadership requirements of its Secretary” (Reinalda 2014: 3; Reinalda 2020 a & b). On their way to becoming “enforcers”, IGO heads can start more modestly as “managers” who are not yet been recognized as “authorities” (Joachim et al. 2008).

However, “manager” does not have the same meaning for a minister as it does for an administrator. The former insists on cost-killing, chasing waste, avoiding red tape, and *focusing strictly on the mandate* of the organization (in short, keeping on track). The latter hopes to strengthen his or her organization reshuffle its structure, create new divisions and open new branches, investing in new activities even if they are assigned to a rival institution (in other words, *discounting the future*). Consequently, to make IO staff comply with their instructions, governmental teams prefer “the iron fist–enforcement–(to) the velvet glove–management”. Conversely, IO heads favour “problem solving and capacity building, rule interpretation and transparency” as well as “learning” to provide “financial and technical assistance” to their members. As for external actors they recognize some “authority” in IOs’ as “normative powers” providing impartial expertise (Joachim et al. 2008: 4, 11).

NPM is not just intended to spare governmental contributors time and money. It is also a suitable tool for assessing responsiveness of IOs' heads to their members' demands and generating incentives to change. We can draw a parallel between voters expecting their elected representatives to implement their pledges and governments relying on IO secretariats to remain faithful to the mandate received. Most heads of government see better IO management as often depending on a more responsive executive. Thus, instead of offering clippers to trim overlapping administrative processes and structures, NPM should eventually see more effectiveness and more responsiveness altogether. Greater accountability rather than better ratios would in turn be more attractive to IO heads.

Proponents of NPM never say that managerial techniques well suited to the private sector should be imported with no adjustment by IO heads—they just claim that possible improvements should not remain ignored. To put it bluntly NPM is “a generalised reform programme... about business-like changes in public sector organisations... including the replacement of hierarchical coordination by competition, the market mechanism as a possible *modus operandi* for improving the efficiency of public services, the introduction of a product culture intended to strengthen accountability” (OECD). NPM promoters are also concerned with handling human resources better than is usually the case with national public administrations, hence they remind us that “the three R’s of the international organization have to be Recruitment, Reward and Retention and there is a need to add a fourth—Retirement”. There is much progress to expect on each of these goals (Johnson 2009: 25).

Since this simplified view of how public bureaucracies can work was much criticized by administrative studies, we are now in a “post-NPM” era, in which reformers “pay attention to a holistic management style, boundary-spanning skills and joined-up targets... (C)ivil servants are thought to be network managers and partnership leaders instead of being the pure business managers suggested by the NPM model”. Consequently, there is “a shift away from the efficiency-oriented performance goals of the NPM reform paradigm” as well as the “increasing importance of non-efficiency goals” (Klenck & Reiter 2019: 3).⁶³ Hence, it is critical to assess the respective dissemination levels of NPM and post-NPM principles among IO heads.

Viewed from the top management of IOs, the shortcomings of NPM called for an improvement in its goals. True, they did not necessarily use “post-NPM” to get rid of NPM but we can imagine how timely it was for them to see anti-NPM publications flourish. One of the outcomes of the NPM

63 The two authors try to “assess whether and how far post-NPM has become ‘institutionalized’, that is, has become a concept of public management reform that enjoys cognitive and normative legitimacy and is taken for granted” and when “the concept has developed into a blueprint for reforms and is infused with value” (Klenck & Reiter 2019: 5).

decades (1980-1990 or 2000) is a completely new insistence on quality rather than quantity. Were it merely about quantity and numbers, then IO staff might be reluctant to comply with national government pressures for reform. Post-NPM becomes popular in the Secretariat when the target of reform is a better service for end users. Member states will eventually favour it rather than expecting that fully-fledged NPM tools to be implemented. Their motivations are easy to understand. Firstly, they do not accept full disclosure of confidential deliberations. Accountability is limited to auditing rather than offering the public materials that can be politically judged. If IOs must become glasshouses, as is often claimed, then they are trans-lucid rather than transparent. Secondly, they cannot go against the tide that makes national bureaucracies themselves turn more “social”, i.e., having more social concerns for the well being of their end users. In a way, economic efficiency is not only complemented but also replaced by social responsibility (on which, more will be said in chapter 14).

Naturally, the level of IO heads’ acceptance of public management reforms demanded by members depends on the sector in which they are designed. For instance, they work better for banking loans than for medical treatment. However, “there is no doubt that despite often antiquated management systems, severe bureaucracy and frustrated staff, things do get done” everywhere (Johnson 2009: 6), although not exactly as recommended by NPM advocates. Signs of such change are an increased focus on projects and “work packages” as well as a growing attention to their actual achievement rather than mere satisfaction with the effort made notwithstanding the results. Recipes from the Management By Objectives paradigm are adopted. Dialoguing in order to make plans collectively thought out and to give “subordinates” opportunities to commit themselves to the accomplishment of managers’ goals is popular. Agents become personally accountable for the success of a mission that they themselves had contributed to defining (Thomson 1998).

Moreover, few DGs could openly discard the adoption of logistical goals like cost killing, red tape tracking, and lean management (interview, WTO, 2015). No one can refuse to “modernize”, “rationalize”, and “evaluate”—the three tenets of the new mantra of management.

The next issue unfolds from this tango between NPM and post-NPM managers. Strong leadership is required when more people must be psychologically rewarded and new structures are created. Meanwhile, making everyone work with every other is imperative when decentralization brings atomization. Otherwise agents’ interests would prevail and the global common good could prevail.

5.2 Leadership, Management Styles, and Innovation

Heroic images of people guiding their organization along the avenues of progress are inappropriate to contexts in which a mere handful of IO heads can be qualified as true “leaders”. Some combine internal and external agency beyond the limits assigned to their action by constitutional texts and dare to take political initiatives. Others are more proactive than merely reactive. In short, great IO leaders should be “able to intrude into the domain of the member states” if not traverse their own mandate as “boundary spanners”. However, these “visionaries” who are “open to new ideas” are few, compared to the “unobtrusive” and “hard-working” administrator (Reinalda & Verbeek 2013; Johnson 2009).⁶⁴ Moreover, a change of context may interrupt their efforts to reach an agreement and frame a new common strategy as occurred to Pascal Lamy, a strong WTO leader who eventually had to accept the deadlock following India’s 2008 refusal to adjourn the Bali agenda (interviews, WTO, 2014).

A successful leader must buy internal peace, facilitate IO members involvement in the strategizing process, maintain “effective working relations with at least some of the key member states that control the resources of the organization”, and develop an effective clientele outside (Cox and Jacobson 1973). He or she must therefore mobilize both external and internal support and spend time “making sense of what is going on in organizational life”. Such efforts provide agents with some understanding of the context in which they operate via

Overall, the common challenge as perceived within most IOs is to “turn highly qualified, very bright professionals into managers and leaders” or turn “operators” into “executives” (Schein 1996) since the former are specialists endowed with niche expertise while the latter must expand their expertise to become broad generalists. The necessity of such a conversion does not depend on the field of knowledge and the type of training. Each prospective leader must be both an excellent expert and a competent manager. This is difficult to achieve, though, because on the one hand, “there’s a great deal of talent in international organizations—some of the very best that can be found anywhere. Indeed, these global agencies are packed full of smart professionals. The challenge is, can you take very clever people, the very best experts you can find, and turn them into talented managers and leaders?”. On

64 On the initiative side: Albert Thomas (ILO SG) and Dag Hammarskjöld (2nd UNSG); on the routine side: Eric Drummond (League of Nations) and Trygve Lie (1st UNSG); see Claude 1964, 174-5, quoted in Reinalda and Verbeek 2013.

the other hand many hurdles prevent a smooth transition for IO agents in the former to the latter (Johnson 2009: 8, 27).⁶⁵

The literature is full of taxonomies that distinguish styles of leadership. Some are famous (like Oran Young's "entrepreneurs", "structural" leaders, and "intellectuals"); others are less known (e.g. Kent Kille's "challenging, respectful, and accommodating"). As noted in the introduction to this book, typologies may be helpful to reach a better understanding of a relationship between variables, but they do not suffice to single out the true explanatory factors. We can therefore list modalities of leadership (such as "hierarchical", "consultative", "cooperative", and "participatory").⁶⁶ Biermann and Siebenhüner come closer to identifying causality when they mention "knowledge brokers", "negotiation facilitators", and "capacity builders" (Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009).⁶⁷ Such an attempt at classification should not conceal the fact that, despite nuances in leadership style, every IO head is above all a *problem-solver* and a *consensus-builder*. They make consensus emerge among various nationalities, interest groups, and administrative "silos". Mediation is a common core of their activity: they are brokers who try to help the members of their organization "identify what they should do and how", then "define a course of action for the organization" (Saz-Carranza 2015: 278). They are both "task-oriented" and "staff-oriented" or at least they are expected to strike a balance between the two. Finally, they are also "implementers": people who make pledges come true (Reinalda & Verbeek 2013; Joachim et al. 2008).

In the real world leaders can tick the boxes corresponding to a style as defined in management studies, whereas scholars appreciate more imaginative classifications. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton's "leadership grid" opposes "team" and "authoritarian" leaders. It mentions good fellows ("country club leaders") and weak primus inter pares ("impoverished leaders") among whom "middle-of-the-road" heads of staff adopt moderate involvement and a balanced concern for their people and for the task to accomplish together. However, such a simple diagram does not do justice to the nuances among leadership styles invented by authors who identify "indifferent", "accommodating", "dictatorial", "opportunistic" and "paternalistic" styles, etc. (Blake & Mouton 1985). In Daniel Goleman's view, such

65 Interviewed by Johnson (2009: 23) a HR director in a developmental IGO said: "No, we don't hire professional managers. I could say that they are few and far between in our business. The main reason is that working with a huge range of governments on extremely sensitive issues *our people need to be able to talk in depth about our mandate and our technical expertise*. That, after all, is the key focus... Sadly, of course, being a specialist doesn't mean that you are any good with your staff!" (my emphasis).

66 Which are many: Vu & Gill 2019: 141, contrast several polarities including autocratic or democratic; contingent or situational; transformational or transactional; charismatic or bureaucratic; heroic or sustainable; inclusive or exclusive; ethical or responsible, etc.

67 Quoted in Reinalda & Verbeek 2009.

styles are meant to build bonds with and among staff members. Therefore, they are “coercive” (“do what I tell you”), “authoritative” (“come with me”), “affiliative” (“people come first”), “democratic” (“what do you think?”), “pacesetter” (“do as I do, now”) or “coaching” (“try this”). Although each has its virtues, none is immune from backfiring, making it nigh on impossible to draw a lesson, save one: if you want to be a leader, try to expand your repertoire of styles (Goleman 2000: 81-2).

As these taxonomic trials show, confronting styles and modalities of leadership or examining the respective performance of historical leaders is not very enlightening. Weak or strong, leaders have to deliver. To do so they may take their inspiration from various cultures. In the end, their leadership can be characterized with nothing else than a parallel with “fusion cuisine”. There is “fusion leadership” when skills and personal virtues having currency in IOs stem equally from the West and the East. Although the notion has not been coined for IOs, let alone their top management, it suits the sort of work done by their leaders. As there is *fission* (“division of labour, authority and control”), there is also *fusion* (“partnerships, connections and joint responsibility [which] encourage conversations to reduce barriers in the leader-follower relationship”) (Vu & Gill 2019: 140-2).⁶⁸

Two traps must be avoided here. Firstly, there is a false belief that personal gifts and abilities do not matter at all because leadership stems from the strength of the state from which someone comes (Americans, Chinese and Europeans are more likely to have leadership skills than, say, Mexicans, Malaysians, and Ukrainians). Exceptions to this “rule” of thumb are too widespread, though, to see it as a general explanation applicable to every case. Mohammed El-Baradaï came from Egypt, a country with no nuclear armament, and he made the IAEA much more proactive than before. Although he was a Swiss citizen, Arthur Dunkel did a lot to ensure the near stillborn GATT survived in the long run. Jean-Claude Juncker is a Luxembourgier but he carried great weight for years as head of the EU Commission. Secondly, the alternative view is not more adequate. According to its partisans, leaders would have specific talents “such as mindfulness, vision, ‘heart’, communication, courage, integrity, connections, community, and positive cultures and value systems” (Daft & Lengel 1998: 56, cited by Vu & Gill 2019: 142). However, accumulating so many talents would make leaders “glory hunters”, i.e., people at the top of an organization who are “more focussed on garnering public support to ‘feed the egos of the leaders’ ” (Sutherland 2016).

It is quite unlikely that any leader possess all these qualities. It is even less likely that they have been acquired before acceding to the Secretariat instead of learning by doing once appointed. Some leaders can be “coura-

68 Vu & Gill draw on Daft and Lengel 1998.

geous, inspiring, and creative” when confronted to some challenges; others can be full of “compassion, gratitude, humility, and trust” when the context favours it. However, they all have to blend Eastern and Western beliefs, in particular: “attachment” and “non-attachment” to objects, the ability “to put aside [one’s] own teachings and principles in order to appreciate others’ choices” and “learn[ing] from mistakes” (Vu & Gill 2019: 142, 152⁶⁹). In the specific context of IOs, this implies that leaders do not lay claim to any ownership of issues and solutions and display a complete absence of narcissism.

Lastly, leadership is not just an individual endowment: it is a collective culture. Leadership is not seen “as something that is concentrated on one person at the top, but as a culture that cascades down through an organization”. No one is obsessed with the egocentric goal “to leave a legacy from their time in the post” since they also have to make people happy during their mandate. In short “external complexities and internal needs cannot be met by a single person at the top of the pyramid” since it is not “simply the number or quality of individual leaders that determines organizational success, but the ability of formal and informal leaders at all organizational levels to pull together in the support of common goals that ultimately makes the difference”, and this can be done through excellent coaching and mentoring (Johnson 2009: 2, 9, 27-8). There are far fewer romantic “leader-icons” in the world of IOs than in the realm of literature (Bezio 2016).⁷⁰

69 According to Vu & Gill 2018: 143, “fusion leadership ... blends a number of Eastern and Western values and other ingredients for effective cross-cultural leadership practices”. Take the ancient emperor of India, once a fierce conqueror who became a humanistic reformer: “Ashoka’s leadership style... displays the ‘fusion’ element of reflexivity and the willingness to acknowledge shortcomings in his own leadership style and adapt it to suit the needs of other people” (144). Vu and Gill also “introduce a fusion approach for hybrid leadership practices based on the allegory of the hedgehog and the fox, which comes from the 7th-century BC Greek poet Archilochus: ‘A fox knows many things, but a hedgehog one important thing’”. The lesson is clear: good leaders are hybrids, because they either mix or alternate fox and hedgehog “personalities”, although they tend to favour practical and political wisdom (as foxes do) over mere knowledge (the hedgehog option). As noted by Jean Leca, foxes want “to maintain civility in conflicts” (Leca 2012).

70 “This habit of falling back upon Thomas Carlyle’s Great Man (or Hero) Theory... particularly as regards fictional leaders drawn from literature, cinema, and television, does a disservice both to the current complexity of leadership studies as a scholarly pursuit and to the works of culture and history from which those singular leader-icons are drawn” (Bezio 2016: 2).

5.2.1 Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Over and above so many smart distinctions—of which only some fit the context of IOs—one way to exercise leadership is particularly meaningful here. Leaders can get the best out of the machinery they head, trading off with agents to *have things done*. Alternatively, they can change its mechanics, alter the organizational culture of the agents over whom they rule, hence *find new goals* and offer new “products” and “services”.

Transformational leaders are “catalysts”. Rather than riding the wave of contextual change, they take it as an opportunity to modify their course of action by persuading people to change voluntarily. They do not rely on mere bargaining, meaning they are not “transactional”. They are not fully constrained by their environment (the “socio-historical context”), which can be unfavourable to proactive moves. Hence, leaders like Franklin Roosevelt alternate Jekyll and Hyde personalities, being transactional outside the USA and transformational within its borders (Nye 2014: 119).⁷¹

Instead of transforming things top-down, leaders like Wilson and Clinton are “inspirational” (Nye 2014: 120). The difference between these two American Presidents stems from the timeline of their action: it was a package deal for Wilson, but a piecemeal operation for Clinton. According to Nye, a fully transformational leadership is characterized by a full reshuffle of values and ambitions that does not depend on trade-offs.⁷² This is more likely in times of crisis.⁷³ Even in peaceful times some leadership skills matter more than others to “transform” the world, like “vision” and “organizational capacity” rather than “bullying” and “bargaining” (Nye 2014: 122).

However, it would be simplistic to correlate transformational capabilities with soft power (communicating instead of commanding). To be both democratically transactional and authoritatively transformative, prospective leaders must overcome a contradiction in terms. To reframe issues, ideas, and attitudes, applicants must adopt a *paradoxical mind-set*. They must table *counterintuitive solutions*, which will inevitably embarrass or even shock

71 On the first point: “Sometimes a leader may transform the world and not transform his followers, or vice versa, and sometimes the leader may use a transactional style to accomplish transformational objectives”. On the second point: “Leadership theorists sometimes fall into attribution error, automatically assuming that leaders make a difference. International relations theorists, on the other hand, generally place more explanatory emphasis on structural factors like economic and social forces and tend to downplay the role of individuals” (Nye 2014: 119).

72 J. Nye attributes differences in leadership styles to favouring soft power over hard power or vice-versa. However, neither Wilson nor Clinton neglected the former. Obama started with soft measures then moved to harder ones (“[a] leader can be transformational in intentions, but not in outcomes. Leaders may also deliberately change their objectives and style over the course of their career”) (Nye 2014: 120)

73 “Crisis conditions can liberate a gifted leader from the accumulated constraints of vested interest groups and bureaucratic inertia that normally inhibit action” (Nye 2014: 121).

their staff. Hence they have one more riddle to solve before being recognized as someone special. To lead, one has to rely on participatory decision-making (Bezio 2016),⁷⁴ and be “inspirational” rather than simply “influential”. In sum, leaders need “contextual intelligence” that implies “a capability to discern trends in the face of complexity as well as adaptability while trying to shape events... [which] allows leaders to adjust their style to the situation and to their followers’ needs” (Nye 2014: 121).

When trying to say what is specific in this form of leadership, dynamic images come to mind: “[t]ransformational leaders have been defined as future oriented, open-minded, dynamic, and concerned about planning, uniting employees, encouraging them to adopt the leader’s vision as their own and to make it become a reality”; “they stimulate creativity”; “[t]his leadership type is seen as the most successful in implementing a pro-innovation culture and values within an organization”. Beyond these, however, “a transformational leader ... motivates [agents] to pursue goals *that they may not otherwise have attempted*” (Jaskyte 2011: 80, 84, my emphasis)⁷⁵.

One recipe for success may be the length of time in office, since “executive directors who have been in their positions for a number of years may want to re-evaluate the internal processes, rules, policies, and structures of their organizations” (Jaskyte 2011: 84).

Transformational leaders are innovators in IOs where tradition is venerated.⁷⁶ They tell the [new] truth, give [new] meaning to action, set [a new] ontology and display [new] ethics, and “unfreeze the present system” (Schein 1990). This is a heavy burden. Instead of gently reminding agents with a “common language” that differentiates the in-group from the out-groups what the “core missions, functions and primary tasks of the organization are” and what “the specific goals” are to be pursued” as well as the rewards and sanctions that will have currency in the organization (Schein 1990: table 1; Schein 2019), transformational leaders must reshuffle all this. They have to change targets, tools, structures, discourse, vocabulary, etc.

To take but one example, the IAEA heads El-Baradei and then Yamano made their organization switch from “atoms for peace” (preserving the deterrence capability of the nuclear powers) to “atoms for peace and development”

74 They must exercise “the responsibilities of the ruler as a servant leader” and not an absolutist one (Bezio 2016).

75 However one should not forget J. Nye’s warning about transformational leadership (coined by J. McGregor Burns in 1978): “the term is widely used though in confusing ways” (Nye 2014: 119).

76 As noted by Schein 1990: 115, tradition can be traced to founders: “When groups or organizations first form, there are usually dominant figures or ‘founders’ whose own beliefs, values, and assumptions provide a visible and articulated model for how the group should be structured and how it should function... As these beliefs are put into practice, some work out and some do not. The group then learns from its own experience what parts of the ‘founders’ belief system work for the group as a whole”.

(building new sources of clean energy and using isotopes for development goals).⁷⁷ In the course of this change, the organization added a whole idiom of cooperation and assistance to the inspection and sanction vocabulary. The IAEA is no longer focused on banning atomic weapons. It has become a source of “prosperity” and offers “quality services” to its members.

This required a new conception of what leadership means. Since such a change could have been seen as harmful or at least embarrassing for some member states, it had to be accompanied by the promotion of a diffuse conception of leadership. An official document from the organization puts it this way:

“Leadership starts with leading oneself. The best leaders are self-aware. They recognize their strengths and use them fully; they recognize their weaknesses and try conscientiously to develop their skills, while making the most of others who possess those skills. They know how they impact on others, where they can make the best contribution and how to manage their emotions positively” (IAEA Leadership Blueprint 2011).

In a nutshell, transformational leaders have a broad and open-minded vision rather than a modest one. This is sustained through an emotional, affective, and contextual intelligence and not by a purely logical/managerial style. They nonetheless know how to remain cautious and not harm people while inducing them to behave purposefully without being compelled to comply. At the same time, they are “inspirational”: they give subordinates an opportunity to “own” actions previously planned at the top (Nye 2013; Jaskyte 2011). Hence they do their best to combine management styles oriented towards people and those that focus on the main tasks of their IO. Their people matter because service motivation contributes to the organization’s legitimacy. It may even spill over and bring additional support and commitment from other members, kept well informed at every stage. It may eventually help attracting other potential leaders and followers who could contribute to a collective achievement. Tasks are important because diagnoses and prognoses are expected from future-oriented transformational leaders, much more than from transactional leaders stuck in the present.

To sum up, and to link these results to IOs, transactional leadership (practiced mainly in firms) is left to powerful participants (states in IGOs, or activists in NGOs) who bully, bargain, and trade off to get results. While transformational leadership is the realm of chief executives in IOs and their closest aides, all are committed to changing the views and the goals of the representatives sent by their members. To this end they try to “distinguish

77 Incidentally, they are perfect examples of two of Oran Young’s leadership styles—respectively, the entrepreneurial and the structural: Yamano was certainly less flamboyant than the risk-taker el-Baradei, but he established himself as the supervisor of the Fukushima disaster case, whereas this role should have been played by Margaret Chan as head of the WHO.

between *non-negotiable* objections to their proposals and *negotiable ones*” (Jaskyte 2011, my emphasis; Federo et al. 2020: 16).

This notwithstanding, it is also true that leadership matters in special circumstances, and not just during international or organizational crises. When, then?

5.2.2 Slack

The answer is: When there is “slack”—an unanticipated source of waste or, on the contrary, stamina, which can be either beneficial (due to the room for manoeuvre it gives individual agents) or harmful (as a useless and un-employed collective capacity). As for “ambidexterity” (“exploring” potential sources of power, funding, and legitimacy as well as reaping the “market share” of possible new “end users”), predicting or discounting the future is helpful if and only if it is balanced by a sound concern for the present and a quest for optimality (all things being equal). Successful reformers are allegedly endowed with a talent for turning bad slack into good slack and for their capacity to care for “exploiting” their current field of activity as well as inventing new activities. They know how to convert slack and ambidexterity (both inconsistent with NPM recommendations) into sound performance (as predicted by post-NPM texts).

Let’s start with the unloved (by economists) or unknown (by political scientists) “slack”. To put it simply, “slack” signals an oversupply, an excess of endowment (means) over ambitions (goals) when decision-makers have more resources than they can use at the time.

It comes in various guises, albeit typically as a *decalage*. It may be a *discrepancy* between expectations and reality; between a program and the way it is implemented; between ambitions at foundation and current routines (Bourgeois 1981). Or, “the *difference* between the resources of the organization and the combination of demands made on it” (Cohen et al. 1972: 12). Another look at it tracks the time *lag* between planned and actual outcomes; *gaps* between tools used and achieved goals (Cyert & March 1963); *inconsistency* between initial targets and new objectives (Lake & McCubbins 2006); *dissonance* between expectation and perception (Farjoun & Starbuck 2007).

Often defined as a “cushion”, a “shield” or a “buffer” of “uncommitted resources” which helps “to hedge against risks or... uncertainty” (Mattingly & Olsen 2018: 484), slack can be deployed and channelled to reach new goals during a crisis. Therefore, it is not as counter-productive as “red tape”—assumed to be omnipresent in public administrations even when they operate routinely (Rainey & Bozeman 2000). In international studies, however, IOs’ slack is often fought as an indicator of *overload*, something like undesired

weight, or ‘fat’, synonymous with *overstretching*. Once slack becomes manifest after a period of latency, remedies must urgently be found: they comprise streamlining, subcontracting, and dropping superfluous commitments (Nielson & Tierney 2005: 787).

Slack may be a resource rather than a constraint on decision-making, depending on how it is perceived (Dolmans et al. 2014), how it is converted into something else, and how it is used strategically “in high-velocity environments” (Paeleman & Vanacker 2015). Of course, “organizations facing increasingly intense global competition feel pressured to eliminate all forms of slack” but this does not per se signal failure or success, because the existence of slack is also an opportunity to adapt.⁷⁸ Actually, unused capacity “is not only unavoidable, it is a necessary condition to innovate” because it offers minimum room for manoeuvre.⁷⁹ In short, “increasing slack levels have a positive effect on performance, but this effect gradually diminishes with increasing slack levels and eventually becomes negative at high levels”. The usefulness of slack also depends on the resources available to managers (Paeleman & Vanacker 2015: 820).

Allocating resources to sections of the organization in order to favour the more creative units will mechanically increase an organization’s overall capability to adapt to changing conditions (Cheng & Kesner 1997). Such a gap may bring a happy ending and generate innovation rather than routine, since results may sometimes exceed expectations. They must be fine-tuned to reach the appropriate balance. “In essence, too little slack may inhibit exploration programs that lead to innovation, while too much slack may, in fact, result in reduced benefits beyond a certain point” (Herold et al., 2006). Slack is therefore understood as a driver rather than an inhibitor of adjustment to external factors, at least when exploration takes precedence over exploitation.

Taking the right road to new goals and using new processes despite or because of slack is therefore possible, on three conditions.

Firstly, the targets of reforms and inventions must be selective since too much innovation kills innovation: “the number of new initiatives logically

78 “If slack is a form of inefficiency but also essential for innovation, organizations run the risk of eliminating slack to a point that undermines their capacity to innovate... (and) experiment with new strategies and innovative projects that might not be approved in a more resource-constrained environment”. However, too much slack is “inimical to innovation because it breeds complacency and a lack of discipline that makes it possible that more bad projects will be pursued than good” (Nitin & Gulati 1996: 1245, 1260).

79 “Organizational slack is one possible source of funding for innovation. It consists of resources available to the firm above-and-beyond those necessary to meet immediate business requirements, fund on-going programs, or meet explicit objectives... Although... there are various definitions of slack, all of them reflect the notion of excess resources that both cushion the organization from environmental changes and represent an opportunity for discretionary allocations, such as innovation activities” (Herold et al. 2006: 1).

increases with an increase in slack, though the outcomes from such initiatives may reflect diminishing returns”. Secondly, “the innovative potential of slack depends on size, innovation magnitude and the rate of innovation... innovation speed or the quickness of innovation adoption” (Gopala & Santoro 2001). Thirdly, “slack resources and resources that can be recommitted” must be carefully thought out.

“Slack institutional resources may work as *shock-absorbers* against environmental change and contribute to continuity. However, slack resources also create *surpluses that generate search, innovation, and change*... Budgetary starvation or reduced slack is likely to generate demands for joint decisions and coordination, and such demands tend to make conflict and change more likely” (Olsen 2010: 94, 134, my emphasis).

Hence, instead of being a manager’s nightmare, slack can be integrated into a sound organizational strategy. However, there will always remain some “unabsorbed slack” (vs. “absorbed” slack; or: “sticky” vs. “liquid” slack). It will comprise resources that are not yet committed. Such an indicator of apparent mismanagement can nevertheless engender positive effects. It can level structural obstacles; minimize the impact of bad decisions; provide spare capacity to face emergencies; cool down political tensions within the organization; and limit “political posturing” (rivalry among agents) as well as the number of divisive internal coalitions. Resources in excess bring rewards, which helps crystallize agents’ loyalty—“bought” with some tolerance for personal autonomy—hence reducing stress and increasing sociability (Cyert & March 1963).

Conversely, even well absorbed slack (slack “available” on short notice) has some negative impact: sub-optimality, lack of efficiency, inconsiderate investments, postponement of necessary reforms, waste, complacency, lack of self-discipline; private capture of perks and golden parachutes, and conspicuous consumption (Papadakis et al. 1998). Once aggregated, such undesired effects could undermine the smooth functioning of an organization. After all, as we are also told, “slack can promote managerial complacency, induce irrational optimism... and allow a firm to establish structural misfits with the environment” (Dolmans et al. 2014: 514).

Therefore, redeploying slack when necessary is not only a matter of basic management it is a strategic function assigned to the top management. Does this corporate truth apply to international organizations and if so, to what degree? Do we have documented examples of slack playing a role in the expansion or survival of an IO? “Yes” is the answer to both questions.

Firstly, the majority of IOs are both relatively small and of limited outreach. Consequently, they are vulnerable and engaged in non-tradable activities. Others are big and multinational, therefore exposed to geopolitical crises. These two situations are the most frequently examined by scholars working on slack in ICT firms, computer software corporations, start-ups, etc.

Secondly, IOs contribute to the public good, as do firms that can trace the cause of slack to a high level of corporate social responsibility. This is an apparent cause of resource misallocation. In fact, in combination with slack, a propensity to protect the environment or to care for agents' welfare creates new public value for every end user rather than just for stakeholders (Mattingly & Olsen 2018). Moreover, state-owned enterprises operating in developing economies where there is still much to do to create value are not pressed to make unabsorbed slack disappear. On the contrary, such organizations "are bailed out persistently by state agencies when revenues do not cover costs". As an IO is often a post-NPM organization, it is also "a system of 'just-in-case' management, as opposed to the lean, 'just-in-time' management now practiced throughout the West" (Tan & Peng 2003: 1253). When economic development is the ultimate value growth justifies some potential waste.

Thirdly, individual perceptions of the bundle of resources an IO can use vary dramatically from one to another, whatever the level of real resources available, which depends less on context than on history. Whether or not the environment is highly volatile, studies on firms reveal the importance of time passed since foundation. They underline the role of the "development trajectory" (Dolmans et al. 2015), as well as the breadth of the leaders' training and background, and the length of their tenure (Tabesh et al. 2019).

Fourthly, whatever the circumstances leaders' idiosyncrasies moderate the relation between good and bad slack, and this work in IOs as it does in private firms (Tabesh et al. 2019). SGs and DGs do discount the future and try to have new ideas, which they sometimes fail to implement successfully if their perception of a rapidly changing context does not necessarily correspond to objective reality. Given IOs do need to invest in the future (if only to resist pressure from rival organizations), their heads engage in "the pursuit of projects that don't appear to be justifiable... Although such projects often fail, they sometimes fortuitously bring positive results that can be of great benefit to the [organization]" (Nitin & Gulati 1996: 1247). Heads may nevertheless be victims of "path-dependent effects [which] occur when [they] only see options along their existing path, despite possible changes in their perceived resource position". In this case, entrepreneurs [here: SGs/DGs] decide according to routine, i.e., they choose the most familiar path (Dolmans et al. 2015: 537).

This said, what might be considered "slack" within an IO may differ significantly from its meaning and content in a firm.

To start with, IOs are not overstaffed: compared to national administrations they lack human resource. Admittedly, duplication between a domestic and an international bureaucracy has a price (more or less equivalent to the running costs and the salaries paid). However, even when put in perspective with private firms IOs are truly understaffed. Most often, handfuls of experts

end up handling a whole host of intractable issues. To compensate for this shortage of human resource they encourage polyvalence, peer communication, and real ad hoc division of labour between heads and chairs, headquarters and field.

Secondly, IOs are underfunded, in particular between two field operations or two multilateral negotiations. Budgets are tight, even ridiculously tiny compared to other significant actors, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Thirdly, the major difference between IO slack and firm slack stems from the delegation contract from members (national states or activists) to international top management at international organizations because the level of slack is also a measure of contract attrition.

Contrary to what happens in private firms, slack does not signal that organizations perform less well or better than expected. It simply indicates that agents' principals are getting out of hand (Andonova 2009). Beyond a tacit acceptance of some "discretion" to choose the most appropriate means to achieve their ends IOs gain autonomy when they go one step further setting their own ends and terms of reference (Cortell & Peterson 2006) contrary to their principals' will. This sort of slack means that staff members interpret their mandate as work-to-rule (shirking), or unintentionally escape tutelage (slippage). In reaction, members opt for other control strategies, such as monitoring, auditing, and periodically reviewing their members' activities. This, in turn, triggers IOs heads' tactics to undermine controls. They invite third parties to evaluate their activities and prevent inspections on substantial issues by insisting on using solemn and formal procedures (a manoeuvre known as "ceremonialism"). They split their constituencies into groups that benefit from private information and those that do not, another sort of "dualism" (Hawkins & Jacoby 2006, 2008).

Lastly, international organizations are not the ultimate step in organizational structuring. They are the first step towards more global institutionalization, which makes a significant difference. Institutionalization is an unachieved journey. Once institutionalized, every organization faces crises and the more institutionalized they are, the more these crises threaten their survival. Some can even dive into a negative spiral of de-institutionalization, as happened with the Arab Common Markets, Arab Unions and more recently the Gulf Cooperation Council. Others will on the contrary re-institutionalize fast, and expand their mandate, as IAEA did with seed selection and IMO with refugees' shipwrecks.

WIPO is a good example of this tide of de-institutionalization/re-institutionalization: drifting away from intellectual property (a capitalistic and individualistic concept, which has lost legitimacy in a globalizing world) to opt for traditional knowledge (a collective non-merchant notion), the organization invented the notion of "traditional cultural expressions". It is of note that these two innovations were made possible by the existence of un-

absorbed slack: when patent and copyright issues that mattered the most for the West became less and less popular among Southern states some WIPO agents went underemployed. To regain usefulness, they smartly used their spare time and coined a synthesis of UNESCO's "expressions of the folklore" and WIPO's "intellectual property".

As predicted, when strategically and smartly used, slack brings new ideas and creates new jobs; it pushes an organization beyond its initial boundaries, remobilizing disillusioned or unoccupied agents stimulated by a new campaign to impose norms and to readjust structures in order to deliver a new global public good or service.

As useful as it can be, the concept of slack did not come out of the blue. It was tightly linked to the emergence of another: "ambidexterity", which has recently become very popular in management studies.

5.2.3 *Ambidexterity*

Spontaneous and free interactions do not suffice "to do difficult things, such as making trade-offs between short- and long-term demands and allocating scarce resources among competing priorities depending on multiple criteria" (Birkinshaw & Gupta 2013: 290-293). In other words, "managerial capability" or "dynamic capability" alone can turn any organization into a structure able to pursue current and future viability (O'Reilly III & Tushman 2013: 325, 332). Simply put, to be ambidextrous is "simultaneously exploiting existing capabilities, on the one hand, and exploring new opportunities, on the other". This balance between *exploitation* (routine tasks) and *exploration* (unconventional tasks) assumes that "[e]xploitation utilizes and incrementally extends existing knowledge and thus allows for short-term efficiency, whereas exploration entails search, experimentation, and the development of new knowledge".

The exploitation versus exploration distinction is a well-known core distinction in Organization Theory that should apply to IOs as well. According to James March:

"Exploitation refers to the leveraging of existing capabilities through activities such as 'refinement, efficiency selection, and implementation' while exploration refers to efforts to create future capabilities by means of 'search, variation, experimentation, and discovery'". (March 1991: 71, quoted among others in Schmitt, Probst & Tushman 2010; Datta 2011).

In short, making the best of exploitation is conducive to deepening processes, seeking efficiency, and creating value. Meanwhile, prioritizing exploration implies finding new markets, seeking resilience, and inventing new sources of value (Bierley et al. 2009). IOs staff members and permanent representatives behave as if they have a "market" of private customers to control. It is

actually the field of their operational activities on the ground, which target needy end users in need, i.e., refugees, starving populations, illiterates, victims of war, climate change, environmental pollution, nuclear dissemination, discrimination, etc. However, as firms do, they must also have projections about the likely condition of the world in the future and spend time on strategic planning, political forecasts, running scenarios on possible mandate enlargements, and norm-making.

While exploitation is at the core of performance, exploration is the very essence of resilience. However, several problems arise from this distinction. Firstly, the more time, energy and money you spend on capturing an extant source of profit to justify your efficiency, the fewer assets you have available to you to shape your future and boost your effectiveness. Secondly, accommodating the past, present and future of the organization may be far-fetched (or overstretching) since initial goals, current activities, and projects may lack consistency. Among many examples we can highlight the selection of seeds by radioisotopes at the IAEA; the protection of traditional knowledge by WIPO; the certification of some water basins as part of our world heritage at UNESCO.

Confronted by such contradictions, leaders can select one of the three variants of ambidexterity: “shift the organization’s strategic focus from exploitation to exploration, and vice versa over time; ... establish a particular organizational design with specialized units responsible for either exploitation or exploration; ... establish an organizational context that enables all organizational members to ... oscillate between exploitation and exploration” (Martin et al. 2019: 39, 42).

However, finding the right balance between exploitation and exploration is a delicate task. Revisiting this constructed and ideal-typical confrontation makes innovation a condition for survival because “[e]xploration involves the willingness and ability to experiment with rules, outlines, and knowledge that might, but often do not, provide improvements. Elimination of exploration will make an organization obsolete in a dynamic world. Continuous experimentation will prevent the organization from realizing the potential gains of new discoveries” (Olsen, 2010: 125).

In line with these views IOs simultaneously deliver and innovate, which pushes their heads towards brinkmanship. States or militants who have appointed them intensely scrutinize their current actions, leaving their agents little leeway to hedge for future shocks. Consequently, even the best-performing heads risk elimination or irrelevance. That in the long run most of them avoid this fate could be explained by a propensity to be ambidextrous. Assuming that “ambidextrous organizations are those that are capable of exploiting their existing competencies while exploring new opportunities” (Datta 2011; Bierly et al. 2009) leaves room for mandate enlargement and norm-creation, even when IOs fulfil their current commitments by the book.

Ambidexterity is nonetheless different in the business world compared to IOs since possessing “such ability leads a firm to create emerging markets while not affecting its traditional ones” (Datta 2011: 2), whereas in world politics ambidextrous international organizations are able to reach new end-users while continuing to help their original beneficiaries.

Undoubtedly, IOs are split between the two processes. Some are lagging behind others in combining autarky and rent capture. The overall trend, however, is experimentation-friendly because “an organizational context may enable individuals to consider both exploitative and explorative aspects of their work; when they try to be effective (*doing the right things*), they also think about how to be efficient (*doing the things right*)” (Simsek 2009; my emphasis). This applies to the private sector and to public IOs.⁸⁰

IOs do both. Instead of focusing on immediate results they decide under the shadow cast by the future, as public administrations do. If discounting the future took too long a time jobs could be repatriated and mandates interrupted or not renewed by member states or militants, a process resembling the private sector’s reshuffling and layoffs.

Whether it is an individual skill or a collective asset, ambidexterity makes room for “balancing” opposed trends and combining “absorptive capacity” (inside the IO) with “networking capacity” (towards the environment). Its origins may be found in ordinary slack or organizational crises, whether slack is positively related to organizational survival (Datta 2011; Raisch et al. 2009) or negatively related to it (Levinthal & March 1993; March 1991).

Whenever ambidexterity is required to tackle problems like the tension between differentiation and integration (or exploration and exploitation), tasks are subdivided into distinct organizational units: they are smaller for exploration and larger for exploitation. Integration of the whole is undertaken through the top management team and agents who switch between the two tasks, supported by “parallel” organizational structures like quality circles. Such structures enable members of the same unit to move back and forth between a bureaucratic structure appropriate to routine tasks and an organic structure allowing non-routine tasks (Raisch et al. 2009: 685). However, quality circles either do not exist or do not play a consistent role in IOs. True, the constitution of internal auditing structures such as those in the WHO and the UNHCR is on the increase. Whether they meet the expectations of their designers and make their organization more ambidextrous remains to be seen. Efficacious people who lead groups of top managers are supposed to be ambidextrous. They have allegedly been selected for their paradoxical mind-

80 “Ambidexterity is used as a metaphor for organizations that are equally dexterous at exploiting and exploring. An ambidextrous organization maintains a high degree of balance between exploitation (learning via local search, experiential refinement, and reuse of existing knowledge), and exploration (learning gained through processes of concerted variation, planned experimentation, and play)” (Simsek 2009: 597).

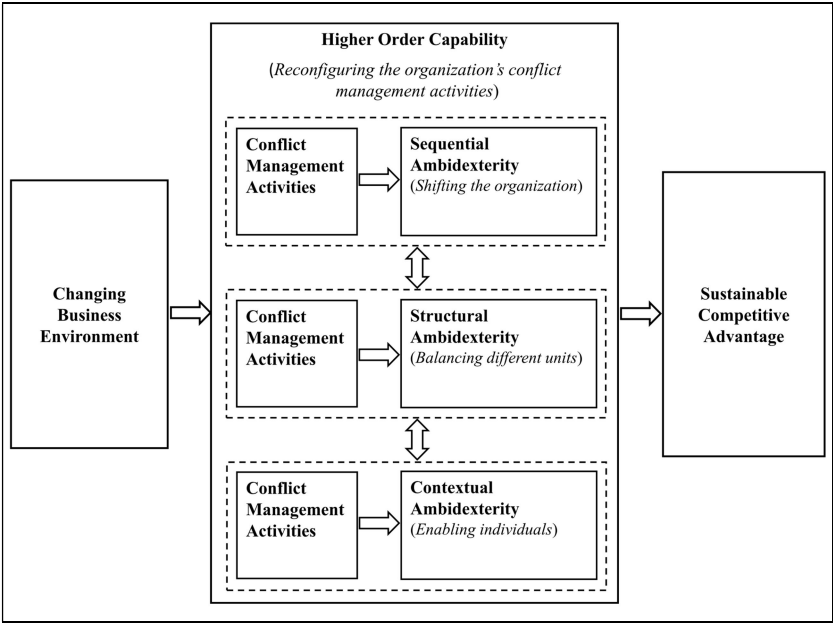
set and their ability to do several things simultaneously, unlike the rank-and-file agents. The latter may nevertheless possess such talent or be encouraged to acquire it if they are not confined to headquarters (UNHCR) but required to do fieldwork and circulate between units (UNEP, the IAEA, the OSCE).

In a nutshell, instead of a straight division of labour between routine and non-routine institutions as is often the case in bureaucracies and firms (Adler & Borys 1996; Raisch et al. 2009), IOs display enough discretion to equilibrate the exploitation/exploration ratio, either simultaneously or successively. Then, what seems to be the right combination of exploitation and exploration, according to the findings of surveys done in business units, is also attested within IGOs where we observe “a combination of stretch, discipline, support, and trust” (Ghoshal & Bartlett 1994), which “facilitates contextual ambidexterity” and “paradoxical thinking” (Gibson & Birkinshaw 2004: 213). However, unlike *structural* ambidexterity that was invented first (Duncan 1976), favouring *contextual* ambidexterity does not lead to dual systems and cross-regulation, the two processes examined in Chapter 4.

As there is tension between the present and the future, leaders must be versatile enough to handle temporal “colliding perspectives”. They have the capability to turn opposition into asset since “continuous interactions between different opposing groups prevent the accumulation of destructive grievances and grudges, and thus the dissolution of the organization as a whole”. To do so, they favour “overarching identity” over “feudal interest” and “reduc[e] power discrepancies [to] prevent the possible marginalization of under-privileged units”, all this “by making contradictions conscious and transparent” (Martin et al. 2019: 39-50).

These statements apply particularly well to the IO world, where multi-cultural conflicts between equals are on-going while opposing political views are openly debated. In fact, diversity is not necessarily counter-productive. It can help a balance to be attained between risk-avoidance and risk-taking behaviours (Khan & Mir 2019).

To check the management of private MNF and see if public or public-oriented IOs match, we can use a recent model (graph 5). Except for the word “business” in the left-hand box all other concepts derived from the business community apply rather well to the world of institutions. Ambidexterity is described as bringing “higher order capability” to organizations able to overcome internecine conflicts through this aptitude. They can achieve this end in three ways: allowing staff to alternate successive sequences of exploitation or exploration only and periods during which they are combined; striking a balance between exploratory and exploitative units; giving individuals a chance to opt for one or the other depending on the circumstances. Such



Graph 5. The strategic organization (Source: Martin, Keller & Fortwengel, *Strategic Organization*, 17(1) 2019: 54)

capability makes organizations able to remain influential and meaningful in the long run. In other words, they remain resilient and performing.

These statements and the implicit causal linearity they make manifest can be tested on the UN (the most prominent IO today). Conventional wisdom assumes that the UNSC only addresses emergency issues. Even there, however, we can find instances of ambidexterity. As conflicts among members of the Council are intense and frequent, they take time to reform the organization, at least tentatively. The way they do it is altogether *sequential* (mandate shifts from one stage to the next, from solving the current crisis to anticipating the next challenge); *structural* (the General Assembly discounts the future, while the UNSC deals with the present); and *contextual* (innovation is mostly assigned to the more charismatic SGs, like Kofi Annan).

In order to become efficient and legitimate, the UNSC itself cannot indulge in doing business as usual; it must change its rules of operation. Since developing countries are latecomers and not permanent members of this Council the legitimacy of the body depends on its ability to maintain a North-South balance, contain the still rampant East/West divide, and treat new states equitably. This explains why the Council tries hard to be more democratic and more effective. However, these two objectives could be

contradictory: reform is needed to democratize and better represent (which would benefit developing countries)—an *exploratory* ambition. It is also required to save money (which would profit developed countries)—an *exploitative* goal.

Whatever their opinion on innovation, the major beneficiaries of the current system cannot disregard it. Four major countries are pressing to become permanent members of the Security Council (Brazil, India, Japan and Germany) and African countries also wish to be represented at that level (Egypt? Nigeria? South Africa?). Hence several models of representation have been discussed so far (“A or B”, “blue or green”, etc.) based on the status of each state (permanent, non-permanent, short-term, long-term, with or without power of veto).⁸¹ Predicting the possible consequences of each model pushes countries to directly oppose plans to reform voting rights, which could empower rivals. Pakistan refuses to count India in. China and Korea reject Japan as Italy does with Germany or Argentina with Brazil. “Small states” members of the United for Consensus group (UfC) fear hampering their decision-making leverage.

As predicted by the conflict management model the UNSC must arbitrate between present and future. It must focus on current crises that might be solved based on the extant distribution of power (e.g. internationalized civil wars) or adjust to apocalyptic collapses that could possibly be avoided by a new division of influence (e.g. climate disasters).

However, neither slack nor ambidexterity can be modelled as unambiguous and homogenous notions. Instead of associating exploration and exploitation, they may balance efficiency and flexibility, or combine alignment and adaptability. Nonetheless, what remains central in ambidexterity for the study of IOs is its ability to explain how *mechanical* and *organic* models of organization can be reconciled at various organizational levels.

5.3 Organic and Cognitive Organizations

Beyond the exploitation/exploration nexus another distinction matters in Organization Studies. In many publications “mechanistic” and “organic” organizations are opposed.

A mechanistic organization is a well-oiled machine, built around centralized, specialized, and fit-for-purpose machinery, which relies mainly on

81 However, these solutions are too technical to solve essentially political problems. Less ambitious though more realistic changes are also available. For example, a country could be prevented from exercising its power of veto when crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed. Alternatively, the Council’s working methods could be reformed before any changes are made in its composition.

unqualified work. Suppose that an IO follows this pattern. At best, it will benefit from enough authority to provision public goods fairly and efficiently. At worst, learning and individual creativity will be limited or absent and the organization will remain reactive instead of being proactive. In an organic organization lateral relationships matter as much as vertical ties. A mechanistic approach suits steadfast and stable organizations; an organic one makes them fluid and therefore more adaptable to change (Burns & Stalker 1961).

Overall, this dichotomy reflects well-known distinctions such as: Weberian/Durkheimian sociology; rational hierarchy/organized anarchy; linear/non-linear logic; or Rational Theory based on strategic planning/Contingency Theory relying on adaptive behaviour. They do not suffice to understand how IOs may evolve from a machine to human agency.

5.3.1 *From Mechanistic to Cognitive Organizations*

In organic IOs success relies on an indivisible combination of *outputs* (specific products are distributed or disseminated), *outcomes* (expected societal goals are fulfilled), and *processes* (defined as “the effort, efficiency and skill by which goals are pursued”) (Gutner & Thompson 2010: 231). Therefore, as we shall see in the next chapter, success cannot be measured on just one scale. It cannot depend on the service delivered to particular end users (victims or consumers), the degree of actual impact of the decisions made, or the level of IOs’ heads’ concern for their social and environmental impact.

The mechanistic/organic distinction takes us back to the already mentioned opposition between efficiency and effectiveness. Whether public or private organizations can be efficient without being effective. Given organic ones favour long-term impact and collective work rather than short-term performance and managerial rule, the concept better suits those organizations in charge of provisioning global public goods. In periods of environmental transformations and normative evolution, the global and long-term human as well as technological impact of an IO prevails over the immediate satisfaction of its end users. In fact, the world vision of the latter may well be so much changed by the former’s activities that the demand for individualized goods and services may also evolve over time. Putting the emphasis on process avoids driving towards dead ends, i.e., trying to measure success in terms of the actual responsibility of IOs’ decision-makers.⁸² Scholars should switch from mechanical to organic units to evaluate IOs’ processual performance.

82 “[I]f goals are easy to achieve an entity might succeed perfectly well even when its performance per se is not very impressive. This helps us understand why *performance* is distinct from *effectiveness*, because the latter implies an ability to achieve specific outcomes or to solve problems without reference to the underlying capacity of the entity, the impact

Structural and contextual weaknesses compel organic organizations to empower their agents. It is no surprise, then, that the following “organic” syndromes found in Organization Studies are familiar to IOs specialists:

“Members are very mobile and are strongly socialized by the whole organization... Members experience diffuse and strong pressure to act collectively, while remaining open to outsider points of views and stakes... Lateral networking is a major resource and easy to join... Internal cooperation is achieved without outside coordination” (Thoenig 2009).

In reality, there are “alternative forms of organization and organizing” (Cheney & Munch 2017). Compared to the “autarkic”, the “fragmented”, the “organic” and the “mercenary” models, an “*interpretive* organization” that is altogether “cognitive” (Thoenig 2009) is the most stable and durable of the five (Michaud & Thoenig 2003). In any “interpretive organization” change stimulated by environmental transformation is *internalized* and resourcing comes from the *inside*.

This is a crucial factor since “*endogenous* regeneration” is the only means to combine resilience with performance (more on that in Chapter 6). In fact, such organizations adopt strategies that can accommodate both the short and the long term. They target performance, for sure, but even more prominent in their chief executives’ minds is the idea that they should keep actively identifying and preventing problems, hence adapting to contextual change.

Capturing all the profit expected from the exploitation of a “market” segment is less important than maintaining buoyancy. New resources must be generated with no outside assistance even if the price to pay is less-than-optimal short-term results, overly-high transaction costs between subunits, or costly trade-offs between hierarchical decision-making levels.

Benchmarking is not neglected when comparing standards of quality across organizations but imitation or importation of management tools from third parties is considered a disgrace. Exogenous languages are “translated” by the top management into internal knowledge only to help peer groups adapt themselves to the new situation and coordinate rather than ignoring or even avoiding each other (Thoenig 2009).

of complicating constraints, or the manner by which outcomes are achieved” (Gutner & Thompson 2010: 232, my emphasis).

5.3.2 Are IOs Organic or What?

How does this model apply to IOs? At first glance, the notion of a consistent whole seems perfectly applicable to most IOs. As an entity, IOs are a network of interdependence rather than a hierarchical unit. They are focused on the future rather than being a legacy of the past. Members of these “self-renewing organizations” anticipate events and try to survive unexpected shocks with no help from the outside. Therefore, they develop an idiom endogenous to the system of institutions to which their organization belongs (e.g. the UN, Bretton-Woods, EU, etc.). The cognitive capability of their agents enlightens them individually while also empowering the institution as a whole: there is little need to import recipes and “mercenaries” from the outside. Permanent debating within each IO shows that they have emerged from a sort of “genetic soup of common values” (Olsen 2010: 110) from which new norms arise and new strategies are orchestrated.

IGOs learn and accumulate knowledge instead of being either overwhelmed by dissonant information or biased by passion. They are not “cognitive idiots” or “passive robots” but “self-reflective” organizations. Since “organizations are considered as pluralistic systems in which some degree of cognitive compatibility or integration is achieved”, mastering organizational language and imposing it on subunits helps heads of organizations build links among their stakeholders. IGOs are not “decision machines” acting as “information systems that provide empirical conditions for the visibility and processing of uncertainties”. For such “legalistic and fictional” entities, “information means ‘news’, surprises, and more generally violations of expectations and anticipations generated by knowledge and specialization”. IGOs are closer to concrete organizations “constantly challenged by internal complexity, diversity, and fuzzy operational boundaries between their inside and their outside” (Thoenig 2009: 6). Since they are not fully protected from uncertainty by their own constitutional rules they must confront dissonant news, learn from unexpected events, and interpret the world they live in.

The IAEA is a good example of such evolution. Its current efficiency is doubtful, since trying to control the atom inevitably shows that preventing nuclear conflicts is a vain task. Inspections do not guarantee tight control over nuclear transgressors or *aggressors*. They do not prevent the *proliferation* of atomic weapons. However, the effectiveness of the Department of Safeguards is high because preventing nuclear disasters may be more urgent than avoiding unlikely nuclear wars. The Agency now *disseminates* its expertise to protect civilians and the health of potential *victims* of nuclear accidents.

As a consequence of this discrepancy between present and future, members perceive their IO as essentially contested and partly unsettled—unlike

states, but similar to the EU (Olsen 2010). As a remedy to such legitimacy deficit they learn quickly, mobilize goodwill, discount the future, and wait for better times to come. All behaving in the same manner, they inevitably become rivals, something that leads them towards developing their own specific comparative advantage.

5.4 To Sum Up

In recent years Management and Organization Studies specialists turned to unconventional firms and drawn lessons from leadership styles under stress. Consequently, the literature on NPM and especially post-NPM has been significantly enriched, which in turn has made feasible to draw comparisons with international organizations and IGOs in particular.

The challenges IOs experience in every field are met by focusing on transformative leadership, slack, ambidexterity, organic and cognitive organizations. The link between knowledge and power that is now evidenced by new research fits particularly well with the type of problems DGs and SGs (and top management and the executive staff of IOs) must face.

Whatever is no longer working in private firms will not help IO heads. They must therefore confine if not abandon routines, mechanical behaviour, hierarchical structure, cost killing and streamlining, as well as the dictatorship of the present. In a world where the environment changes at “high-velocity”, while the legitimacy of current activities decline, salvation depends on adaptive, inventive, and proactive behaviour at every level.

In short, leaders who used to make important decisions according to reactive NPM principles (“reform to be resilient!”) now face a new mantra (“expand or perish!”), which we shall address in the next chapter.

6 The Trade-off Between Resilience and Performance

IOs face two organizational dilemmas. Should IO managers flow with the present or target the future? Should they focus on quantitative or qualitative measures? In private corporations CEOs opt for the former in each case; within IOs chief executives choose the latter because they want to remain meaningful and influential in the long run rather than just performing in the moment.

Whereas private firms favour performance over resilience, IOs reverse the hierarchy. To survive, they can neither increase their market share nor guarantee any return on investment. While corporations limit the shareholders to a number which must be sufficient to pursue their activity while not weighing too heavily on price per share, IOs accept new members, which make them stronger. Their activity is win-win or regulatory, rather than zero-sum game and non-cooperative.

As a consequence of such options, IOs carefully produce symbols that may take decades to become accepted by a larger audience. They deliver more intangible guidance than tangible products and services. They are less obsessed by competitiveness than eager to promote corporate social and environmental responsibility plus economic fairness. They even go beyond what is expected from firms and fight to impose global ethics.

Compared to profits, stocks prices, and market shares, norms and values are of little help to measure the added value of a specific organization. On average, however, IOs do not perform so badly when the quality of their output is assessed according to the standards of the private sector. Some organizations are actually profitable. WIPO benefits outstrip its costs: according to one of its most recent budgets, it received €685 million from its members to protect their patents, copyright, and designs worldwide, but spent only €666.

However, members insist on applying NPM-type criteria. They want reports drafted by auditing groups. Hence, IO staff cannot neglect quantified performance, even when persuaded that reaching qualitative resilience is a priority.

Before going further it is therefore imperative to see how original their management processes can be. This can be done in two steps. I shall start by taking stock of IOs managerial performance according to the usual standards of scoring. Then, I will introduce other criteria, which may eventually make these organizations more resilient than firms. This is in particular true of corporations that are less profitable for their shareholders, even risking bailouts. It is enlightening to better understand the reasons behind their durability

when they are attacked by some of their stakeholders. If individual IOs have any secret recipe to their survival despite low or slow performance, this chapter will tell us why. Then the following one will show that cooperation may also empowers certain IOs while strengthening the weakest.

6.1 What Are the Relevant Indicators of Success?

Long considered passive or neutral communication “switchboards” if not “information booths” (Haftendorn & Keohane 1999), IOs are increasingly viewed as “proactive” (Barnett & Finnemore 2004). For some scholars, they even have an aptitude for “strategic actions” (Hawkins & Jacoby 2006: 200).

At the very least, some IGOs—if not all of them—and a handful of NGOs display an astonishing capacity to conform to NPM performance metrics and obtain decent ratings. Their staffs do not hesitate to streamline costs, downsize the input/output ratio, reduce the length of the production-delivery line, and improve end user satisfaction. If they show some reluctance to use “scoreboards”, they nonetheless borrow some tools from management scholars, such as the “Logical Framework for Action” and the “Open Method of Coordination”. Such imports stimulate “mutual learning” through “peer reviews” guided by the quest for the “best practice” and careful “monitoring” of the follow-up process (Borras & Jacobssen 2004).

However, if a desirable outcome of undesirable slack (as stated in the previous chapter) plus troublesome overlaps (as we shall see in the next two chapters) cannot be converted into market products and services because they are *intangible* public goods, how could the performance of international public administrations be assessed?

Within the IGO world, there is no obvious “productivity” indicator or any roughly equivalent measurement. While private firms dispatch economic value among shareholders, workers, and clients, IOs must politically satisfy members, staff, and end users. They also have to convince stakeholders that their respective goals have been achieved. This is not about return on investment, just a matter of psychological reward.

Despite such discrepancy between domestic/private and international/public goals, the same tools are helpful to approximate “productivity”. Three indicators give precious hints about the health of an IO: (1) the *hazard rate* of actual decisions over tentative proposals (i.e., the conditional probability of a decision occurring, plus the time needed to reach that decision);⁸³ (2) the

83 This can be estimated with the help of event history analysis, which measures the survival rate of events and the duration of their genesis (Box-Steffensmeier & Byungwon Woo 2011).

consistency between actual outcomes and initial expectations and the intensity of activities with regards to means (number of operations, personnel, levels of funding); (3) the extent and speed of norm dissemination worldwide and the influence gained, which depends on numbers of world conferences organized, conflicts resolved, successful mediation, effective peace-making, etc.

Should ratios that are so popular in Business Studies be used to evaluate IOs? And if so, which one would be the most adequate? There are several possibilities: one can trust growth rates, success-failure rates or market shares. If such tools are considered too coarse for complex activities, then more sophisticated and less managerial indicators may be useful.

What matters when one wants to assess the quality of management in corporations? Rather than using “production”, “profit” and “customers” as keywords, a “performance prism” would select other indicators (one for each facet of the prism): *satisfaction* (who are the key stakeholders and what are they expecting?); *strategies* (what strategies can satisfy their wants and needs?); *implementation* (what critical processes help to execute strategies?); *capabilities* (what capabilities are needed to implement such processes?); and *contribution* (what contributions stakeholders should make in order to develop these capabilities?) (Neely et al. 2002).

Unfortunately, the time horizon, scope, and social usefulness of any IO cannot be captured by what remains a mere scoreboard, albeit more ambitious than is usually the case. Specific standards must be found to see where collective value is created because it cannot lie in simple metrics like calculating outcomes minus costs or the difference between inputs and outputs. This is because metrics apply to *tangible* value, of which, admittedly, there are some instances in the IO world itself (e.g. patents and copyrights, weather forecasts, book and report sales, etc.).

However, what IOs produce most of the time has an *intangible* value. Expertise and knowledge that are the root of confidence-building measures immediately come to mind, followed by exclusive arbitrage and mediation capabilities to escape the trap of intractable negotiations. Less spectacular examples of the value so created include the enactment of symbols and standards (the kind of “... for all” mottos); data collection and processing (archiving and disseminating their content with related diagnoses); setting health benchmarks (watching over the adequate provision of drugs, contraceptives, and vaccines in each country); improving life condition (detailing the minimums to achieve in food availability, safety and security, temporary housing, educational systems, or hospitals); multiplying radiofrequencies (for satellites, Internet traffic, and early warning systems); generalizing training seminars (to assist agents in low competence contexts and socialize them).

Nonetheless, it is not always possible to assess IOs performance scores with the usual management tools. In the short run performance equals

efficacy (an adequate ratio between goals and resources). This means that the decisions made are at least partially implemented and they matter to the international community—the Arab League does exist, its headquarters are highly visible in a central district of Cairo, and its meetings receive media coverage. Despite this, it can neither solve domestic crises in one of its member countries (as in Lebanon) or feuds between them (as in the Iraq-Kuwait or the Saudi-Yemenite conflicts).

Measuring *efficiency* goes one step further towards an optimum. The World Food Program had always fed people facing hunger despite increasing transportation and commodity costs, so it was efficacious. To be considered wholly efficient the WFP should have reached a basic optimum: the maximum achievable given the resources available, e.g. coping with several severe crises at a time. A Pareto's optimum would not be required, though, since the best could become the enemy of good. A striking instance of suboptimality comes with peasants stopping to leave fields fallow once they are sure that in a drought they will receive staples from the WFP.

Lastly, achieving *effectiveness* implies that performance is no longer linked to conjuncture. Once it becomes permanent the context of action is permanently changed in the long run. The principles, norms and values to which an action refers are transformed. Targeting effectiveness rather than just aiming to be efficient may imply sacrificing current performance to take risks and investing in creativity or sacrificing sovereignty and investing in humanitarianism. A good case in point is the responsibility to protect (R2P) imagined compared to the non-interference assumption that was the rule to date.

In periods of environmental transformation and normative evolution the global and long-term reputation of an IO prevails over the immediate satisfaction of its end users. Some may look *temporarily inefficient* (their internal decision-making processes are criticized by auditing agencies, politicians, and journalists) although they are slowly building the conditions for *future effectiveness* (their external strategy defines and achieves ends that could not be assigned to the organization at the outset).

Of course, effectiveness cannot be assessed on just one scale. It cannot only be the service delivered to specific end users (victims or consumers), the degree of actual impact of the decisions made, or the level of IOs' heads' social responsibility. Efficiency, however, can be measured and audited. Hence, budgeting, "marketing", and accounting are the three most prominent issues.

6.1.1 *Budgeting*

Within IOs, there are five relevant and distinctive budgetary issues. Firstly, budgets are not annual but bi- or tri-annual. Secondly, they are insufficient to fulfil their mandate. Thirdly, assets are split between regular and occasional contributions, some donations being tightly or softly earmarked. Fourthly, their independence depends on the origins of the funds received. Fifthly, the respective influence of members depends on the level of their contribution.

The first and second points are those that depart the most from the financial auditing of a private corporation. A private audit examines the financial position of an organization yearly and no firm could operate without enough capital, as shown by the dilemma that the undercapitalized Canadian champion Bombardier had to solve in 2020 when it could not continue without selling part of its activities to competitors. IOs can work while being dramatically underfunded, although the concatenation of two or three years in a single budget may hide their actual frugality.

Table 3 lists a number of IOs budgets from the largest to the smallest (left two columns) and compares each with a benchmark at approximately the same level of receipts (right two columns).⁸⁴ The imbalance between the two sets of expenses is striking. Surprises come from the relative poverty of those that are the most familiar (EU, UN, FAO) at the top of the list, and the indigence of those impacting the most on our daily life (WMO, WTO, ICANN) at the bottom. It is for instance striking that the money spent to please visitors to a big museum in one country (the Met in New York) is much higher than the funds accruing to protect migrants (IOM). In the same vein, a single Olympic year could fund the UN budget for four. A disappointed agent told me once at the IAEA that his agency received 1 billion less than Manchester United Football Club, a statement confirmed by the table below. Another puzzle is the vast amount of spending devoted to the entertainment sector despite humanitarian and climate challenges. Then, lastly, far more money accrues to sovereign mandates (Defence, Courts) than to intergovernmental missions.

84 This table illustrates my point, but it is not a mathematical demonstration. Cases are selected according to two criteria: the frequency of the references made to them in this book, and the possibility to access honest and correct financial documents. Hence, some figures can be but approximations of the real amount of funds accruing to an organization; they are not exhaustive, though, because the salaries of detached agents and the operating costs of headquarters (unrequited transfers from the state, or donors' contribution and bequeathed capital) are not always included in budgetary files. Readers must understand that such accounts are difficult to read: press releases and internal documents do not use the same formats to report on their budgets. Lastly, they may drastically vary from decade to decade.

Table 3. Selected budgets of IOs in comparative perspective (Data compiled by the author)

<i>Intergovernmental Organizations</i>	<i>Yearly Budget in \$ (2018, 2019 or 2020)</i>		<i>Other Institutions (Domestic, Associative)</i>
European Union	168,700,000,000	52,134,800,000	UK Defence budget
UNHCR	4,317,000,000	41,000,000,000	US State Department
United Nations	3,073,830,500	13,100,000,000	2016 Olympic Games
International Organization for Migrations	1,800,000,000	3,100,000,000	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY
Food and Agricultural Organization	1,300,000,000	1,790,790,000	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
World Intellectual Property Organization	899,357,000	3,800,000,000	US Patent and Trademark Office
International Atomic Energy Agency	592,000,000	840,800,000	FC Barcelona
International Telecommunication Union	338,356,000	500,000,000	IATA
Amnesty International	302,860,000	473,650,000	Court of Justice of the European Union
World Meteorological Organization	277,449,000	377,800,000	2004 Tsunami gifts
World Trade Organization (WTO)	201,507,000	218,000,000	European funds to agriculture in Latvia
ICANN	140,000,000	140,000,000	International Criminal Court
IPCC	3,475,000	1,381,958	Australian Federation of Travel Agencies

However, given the limited amount of funding available, most non-UN system organizations perform miracles. In 2019, the OECD voted a €385 million budget, to be compared to the UNHCR at 8,6 billion—humanitarian aide costs more than knowledge. The IMF rescue states budgets with even less money (only 1,7 billion on average).

One may suspect that IGOs are richer than NGOs since their contributors (states) have their hands tied, while individual donors are free to choose the sort of advocacy they prefer and adjust their voluntary contribution based on their financial results. While this is the case in some organizations (SOS Mediterranean depends on private donors for 98% of its money), it is not quite true for all. On the one hand, public contributions may comprise a great

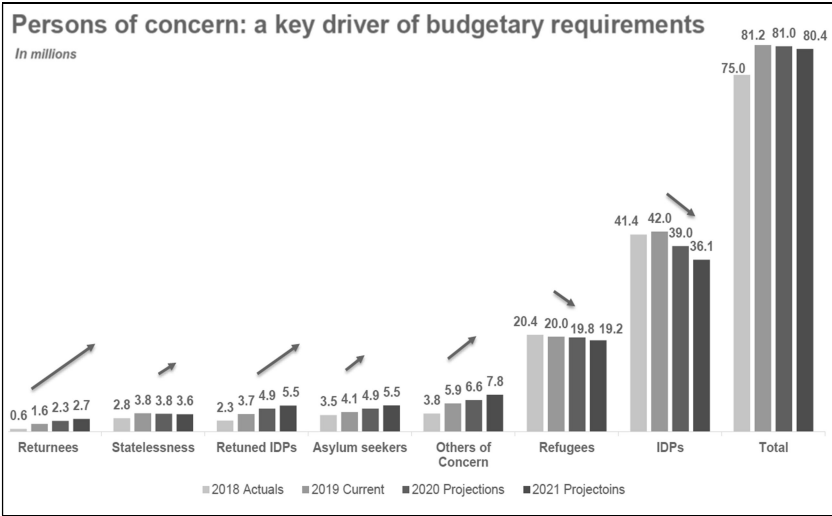


Figure 1. Donors voluntary contributions to the UNHCR (Source: UNHCR, *Bien-nial programme budget 2020-2021*, 18 September 2019 Standing Committee, Controller and Director DFAM)

majority if not the totality of the budget (79% of ACF money to fight hunger comes from public bodies). On the other hand, fund-raising can be surprisingly efficient (ACF spends spend €425 M yearly compared to €6 M in the eighties; Amnesty has over €295 M; one of the smallest, once called Handicap International, nonetheless receives €192 M a year—this represents more than twice the budget of the IMO to regulate sea transportation, wreckages, and pollution). Note that the total resources of this organization are just a little higher than that accrued by Sea Shepherd for the protection of dolphins and whales. It is no surprise, then, that better known NGOs can accumulate resources much above the budget of well-established IGOs (Oxfam, for instance, spent £51 M in 2019).

As for the third and fourth points (autonomy through the funding process or otherwise), the share of Special Funding within the General Budget is a key feature. Within the IAEA, for instance, this ratio is 50%—a benchmark. The special interests of certain states in specific issues are at the heart of nearly half of all OECD funds. This proportion reaches its apogee at the FAO: committed resources equal 61 % of its assets.

A relevant investigation should compare conditional grants to unconditional funding. It should also check if *earmarking* depends on the targets (aid must either go to a category of beneficiaries or be spent on specific programs)

Table 4. Conditional funding within the IMO budget

IMO		Amount GBP	% of total donor revenue
1	Government of the Republic of Korea	2,056,519	21.60
2	European Commission	1,800,827	18.91
3	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	972,983	10.22
4	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	634,412	6.66
5	Government of Japan	573,443	6.02
6	Government of Norway	941,953	9.89
7	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	451,199	4.74
8	Government of Canada	321,128	3.37
9	Government of Belgium	308,130	3.24
10	Government of Australia	293,952	3.09
Total		8,354,546	87.74

or the results (aid is linked to performance). There are, of course, additional parameters. Crises help supplement the budget available to organizations, which are often operating in urgency. At UNICEF 40% of expenses go on emergency issues, and this organization is 100% funded by voluntary contributions in contrast to UNEP (90%), the WHO and CNUCED (75% each). INTERPOL has a basic funding of \$59 M to which varying sums are added depending on priorities (\$49 M to face unexpected challenges, plus \$31 M from unrequited transfers such as salaries, maintenance, etc.). Instead of being paid for by governments, the bulk of the expenses can also be charged to the organization (40% of the FAO yearly budget is needed to cover expenses at its headquarters), its host city or the country where its seat is located.

Segmenting issues may also bring additional and conditional money: the more you multiply the issues at stake, the more likely you are to find donors seduced by one specific target, as occurs with the UNHCR.

Donors' voluntary contributions give accurate information about the managerial health of each IO. Firstly, they supplement insufficient budgets. Secondly, they finance specific tasks that would otherwise remain unfunded. Thirdly, they may impact on an IO's room for manoeuvre: if it has to rely on politically-driven governmental or intergovernmental aid the autonomy of its decision-making bodies would be compromised. In some IOs, the proportion of conditional funding accounts for nearly half the total amount of available assets. Even in technical organizations like IMO in which special funding cannot buy political legitimacy, this ratio may be high (12%).

Fourthly, except for the UN where the one-state/one-vote rule prevails, contributions to the budget operate like shares in firms: they give differentiated voting rights and unequal influence. The distribution of power within

Table 5. Percentage of each member state assets and voting rights at the IMO

IMO		Amount GBP	% of total assessment
1	Panama	4,938,291	15.50
2	Marshall Island	3,188,327	10.00
3	Liberia	3,161,087	9.92
4	Singapore	1,919,084	6.02
5	Malta	1,600,278	5.02
6	China	1,327,925	4.17
7	United Kingdom	1,324,422	4.15
8	Bahamas	1,312,754	4.12
9	Greece	969,629	3.04
10	United States of America	876,241	2.75
Total		20,618,038	64.69

IGOs, in turn, has a secondary impact on forum shopping since one organization may be more attractive than another to a member state, which will consequently invest more in the former than in the latter. In the end, countries that are sidelined in some IOs may be prominent in others. Consider the hierarchy within the IMO, and see how far it is from its equivalent within the IMF.

6.1.2 Marketing

One might also inquire about the network to which the organization belongs: what are its “suppliers” and “consumers”, or their equivalents? To what extent is work outsourced or subcontracted and to which stakeholder?

One crucial thing is to know how a particular IGO is positioned between states and the various types of non-state actors. A survey of two global organizations, the WTO and the IAEA (Schemeil 2009 a) shows that achieving a stage of “mutual recognition” consolidates the legitimacy of an IGO. It nevertheless depends on a few requisites: the network must be dense, with strongly connected components; it must be focused on few issues. These conditions are met within the WTO (in particular, on genetically-modified organisms and intellectual property rights-related issues).

When networks are loosely knit and scattered over too many fields of activity single-issue NGOs cannot confront a more powerful IGO. Within the IAEA, for instance, physicists, physicians, ecologists and pacifists are distinct communities, each concerned with only one aspect of the agency’s activities, which puts it under considerable pressure. The reverse may also occur. As an integrated and homogeneous NGO, ICANN (comprising a majority of American university IT specialists and registered in the US with the Department of Commerce) resists big IGOs’ attempts to infringe on its activi-

ties. Neither the European Commission nor the ITU or the UN (through the World Summits on the Information Society and the IGF that then unfold from them) has so far been able to find the appropriate response to such a monopoly of competence (Froomkin 2000).

Compared to domestic administrations rather than International NGOs, IGOs are less vulnerable to international rating agencies such as Standards and Poor's or Moody's because they do not borrow money. We must not infer from the lack of debts that IGOs are independent from the market, since price elasticity matters. Cooperation from TNCs is sometimes needed, as was the case with Dupont de Nemours in the negotiation round of the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer. This firm just took out a patent and substituted a new process for the banned CFCs. It was therefore ready to find a win-win solution. Pharmaceutical corporations eventually waived their patent rights on vaccines when pandemics peaked in the South. They returned to centre stage with the H1N1 alert in industrial countries when the WHO recommended high levels of vaccine be stocked. Shipping companies and airlines occasionally agree to transport heavy cargos to those in need far from the production zone. Forestry firms may also resist pressure aimed at more protection for endangered species and timber stocks.

Conversely, TNCs may also be sensitive to new norms—such as fair trade—and adhere to new certification rules suggested by NGOs and endorsed by IGOS (like the Max Havelaar label). Some, like the automotive industry, contribute to spreading ILO and UNICEF labour standards in less industrialized and less socially protected countries. Others, by contrast, act just like cartels. OPEC, for instance, tries hard to reach an optimal long-term price for its oil, far beyond WFP and UNHCR purchasing power. Unexpectedly, relationships between these three groups are more reciprocal than one might have imagined.

6.1.3 Accounting

From *accountancy* to *accountability* the boundaries separating technical from political issues are extended. Accountability has two meanings. On the one hand, an IO is audited by outsiders and its accounts are certified. On the other, the report on its activities focuses on the way it combines *awareness* and *responsiveness*.

Let's start with *accountancy*. In Management Studies, what is analysed is the honesty and legality of the current account with an eye on possible improvements in cash flow, profit, and investment (among other ratios). Audits are based on objective figures and graphs: they also focus on verifying the conformity of its operations to the benchmarks set by shareholders. There are major concerns, though: will agents accept assessment from allegedly neutral people, or will they ignore or even boycott it? Can external auditors be con-

sidered truly independent and unbiased, knowing that even accountancy norms can be disputed and the fight to control their accreditation tough?⁸⁵

Accountability refers to interpersonal trust within the organization—a psychological phenomenon. Within this framework, the questions become: does the structure stimulate confidence among its stakeholders? Can it be improved with the help of O&M recipes? Will staff play the game by the book, or will they try to shirk or procrastinate?

A basic driver of trust is the degree of transparency. It is often said that legitimacy depends on the capacity to transform firms and IOs into inclusive glasshouses than can be explored in a click. However, IOs are not only institutions open to all potential members, they are exclusive clubs of countries whose heads do not want to share private information with non-members. This is particularly true within the WTO where negotiators hold back news until an agreement is reached, while outside observers are banned from entry into the negotiation room.

Of course, transparency is the new mantra everywhere, with commitment to a nothing-to-hide attitude. As a consequence, it must be reckoned that efforts have been successfully made to invite non-stakeholders to look through the windows of the decision-making black boxes. Friends of the chair and civil society spokespersons have been encouraged to draft reports and motions; archives have been declassified. Anyone can now access every document.

Although this may be a delaying tactic if not a sort of demagogy (a brief may remain unnoticed by those to whom it was sent) it is a true step forward. We are now far from the confidentiality and lack of any premature disclosure that characterized the diplomatic debate for centuries.

6.1.4 *Auditing*

A significant sign of commitment to business standards is the attention given to auditors and other O&M consultants. Most IOs go beyond the legal obligation to have their accounts certified by independent bodies. They mandate experts to analyse their strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities they might take and the risks they face before sending them their recommendations. As a further step, some IGOs launch an internal audit to be better prepared for an external evaluation, giving them time to rectify whatever is wrong upstream in their structure and processes.

85 According to P. Leblond (JEPP, 2011), “accounting standards represent one important area of international finance where the EU has finally taken a leadership position alongside the United States, as a result of its adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) and its corresponding delegation of standard setting to the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). Surprisingly perhaps, neither the EU nor the US has been able to exercise much influence on the content of IFRSs”.

ITU, for instance, established a specialized body to diagnose the quality of its management and “advise the Council on the scope and approach of the external auditor's work”:

“The purpose of the Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC), as a subsidiary body of the ITU Council, is to serve in an expert advisory capacity and assists the Council and the Secretary-General in fulfilling their governance responsibilities, including ensuring the effectiveness of ITU's internal control systems, risk management and governance processes. IMAC must add value and must assist in strengthening accountability and governance functions of the Council and the Secretary-General” (ITU Website).

To sum up, these four aspects of IOs activities are now under the control of consulting firms. Such opening up is spectacular, for sure. It has been celebrated in books and articles. In a way, it boosts the political legitimacy of IOs. However, IOs’ performance scores are difficult to quantify. Their value added is qualitative rather than quantitative and symbolic rather than material. Value is created through intangible long-term trade-offs between global and local norms, and not from tangible short-term ratios. The differences between standards of performance in business firms and international organizations are summarized in table 6.

When symbols, norms, and ethics are at stake, there is an absolute lack of basis for any sort of accountability, requiring the creation of new types of benchmarks.

Table 6. Standards of performance—old and new

Metrics of performance (NPM)		New standards of resilience (OS)	
Indicator	Descriptor	Indicator	Descriptor
<i>Efficiency</i>	Value for money	<i>Effectiveness</i>	Value change
<i>Cost killing</i>	No red tape, no waste	<i>Slack</i>	Source of innovation
<i>Rational management</i>	Exploitation, profit	<i>Strategic management</i>	Exploration, ambidexterity
<i>Transactional leadership</i>	Bargaining	<i>Transformational leadership</i>	Structural change
<i>CSR</i>	Ethics for business	<i>CSEHR</i>	Ethics for society
<i>Research (R&D)</i>	IP (patents, copyrights, designs)	<i>Knowledge</i>	Open access, epistemocracy
<i>Market share</i>	Competition & bilateral contracts	<i>Partnership</i>	Cooperation, plurilateral networks

6.2 Towards New Standards of Performance

In O&M terms, performance is a prerequisite to durability; it can be measured objectively; it targets good scores; it is sanctified by ratings. Viewed from the headquarters of an IO, however, the link between achievement and resilience is not so obvious. Records can even hamper longevity; norms matter more than ratios; reputation prevails over rating. As IOs make norms that frame the future, they are less concerned with current business models than firms are.

It is so because IOs must be effective, not merely efficient. They should be able to transform the conditions under which decisions are made and promote more complex convictions than just remaining in business.

A sign of this trend is the increasing popularity of global ethics, moral compasses, and global compacts. IO staff members argue that their organization serves the Commons since they dispatch and redistribute intangible value with a cosmopolitan mind-set. Let us examine each of these claims.

6.2.1 *Global Commons*

Firstly, what kind of “global public goods” do IOs provide? They concentrate on non-tradable goods and services that are deprived of property rights, such as natural/common-pool resources and cultural heritage. Nobody can be excluded from their consumption; externalities are compensated for; their development cost includes a legitimate concern for foreigners and for future generations.

IOs also provide equal access for anyone everywhere to rare or non-renewable resources. They make markets work, set rules, impose checks in matters of hygiene as well as transactional loyalty. They fight against market deficiencies like lack of coordination, information asymmetries, cost externalization, and free riding. Additionally, they provide venues and frameworks for negotiations, thus opening up the possibility for cooperation.

Such cooperative patterns are, per se, “primary public goods”, whose face value is even less tangible than the usual Commons. These goods and services are owned neither by private agents nor by states. They are provided for, delivered, and protected by intergovernmental agreements and organizations. They must be readied for the generations to come (a point on which we shall focus in the next chapter).

Intergovernmental organizations provide global public goods that no other governmental agency could deliver alone even to its own population including clean air, fresh water, non polluted oceans, etc. due to the volatility of major cross-borders externalities. Externalities that did not exist in the 18th century matter today: disrespect of privacy because the Internet makes the externalization of “likes”, “forwards” and other “commentaries” possible;

photographs and videos in which a person is recognizable, disseminated by third parties without consent.

Thus, IGOs limit the impact of externalities on most people in the world and everyone's life. NGOs, on the other hand, limit the impact of IGOs' own externalities on the same people—those who are compelled to tick boxes and refuse or select cookies, accept or reject the terms of service of insurance contracts or pressured to sign petitions, demonstrate in the streets, etc.

6.2.2 *Global Corporate Social Responsibility*

IOs permanent representatives and staff members claim that they cannot be evaluated in the way of private corporations because they must behave more ethically. They must avoid conflicts of interest and be careful not to harm anyone when disseminating information.

Although unsubstantiated, these claims impact on staff behaviour. They relieve heads from the burden of elaborating an explicit doctrine of corporate responsibility to underline their dedication to social and environmental duties. On that point, IO staff often lags behind the top management of firms, for whom the concept of “Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR) came into existence years ago. Part of it is outsourced to special units like international Foundations and Global Funds (e.g. the Bill and Melinda Gates or Clinton Foundation, UNAIDS or the World Fund for the Environment). This makes even more manifest the neglect for the actual meaning of CSR, considered “a company's responsibilities to multiple stakeholders, such as employees and the community at large, in addition to its traditional responsibilities to economic shareholders” (Zhang et al. 2018). Note that the definition of each organizational CSR type depends on the level of slack that made commitment to it possible,⁸⁶ plus the complexity of its organizational structure, and the level of board involvement during its implementation. Assuming that board involvement is “the level of attention that board directors give to the strategy process” (Federo et al. 2018), the more board members involved in CSR the more they pursue the Common Good.

Herein lies the main difference between private corporations and public organizations. Within firms, the board may simply “rubber stamp” strategies proposed by the CEO; it may also “conceive and deliberate with the CEO different strategic options during the strategy process”. This would be neither possible nor useful within IOs in which “board dynamics” is by essence higher, because (a) “the board and its committees work repeatedly with top

86 According to Zhang et al. 2018, there is a positive relationship between the financial slack of a given MNE and its CSR. The explanation is simple: if a firm spends sufficiently on R&D and marketing activities, it may have some advantages in terms of increasing the CSR rating.

management”; (b) full time directors are more engaged in meetings; (c) such meetings are more frequent in public IOs than in private companies.

Being sensitive to CSR provides some advantages, even in the for-profit world. Firms attentive to CSR are more likely to have a better relationship or a closer connection with their customers. Additionally, more motivated agents are encouraged to design and promote new products and to generate greater long-term returns. For instance, it may be rewarding to develop a new technology for environmental protection, provide better customer service or have better public relationships. Indeed, good CSR can enhance employees' identification with their firm and therefore improve agents' performance. Research has nonetheless showed that, due to higher organizational complexity, non-profit boards are even more involved in strategy formulation than for-profit executives. The more so when they go global. Research has also proved that “IGOs that have broader scopes are more diversified and are thus more complex” than firms (Federo & Saz-Carranza 2018: 417). Their strategy is more other-oriented and success means more welfare. When an organization has a broader scope and a greater heterogeneity than most firms it must face more demanding information-processing requirements and interest in its CSR is aroused.

Being international means that firms or IOs must face different cultural environments in different host countries. Following investigations conducted by review boards, IOs must do more: they also rate the performance of their members, which sets standards of excellence at the global level.

This explains why CSR impacts so much on the way an organization self-presents itself to the public with short sentences that are expected to detail the social usefulness and the program of an organization. Think of “Atoms for Peace and Development” (IAEA); “Building peace in the minds of men and women” (UNESCO); “end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity” (World Bank); a commitment to help “all people [to attain] the highest possible level of health” (WHO); the promotion of partnership in “caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations” (UNEP). In 2006 the WSIS Tunis Agenda stated that “the same rights that people have offline must be protected online”, calling for a list of basic rights of the Internet community and end users.

Telling instances of such eye-catching mottos come in particular from the UNHCR and ILO. The former is now involved in a boosting sustainable energy strategy, and strengthening climate action while the latter tries to insert refugees into the labour market.⁸⁷

87 “In recognition of the growing climate crisis and to boost refugees' access to safe and sustainable energy, while minimizing its own environmental impact, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, launched a four-year Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy. The strategy promotes the transition to clean, renewable energy at refugee camps and hosting

6.2.3 Global Ethics

Over and above rules made to avoid conflicts of interest, set benchmarks, rate IOs, and frame new horizons, international organizations are focused on a “moral compass”. This compass was imagined by the United Nations Organization to stimulate other actors who seriously consider morality as a legitimate and priority goal. The UN adopted a series of “ethical goals”, created the “United Nations Millennium Development Goals”, signed a “Global Compact” with private partners, and promised to adopt a “Sustainable Development Goals Compass” because “[b]usiness cannot succeed in societies that fail. Investing in the achievement of the SDGs supports pillars of business success, including the existence of rules-based markets, transparent financial systems, and non-corrupt and well-governed institutions” (UN website).⁸⁸

The UN also adopted the “Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework: Gender equality, decent work, sustainable cities, peace, justice and strong institutions”. In this document the purpose of the global compact is detailed. It includes openness; cooperation and co-creation between the developed and developing worlds; fighting against climate change; addressing the “vastly unbalanced distribution of life chances due to chronic inequality”; limiting “the rise of global slums in the mega-cities of the South” to avoid the worst “plausible scenario [that] would depict a predatory global minority of ‘elders’ being serviced by masses of much younger and less healthy (due to eroding public health infrastructure)”.

As for the means required to be consistent with such goals, they require “competence or effectiveness” plus “values such as integrity, honesty, trustworthiness and a commitment to virtue as well as to service to the organization”. Additionally, free-riding is no longer a sign of smart management. On the contrary, it now becomes unforgivable because profiteers who could discretely “commit evil acts, even when the evil is of a small scale” can no longer operate “in a world where globalisation is the basis of much of the world’s economy” (Jones & Millar 2010).⁸⁹

sites” (UNHCR website). “ILO and its constituents share experiences and good practices in the inclusion of refugees and displaced persons in the labour market, during an event aimed at encouraging a more coherent approach to the promotion of decent work in crisis settings” (ILO website).

88 The problem here is “whether corporate leaders have the vision and courage to make the type of long-term strategic choices, which will not bear fruit for many years” (M.T. Jones & C. Millar, *Journal of Business Ethics* (2010) 93:1-8).

89 To these concrete ambitions, some philosophical attitudes or “spiritual anchors” can be added. For instance, a Turkish scholar lists “perfection, compassion, passion, inspiration, investigation, dedication, appreciation, determination and cooperation” (Karakas, 2010).

6.3 To Sum Up

Suppose that an IO performs according to the conventional standards of the business world, it would nonetheless risk being shut down because because *stakeholders* always want more than what *shareholders* can anticipate from market mechanisms.

The ways IOs manage, steer, and regulate are original. As their standards of performance are only partially imported from the private sector, they have invented new indicators like multiannual budgets and slack absorption. They are more concerned with resilience than mere performance. As complex hybrids they have a quasi-monopoly over the provision and maintenance of the Commons. Hence, they promote Global Ethics, and guide the private sector towards a Global Compact by means of a Global Compass.

Morality and long-term ambition protect vulnerable organizations from decay, long after inception, a trend that will be more visible once their evolution is explained in chapter 7. The impact of ethics on steadfastness can be consolidated through collaboration.

However, such a move generates its own series of problems like overlap and encroachment, as we shall see in chapters 8 to 10.

7 Genesis and Expansion

Rather than resisting change as is often said, *adaptation* to a new context is the best strategy for the staff of International Organizations. As we have seen in previous chapters a commitment to managerial reforms combined with evolution of leadership styles protect IOs from external turbulences.

I shall now address another aspect of organizational reactions to environmental transformations. Opening new offices, launching new programs, making new norms: this is the new paraphernalia of a headlong flight towards a new scope and a new status. This is a more ambitious strategy, albeit agents openly deny it during interviews.

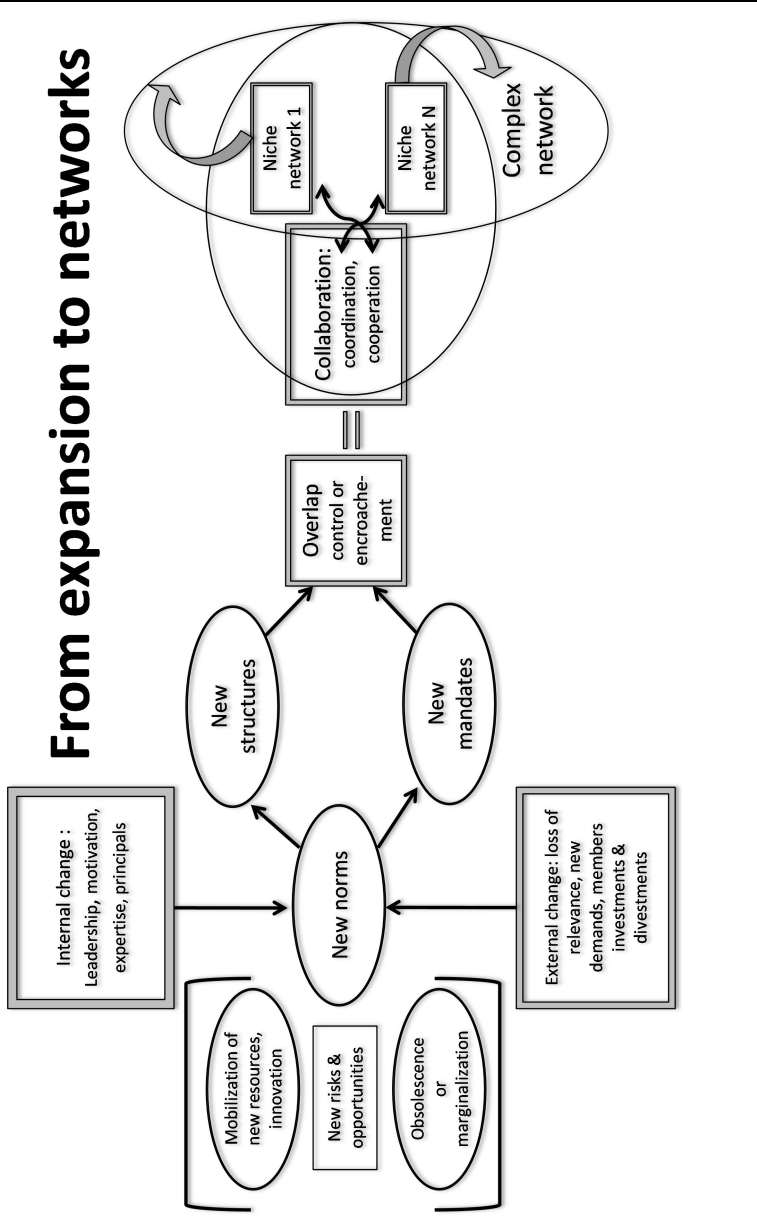
As a sort of natural law IOs heads are convinced that their organization must either expand or perish. Were they to stagnate, they would soon become obsolete. Heads are therefore determined to make their organization grow and get public recognition when its activities have to that point remained confidential.

This scheme is summarized in graph 6. Few comments are needed on the left hand side of the equation, although the distinction between controlled overlap and undesirable encroachment should be clarified. Controlled overlap is beneficial to the first mover and its target organization. Encroachment becomes unbearable when things get out of hands of their respective heads. More will be said about the right-hand side of the equation on forms of teamwork in chapter 9; on niches in chapter 8; on networks in chapter 11.

Since few IOs ever disappear, making the right decision when reaching the point from which their future can head towards an endless expansion or shutting down is not a matter of life and death. As made plain by the title of this chapter every IO is doomed to expand into another's area of responsibility. In doing so, their respective identities might become blurred, which in turn may entail reduced efficiency and effectiveness. They must nonetheless continue onwards to avoid being sidelined or risk obsolescence.

To be resilient IOs staff must at the very least accept limited competitive cooperation (or "coopetition"). They should seek a rapprochement with at least one organization, despite cultural differences. They must assume Western dominance on the tandem, accept pressure from third parties to work together, and prevent growing asymmetries between partners due to changes in the environment. Fine examples of this would be the IMF and the World Bank Group in recent years, when development and environmental issues became more central, leading to an advantage to the former (Freytag & Kirton 2017: 572-574).

From expansion to networks



Graph 6. An expansionist process

There is a problem though: when you grow in size and grasp “market” opportunities your mandate inevitably overlaps with the territory assigned to another organization within the sound division of labour that had been thought out in the forties, if not earlier. Various notions like trespassing, encroachment, and jurisdictional overlap have been used to describe such a tendency.

Prevailing over partners does not depend only on a capacity to symbolize the future ambitions of partnership better than peers do. It is also a consequence of their respective past, itinerary and evolution until time comes to work with many others in a mutually profitable system of collaboration.

Whatever their singular history, every IO expands its mandate sooner or later as it would eventually regress if it did not. A case in point would be UNIDO: this Vienna-based organization saw various member states depart its rank as a consequence of controversial support given to industrial take-off in LDCs.

There is also a lot to learn from the genesis of international organizations. IOs do not come out of the blue, they have a past and each episode is enlightening. The IOs trajectory is similar to that of others in many aspects. To illustrate this point, I examine the story of three organizations that were born in pain and grew slowly over a long period of time, centuries even. They are like three rashers cut from the thick meat of IO’s past, rather than an encyclopaedic review of their history. As complex cases, they are probably most able to tell us something important about why IOs emerge and then grow.

Accordingly, I focus on Trade, the Environment, and intellectual property. Considered non-vital to selfish governments, the three organizations that emerged from a series of attempts at regulating these sectors were allegedly unable to grow and compete with existing institutions. They were also weak, underfunded, and understaffed.

They nonetheless expanded. “*E pur si muove*”–“and yet it moves”... as Galileo allegedly whispered after his condemnation. So, we must consider expansion as ingrained into their very essence.

7.1 Genesis: How It All Started

Simply put, the genesis of IOs must not be confused with documented history for which we have a seminal book (Reinalda 2009) unless we believe in retroactive or “regressive history”–knowing where we are now and wondering how we arrived there. Put this way, a number of details required for an exhaustive and precise reconstitution of the past are being ignored. Nonetheless it is sufficient here, as we merely need to understand Episode 1.

The task is overwhelming, because secular IOs appeared as early as the second half of the 17th century in the aftermath of the celebrated Peace of Westphalia among countless religious and dynastic institutions inherited from earlier periods. IOs proliferated when Waterloo put an end to Napoleon's hegemonic dream of a world unified as a single state. This was a time of great expectations: philosophers, physicists, engineers, as well as poets, writers, historians, and lawyers—all nurtured on the classics in Latin and Greek—shared the same values. The promise of adequate treatment for social ills and economic woes would result in technological, scientific, and constitutional progress. The modern world would be affluent, civilized, and peaceful. Although the invention of the concept of “epistemic communities” was still to come, scholars participated in informal networks of wise and well-educated people who believed in progress. To the Positivists the world was a playground for inventors and constitutionalists—the engineers of the future.

Scientists and philosophers were not the only intellectuals involved in the creation of IOs. Other actors—bankers, farmers and industrialists—were even more instrumental in building them, because “the essence of an international organization's creation is... its conference system”, a kind of forum (rather than an agonistic arena opposing hostile parties) tending to institutionalize itself and the locus of a learning process through which additional bodies would later on be created (Reinalda 2001).

Central bankers and traders benefited more than any other groups from this early wave of globalization. In centralized states bankers with a national monopoly on deposits rushed towards the gold exchange system while local lenders invested in small-scale regional factories within decentralized countries.⁹⁰ At the time, enlightened politicians ruled benevolent hegemonic powers like England, France, Prussia, and the United States of America. They invested time and money in building new international networks of influence. Then, in the wake of state and nation building some of the oldest IOs were reformed. Their rules of procedure were formalized. Global networks like the San Francisco, Bretton Woods, and Havana systems emerged and attracted new members.

Three such organizations made a remarkable move in that direction. Rooted in shared scientific and technical knowledge they were better at adapting to contextual change than more volatile organizations like security IOs. Despite the specificity of their respective sector the WTO, the WMO,

90 It has been shown with convincing evidence that collective action (of advantaged and disadvantaged coalitions of actors) as well as the nature of the political formula (centralized, decentralized, and federalized) determined variations in incentives to globalize and to organize the banking sector, which in turn led to the creation of central banks and a jointly managed financial system (Verdier 1998, 2001).

and WIPO still convey the universalistic spirit of their creators. For example, they all believe in the same paramount value: reciprocity (if not solidarity).⁹¹

What these three organizations have in common is their attention to intellectual property. This is evidenced by: (1) the existence of the WTO TRIPS; (2) the history of the 42nd WMO resolution on free dissemination of meteorological data; and (3) the business conducted daily within the WIPO itself. They grant a minimum protection to innovators (Lavoisier) or visionaries (Kant) while allowing the dissemination of their discoveries. These two contradictory goals can be summarized in just a few words. They promote the removal of barriers to intellectual and material exchanges without weakening state sovereignty. They disseminate inventions while protecting inventors.

A closer look at their past itinerary shows that they arose from private initiatives motivated by the conviction that a public good should be provided. This could mean a better diet or a democratic peace at the WTO, weather forecasts and early warning systems for the depletion of climate and water resources at the WMO, or indigenous know-how and technological designs at the WIPO (Schemeil, 2002). The transition from national to international and from private to public was signalled by a change of status and a revised acronym. The ITO (International Trade Organization) became the WTO (World Trade Organization). The IMO (a unique International Meteorological Organization) gave way to the WMO (World Meteorological Organization: weather, water, climate). The BIRPI (United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual Property) led to the WIPO.

To our preliminary consideration (how did we get there?) the answer varies minimally from one organization to the next. These slight variations reinforce the feeling that there is a common pattern behind apparent specificities.

7.1.1 Trade before the WTO

Creating an institution dedicated to free trade is not a recent idea. It dates in back to the 18th century and the Kantian foundations of a peaceful trading world. Serious discussions about an organization able to regulate cross-border commerce can be traced to the 1930s. Its framework has been thought out in the interwar period when J.M. Keynes challenged the principles of classical economics. At the time of the Gold Exchange Standard most economists did not believe that freeing national markets would suffice to prevent a great depression. Contrary to conventional wisdom among mercantilists

91 Another case in point, which I am not addressing here, is the social and professional conditions of the working class before 1927, which led to the creation of the ILO (Reinalda 1998).

domestic markets had to be organized and international markets deregulated. Then, the 1948 Havana Conference examined the feasibility of such a new world institution conceived as a means to complete the Bretton-Woods system. This dream had to wait until the 1994 Marrakech agreements to finally come true—albeit under a new name to avoid any connection with neo-monetarist philosophy or neo-Keynesianism.

As for the so-called “Kantian variables” and their compatibility with Hobbes’ cynical view of the evolution of the world (O’Neale & Russett 1999; Schemel 2018), it is a well-established idea if not a proven fact that freeing trade brings good governance to less affluent countries whose economy is far from efficient. To trade fairly, government must democratize and corruption must stop. Trade engenders growth in economic output, as well as growth in democratic input through the extension of domestic political freedoms and international transparency (Schemel 2003).⁹² As information and training are either the prerequisites or the by-products of trade, the more countries trade with each other the more information is disseminated democratically within the domestic, the multilateral, and the international spheres. Trade in goods equals a trade in ideas. Information about procurements, procedures, and customs regulations is information about power—a welcome means to prevent its undesirable accumulation within small elite circles.

To assess the relationship between a trading stance and international peace, philosophical postulates must be supplemented by facts. The first moves towards trade deregulation were seen during the second half of the 19th century. Trade agreements were signed in Europe and in the U.S. In Europe, “The 1860 Cobden-Chevalier Treaty was in part the product of a trade-security linkage” and a means to make a British cabinet—lured by the expected profits of exporting to a larger market—accept the annexation of Nice and Savoy by Napoleon III (Verdier 1998: 69, 201). In the U.S. Congress ratified trade agreements to consolidate relationships with close neighbours and watch over borders. The Reciprocity Treaty with Canada was signed in 1854 and denounced in 1866. The agreement with Mexico lived longer on paper but not in practice since it was never implemented. However, people in Congress did not see any urgency in signing agreements with European or Asian countries with little impact on domestic security.⁹³

92 According to Richard Rosecrance (1986), “the plethora of small nations created after the war... were generally not large or strong enough to rely on domestic resources... Unless they could trade, they could not live... If tariffs and restrictions had inhibited the trade of new nations... they would not have been able to function as independent units ... It seems safe to say that an international system composed of more than 160 states cannot continue to exist unless trade remains the primary vocation of most of its members.”

93 “Embroidered in a civil war that interrupted two decades of liberalization, the United States did not join the European tariff treaty system”. Moreover, “until World War II and with the exception of World War I... states usually refrained from using trade policy to pursue

For some scholars, the free world was a trade world. For others, it had never been fully established that commercial interdependence between states was shielding them against war. Indeed “European nations in 1913 relied upon the trade and investment that flowed between them; that did not prevent the political crisis which led to a breakdown of the international system and to World War I... The United States was Japan’s best customer and source of raw materials in the 1930s, but that did not deter the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor” (Rosecrance 1986).⁹⁴

Time after time, the initial idea of a positive link between trade and peace morphed into a special relationship between trade and victory. Economic interdependence did not protect democracies from conflict, so the initial thesis was buried during the interwar negotiations. It returned with the Atlantic Chart, which includes a clause on free trade among victorious allies.

Proposals to institutionalize agreements once the war is over have flourished everywhere, notably in France.⁹⁵ Successive conflicts impeded the signing of trade agreements in the U.S. They opposed exporters and local producers, interventionists and isolationists, supporters of free trade and promoters of fair-trade (Verdier 2001; Graz 1999). A Democrat politician, Cordell Hull, was the most prominent advocate of the latter.⁹⁶ Former Representative, Senator, and then Judge, he had supported Woodrow Wilson⁹⁷

security goals”; on the contrary, “throughout the 1950s, openness was justified by security needs” (Verdier 1998: 69, 78, 201, 206).

94 This sounds very much like a Cordell Hull statement to the Congress asked to tear down tariff walls: “I, of course, never claimed that trade agreements would be an absolute panacea against war. Moreover, by the time the Trade Agreements Act was passed, Hitler had been in power a year and a half and was furiously arming, Mussolini had been in power nearly twelve years and was planning the Ethiopian War, and Japan had been in Manchuria nearly three years and was getting ready to withdraw from the naval limitations treaty. These nations had no use for the liberal commerce of trade agreements, for they were already transforming their commerce to the needs of war.”

95 “In 1917, Etienne Clementel, the [French] minister of commerce (...) sought to perpetuate the wartime cooperation of the Allies in the form of a general economic bloc in which the Allies would be bound together by preferential tariffs. It would be the task of the trade bloc to allocate-and regulate—the price of raw materials” (Verdier 1998: 152-3).

96 As an ideal of the American politician, Cordell Hull displays few skills associated with politically “competent” people although he achieved his ends and remained in power longer than any other Secretary of State (“Hull did not possess the oratorical talent, the stylistic finesse, the brilliant charm, or the impressive personality so frequently characteristic of the politician who makes his way to the front benches.... Hull had the power that comes to one who is thoroughly convinced of the rightness of his political economic policies for peace and justice” [Hull’s Memoirs; Acceptance speech, Nobel Prize Laureates website]).

97 Hull: “In February of 1916 I had prepared a resolution calling for this world-trade conference after the war, and intended introducing it in Congress. Before doing so, I addressed a letter to Secretary of State Lansing, explaining the entire proposal and enclosing a copy of the proposed resolution. In a spirit of teamwork I requested his opinion as to whether he had any objection to my offering the resolution. He replied that some features of it might produce friction with some other countries, and asked me to defer its

before becoming Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of State. Known as the "father of the United Nations" Hull dedicated his life to what he called a "trade truce" and a "world peace"—two sides of the same coin.⁹⁸ In retrospect he is also the founding father of the WTO as shown by a letter sent in 1917 to his predecessor at the Secretariat of State in which the trade agenda of today was already detailed.⁹⁹ His arguments against high tariffs were presented on several occasions before World War I,¹⁰⁰ in particular on 8 July 1916, to the

introduction for the time being. Mr. Lansing did not have the broad international economic view. Accordingly I postponed introducing it until April 1917. Then, I believe, it became the forerunner of Point Three of Wilson's Fourteen Points, for I had discussed tariff and commercial policy with the President, though I had no commitment from him. Point Three called for elimination of international trade barriers."

98 Hull: "When the war came in 1914, I was very soon impressed with two points. The first was its terrific commercial impact on the United States. I saw that you could not separate the idea of commerce from the idea of war and peace. You could not have serious war anywhere in the world and expect commerce to go on as before. And the second was that wars were often largely caused by economic rivalry conducted unfairly. I thereupon came to believe that if we could eliminate this bitter economic rivalry, if we could increase commercial exchanges among nations over lowered trade and tariff barriers and remove unnatural obstructions to trade, we would go a long way toward eliminating war itself. After long and careful deliberation, I decided to announce and work for the broad policy of removing or lowering all excessive barriers to international trade, exchange and finance of whatsoever kind, and to adopt commercial policies that would make possible the development of vastly increased trade among the nations. This part of my proposal was based on a conviction that such liberal commercial policies and such development of the volume of commerce would constitute an essential foundation of any peace structure the civilized nations might erect following the war. This was the only means of providing wider access to raw materials, increased production, increased facilities for transportation and distribution, increased consumption and increased employment of labor throughout the world. It was calculated greatly to augment understanding and friendliness among peoples and nations."

99 "In my letter to Lansing I suggested subjects for the international trade-treaty conference I proposed. One was the universal adoption of the principle of unconditional most-favored-nation treatment. The United States did not then embrace this principle, which meant simply that a nation would apply the same tariff rates and commercial regulations to all other nations without discrimination, provided the other nations dealt with it on the same basis. I also suggested discontinuance of trade retaliation and undue discrimination; an understanding on maritime rights of noncontraband commerce; suitable action against unfair procurement of trade routes or unfair interference with trade routes, and against a powerful nation forcing trade upon a weak one; an agreement against subsidizing or aiding a domestic industry so as to enable it to undersell its rivals in other countries or destroy them by unfair methods; prohibiting boycotting of one nation by another; and the equal application of export duties and of the right of entry to the ports of other countries. I opposed the well known colonial or empire system and asked for the discontinuance or a virtually nominal operation of preferential tariffs and other differential treatment as between a mother country and colonies... I counseled the adoption of a reasonable system of commercial arbitration covering dealings between traders of different countries."

100 "Opponents of lower tariffs savagely attacked the Underwood Act, as if it were responsible for the diminished revenues then coming in through customs receipts. I hurried to the defense on September 25, 1914, less than two months after the outbreak of war, and called

House of Representatives when an International Trade Organization was mentioned for the first time.

"If I were President of the United States, I should... propose to the governments of all commercial nations that at the close of the present European war an international trade conference be held in the city of Washington for the purpose of establishing a permanent international trade congress... to consider all international trade methods, practices, and policies which in their effects are calculated to create destructive commercial controversies or bitter economic wars, and to formulate agreements with respect thereto, designed to eliminate and avoid the injurious results and dangerous possibilities of economic warfare, and to promote fair and friendly trade relations among all the nations of the world."

Cordell Hull clearly wanted to be counted in the "idealist" camp, firmly fighting against isolationism. However, he saw himself as a "realistic" politician: in a deregulated world American exports would increase and every consumer would equally benefit from removing tariffs while freeing international trade would lead to World Peace. Should the Secretary have forgotten to publicly balance these two series of purposes the President would have reaffirmed the priorities of American businessmen and farmers and raised prices while Hull was trying to stimulate international trade (Acheson 1969: 11).

To better understand his views, it must be remembered that he waged an intense power struggle as a local then federal politician. Dean Acheson attributed the causes of Hull's failure to his "almost fanatical single-mindedness" when addressing his "central political purpose, the freeing of international trade from tariff and other restrictions as the prerequisites to peace and economic development". To achieve this end, "he devoted himself to getting legislative authority, and then acting upon it, to negotiate 'mutually beneficial reciprocal trade agreements to reduce tariffs' on a basis of equal application to all nations" (Acheson 1969: 9-10).

attention to "the almost complete standstill to which not only the interstate but the international commerce of the entire world has come." ... While I could not see any immediate end of the war, I could indeed see growing effects upon the United States. "Our imports from Europe," I said, "must naturally fall off as long as the war continues, and no one can prophesy that it will end within any short time. While we are not actually at war, we are actually facing war conditions as much as or more than, in some respects, if we were at war." ... Several months passed; the war increased in fury and its effects on this country intensified, but still I felt that Americans did not adequately appreciate its meaning and especially its danger. On February 26, 1915, I opened a long address in the House by saying: "Mr. Speaker, one of the surprising facts relating to the existing European war is the entire failure of so many intelligent citizens of the United States to realize and appreciate its tremendous effects upon finance, commerce and industry throughout the world; indeed they do not grasp the real scope and extent of the war itself. Little do many people, especially in the peace countries, realize that we are passing through the most momentous epoch in the history of the human race".

Hull explicitly favoured a Kantian “federation of nations” rather than the 19th century “balance-of-power”. He tried hard to prevent military wars by avoiding trade wars. According to him protectionism and autarky led to conflict, whereas commerce was a prerequisite of peace (Curzon 1973). This solid political vision was rewarded by the 1945 Nobel Peace Prize for his actions to sign “trading agreements as a means towards obtaining peace”, his dedication to both “enduring peace” and “fair-dealing for all” (Hull Memoirs: 1724; Acceptance speech, Nobel Prize website). He had in mind an international system with one centre (which he called the “United Nations”, a global security coalition of states waging war against Nazi and fascist “desperados”), buttressed by several specialized IOs, among which a “World Trade Congress” as mentioned in the wording of the 1934 Trade Agreement Act.

Hull supported trade deregulation on several occasions including the 1933 London Conference on financial and monetary issues (a forerunner of the G7, where he pleaded for trade deregulation against currency stabilization) and the Montevideo Pan-American Conference in 1933. Lastly, he strongly supported disarmament at other meetings—the Quebec and Dumbarton Oaks Conferences in 1944, and the San Francisco Conference in 1945.

During World War II he set up various committees at the Department of State, each being entrusted to prepare the blueprints of a single post-war IO. Accordingly, each committee convened a meeting announcing an international specialized agency in the offing: The Food and Agriculture Conference met at Hot Springs, Virginia, in May and June 1943; the Relief and Rehabilitation Conference gathered in Atlantic City in autumn 1943 (the forerunner of the Marshall Plan and the OECE); the International Labour Conference was held in April 1944; the Bretton-Woods Monetary and Financial Conference started in July of the same year (Hull, Memoirs: 1654), while the Havana Conference on Commerce was scheduled for 1947. The latter was the only one that failed to create a specialized IO in the aftermath of the war. This was due to the negotiators’ strategy: their agenda displayed the very absence of synchronization between US and European stakeholders that Hull wanted to conceal and Keynes strived to avoid. The process started with the most difficult chapter, agriculture, while the first two conferences were devoted to “bread-and-butter subjects” (Acheson 1969: 73).

This was not the only cause of failure, however. The foundations of a future trade organization had been previously negotiated between the US and their allies in talks on matters of armament supply and financial credit during the war (Acheson 1969: 132-3). Such “invaluable work” was hard to achieve, since British and Americans had opposite views on several issues—like the “imperial preferences” to which the former were attached or the “most favoured nation principle” so strongly promoted by the latter. Although John Maynard Keynes headed the British delegation during the 1941 loan-lease

negotiations in Washington, and chaired the Bretton-Woods Conference with the sympathy of successive American negotiators (Dean Acheson, Harry White, and Will Clayton), he proved to be a demanding partner. For instance, he wanted to amend US drafts to insert “slippery words and phrases (that) robbed of all meaning... prohibitions of discrimination against the importations of American goods in Britain” (Acheson 1969: 29 & sq.).¹⁰¹

Years after the disaster of the 1933-4 London Conference, divergence on foreign exchange and balance of payments still impeded a free-trading world. Notwithstanding the loan-lease agreement of 1941, bargaining at the last minute over mutual tax reductions between the U.S. and the United Kingdom to allow both governments to sign the GATT agreement on October 24, 1947 prevailed over the broader agenda of perpetual peace through commerce.

At stake was the existence of a forthcoming multilateral trade system as a substitute to the bilateral and regional arrangements still favoured by the British negotiators over a universal organization when the latter was discussed with Cordell Hull in 1944-45. Europeans (including the British) always tended to see the world as a pyramid of arrangements (bilateral; regional; universal); Americans balanced between regional free-trade arrangements—like those provided for by their treaties with Latin American countries—and an actual multilateral process expected to facilitate US exports of goods and ideas.

While market shares were a major stake for big exporting countries in which trade-union militants were more expressive than free-trade supporters, quantitative restrictions were desperately needed by importing countries like India or Brazil, to the great disappointment of the American delegation.¹⁰²

Special agreements were assumed to ensure peace among signatories. The motivation for a universal system was to spread the political and economic ideals of the victorious coalition led by the USA over the vanquished, the neutrals or the uninvolved.¹⁰³ This cleavage is still visible within the WTO.

101 “Early in December [1945] the combined British and American groups completed an immense schedule of invaluable work on a loan to Britain... and a comprehensive agreement on proposals for expansion of world trade and employment including the creation of an International Trade Organization... Alas... the brave new world... we envisioned was to run into a block in the Republican Eightieth Congress... The Marshall Plan would prove acceptable... but lowering protective tariffs had gone far enough, and from the Imperial Box thumbs were turned down on the International Trade Organization” (Acheson 1969: 29).

102 As Clair Wilcox would have it: “Mr Chairman, officially this meeting is known as the meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the International Conference on Trade and Employment. More accurately it should be described as the International Conference on Quantitative Restrictions. No matter what door we are going in—whether it be marked ‘Employment’ or ‘Development’ or ‘Commercial policy’ or ‘Commodity policy’—the door where we come out is always marked ‘Q.R.’ ” (quoted in Graz 1999: 254).

103 Hull was already positing the notion of a “victorious coalition of the Good against Evil”, composed of a number of states meticulously counted one by one and entrusted with a

The full story of the ITO failure was recounted by Graz (1999: 236-265). Stafford Cripps, the British delegate to the Havana Conference preparatory meeting held in Geneva in 1947, refused to accept to barter imperial preferences with the U.S.-inspired most-favoured nation principle because Great Britain had a responsibility in protecting the nascent Indian industry. The US delegate, William Clayton, had his eye trained upon the domestic debate on the protection of the American cotton industry in the Deep South. Everyone was simultaneously taking part in the GATT and Marshall Plan negotiations dealing with concrete, urgent, and sensitive issues (Croome 1999). Between planning for the future and solving problems of the time the delegates opted for the present. According to Stafford Cripps, there was “imbalance” between the blueprint of the ITO and the reality of the GATT plus the Marshall Plan. Moreover, debates about the GATT were far from being as generous a project as to set up an ITO. Discussions on the Marshall Plan were linked to the ambitious issue of a customs union in Europe and its impact on the constitution of three monetary zones (dollar, sterling, and franc). In addition, the US delegates were divided over the best way to achieve their ends. Should they encourage the multiplication of bilateral agreements or favour the establishment of a single multilateral intergovernmental organization?

The Havana Conference itself opened on November 21, 1947. Its proceedings would last until March 1948 because an excessive number of amendments slowed the pace of the debates. Unlike in the 1930s, Latin American governments no longer supported trade deregulation. They joined the Australians and other British Dominions in their fight against American proposals. The U.S. delegates themselves did not tend towards compromise. They advocated the creation of an intergovernmental organization with an exclusive membership limited to those states whose rulers shared their philosophical ideals. Only twenty of them would benefit from the Most Favoured Nation principle and agriculture should at any rate remain protected. The Europeans depended on America’s goodwill regarding the Marshall Plan, and the new states had great expectations of a U.S.-led world economy. However, raising the stake too high in a limited field, as the U.S. delegates did, hampered the probability of achieving an agreement, the more so since the U.S. business community was not able to limit the risks attached to direct investments abroad.

mission to spread an unlimited peace over the whole planet: “our nation and all nations, including especially our major allies in the recent death struggle against the forces of tyranny, would merely deceive themselves if they failed to realize that they are facing the supreme crisis of all ages. If they resolve that the forces of peace, order, and civilization shall proceed unceasingly with the task of restoring their economic health and solidifying their political and moral strength, they will thereby become powerful enough to preserve the peace, freedom, and culture of the world.”

The Havana Charter must nevertheless be credited for a number of achievements: insistence on a dispute settlement mechanism; escape clauses (even though they looked too easy to use, providing no guaranty against free riding); regional trade blocs; and an equal electoral weight granted to every member (unlike the IMF and the World Bank). No other forum than the Havana Conference, in spite of, or maybe thanks to, its hotly debated agenda, would have permitted commerce to be linked not only to peace, but also to welfare.

In short, as early as the pre-war years knowledgeable politicians and famous economists were building an organization in charge of the deregulation of foreign trade, which would be endowed with a dispute settlement mechanism. Among them prominent personalities like Cordell Hull and John Maynard Keynes were at the roots of the project. Reaching an agreement was painstaking, though, because the interests and priorities of the U.S., Europe, and developing countries diverged. Divisions also stemmed from a “transnational mercantilism compromise” (Graz 1999): long before the creation of the WTO, the Havana Conference was the last intellectual and political attempt to combine the contradictory economic principles of domestic Keynesian measures (at their best in a closed economy) and free trade ideals (Graz 1999). It also aimed to bring together democratic and conservative thinkers: the former linked trade to employment, and peace; the latter were focused on tariff, affluence, and isolationism.

7.1.2 Weather forecasting before the WMO

The WMO was officially established after WW2 and rallied the UN system in 1974 at the end of a long journey begun back in the 16th century, when a cosmopolitan club of philosophers resolve itself into an international institution.

Ideas conducive to a world organization in charge of weather were publicly expressed as early as the Renaissance. Scientists of the Age of Industry later hoped to reach an agreement on standardized measures collected through dedicated instruments. They worked on weather maps,¹⁰⁴

104 “The first systematic attempt at preparing a weather map was made by Brandes in Leipzig in 1820... About the same time Redfield, of New York, prepared the first series of charts of hurricanes, showing their rotary and progressive motion. Adding to this work, Espy, of Philadelphia, and the British scientists Paddington and Reid were able to establish the existence of characteristic patterns of pressure, wind and weather as well as empirical rules for their development and the accompanying sequence of weather changes... The first weather maps based on telegraphic data were publicly displayed in Washington, DC, in 1850 and in France in 1855.”

and tried to discover the physical laws behind weather change.¹⁰⁵ In this race to improve meteorological knowledge precious contributions came from British, Italian, German, French, Scandinavian, and American scientists:¹⁰⁶

“The first network of observation stations is thought to be that created by Ferdinand II of Tuscany in 1653. His Accademia del Cimento (Academy of Experimentation) established seven meteorological stations in northern Italy and four outside Italy... In 1780 the Societas Meteorologica Palatina, Mannheim, started its activities to that end. A network of 40 weather observing stations was in due course established in Germany and other European countries and a small number even in the United States ... Each station was equipped with comparable instruments... Standard instructions for their use were also provided.”

At the turn of the 19th century, international trade and merchant shipping expanded. To improve security, information needed to be shared, and such was the goal of the first international *conference* on this topic:

“The First International Meteorological Conference, which took place in Brussels in August 1853... was attended by 12 delegates (mainly naval officers) from nine countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the USA)... Stimulated by the success of the Brussels Conference in the field of international marine meteorological co-operation, efforts were soon made to develop international co-operation in the many other fields of meteorology.”

A First International Meteorological *Congress* met in Vienna in September 1873. The replacement of “Conference” by “Congress” points to a growing interest among states on the matter. For the first time, a Government invited 32 delegates from 20 countries. They recommended the establishment of a permanent and formal structure, called the International Meteorological

105 “Robert Boyle, in 1659, enunciated his famous law on the relation of volume to pressure of a gas, the first step in understanding the dynamics of the atmosphere. Hadley, in 1735, gave an explanation of the relationship between trade winds and the rotation of the Earth. Franklin, in 1752, worked on atmospheric electricity. Lavoisier, in 1783, and Dalton, in 1800, laid the physical basis of meteorology as a science with their findings concerning the nature, condition and composition of the mixture of gases we call the atmosphere.” Other names deserve to be mentioned, as they clearly signal the intense involvement of a small group of countries: Professors Dove (Prussia), Quetelet (Belgium), Jelinek (Austria); Doctors Renou, Marie-Davy, and Mr. P. Wehrle (France); Dr. Th. Hesselberg (Norway).

106 “The earliest known systematic recording of local weather in Europe is believed to date from the early fourteenth century when William Merle, Rector of Derby in England, made daily records during a period of seven years... The air thermometer was invented about 1600, probably by Santorio... Castelli invented a new rain gauge in 1639 and a little later, in 1644, Evangelista Torricelli, a pupil of Galileo invented the barometer. At about this time also various forms of hygrometer and anemometer appeared one version of the latter being invented by the English physicist Robert Hooke in 1664.”

Organization. Its steering committee, comprising the seven founding members (individual and states), would become a “Permanent Committee”.¹⁰⁷

The United States played a prominent role in this progressive formalization (a US Navy Lieutenant helped to convene the first Conference). A University Professor chaired the first Congress.¹⁰⁸ Then a new body, “the Conference of Directors”, was created.¹⁰⁹ Organizing and financing these activities led to “the establishment of a paid Secretariat... whose decisions would be binding on governments... On occasion, colleagues from other Services helped him with the translation and publication of proceedings and reports”.¹¹⁰

During all these years, scientific independence was preserved. International Meteorology was efficiently handled by a non-governmental organization and led by dedicated scientists. Meteorologists even turned down a proposal from the League of Nations to accommodate an International Meteorological Bureau at its Paris offices. As the field expanded significantly, though, time came to find new resources and to gain more legitimacy. Coordinating, enforcing, and implementing a huge network of people, states, research and activities required the creation of a stronger organization with a new

107 “The Committee set about its allotted tasks in a highly efficient manner at this first meeting and also at the three subsequent meetings which followed it—Utrecht, 1874; London, 1876; Utrecht, 1878... By this time, the stage had been reached when the Second International Meteorological Congress could appropriately be held. This was convened in Rome in April 1879. Some 40 scientists from 18 countries attended... The IMC met at intervals to review progress and to take any necessary further action. Meetings were thus convened in Berne (1880), in Copenhagen (1882), in Paris (1885) and in Zurich (1888).”

108 Respectively, M. F. Maury, and Buys Ballot.

109 “[A]fter due consideration, the IMC decided to convene... a Conference of Directors of Meteorological Services on a non-governmental basis... The first such Conference took place in Munich in 1891. Invitations were extended to some 80 directors of Meteorological Services and observatories in all regions of the world, of whom 31 found it possible to attend, despite the now non-governmental nature of the gathering.” They met in 1923 (Utrecht), 1929 (Copenhagen), and 1935 (Warsaw); meanwhile, the IMC was convened in 1921 (London) and 1939 (Berlin). Previous IM Congresses were held in Uppsala (1894), St. Petersburg (1899), Southport (1903), Paris (1907), Berlin (1910) and Rome (1913).

110 “It was agreed at a meeting of the International Meteorological Committee (Vienna, 1926) that a small Secretariat should be established. It would have no policy-making functions and its principal task would be to relieve the President and Secretary of the Organization of their administrative and conference-servicing burdens. It would publish the reports and proceedings of the International Meteorological Committee and its Commissions, a task which had previously been carried out by the Members on a voluntary basis... While the Vienna decision temporarily settled the question of the Secretariat, the question of the status of the Organization was by no means in abeyance. The sixth Conference of Directors, held in Copenhagen in 1929, confirmed the structure of the Organization: a Conference of Directors, an International Meteorological Committee with an Executive Council, Technical Commissions and a Secretariat. But it also adopted a resolution, which was sent to governments through proper channels, on the desirability of the Organization becoming intergovernmental... It was hoped that... move towards official recognition would enhance the status of the Organization.”

constitution, which was debated during a meeting of the IMC in Berlin in 1939. After World War II, the International Meteorological Committee and the Conference of Directors decided to draft a “Convention”, known as the “Paris Draft”, which was revised by a 1947 Conference of Directors in Washington. At first, governments disagreed on the content of this document. For some, “safeguarding of the Organization's independence and world-wide character” was a priority. Others favoured representation “at meetings of the new body by directors of Meteorological Services”. Consequently, “four new drafts were submitted by Canada, the UK, France and the USA” (note that the same countries were at the core of the GATT) before an eventual unanimous approval of the final text. The new IGO came into being in March 1951, after a nearly 4 years of strife and hesitation.¹¹¹

In a nutshell, scholars who had informally met in Europe at their own expense since the 18th century agreed on framework conventions to organize the collection, standardization and dissemination of meteorological information. Consensus was reached very early on technical measures implemented with goodwill and few resources. Governments were included when participants became too numerous to cooperate efficiently. Scholarly independence has been lost but independence without resources offers little attraction to Academics. Besides, in such a technical realm governments kept a low profile and entrusted technicians to make decisions within the WMO.

7.1.3 *Intellectual Property before the WIPO*

While the predecessor of WIPO was founded by just 7 states, the current intellectual property organization now has 193 members. In 1883 the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property was signed; in Berne, three years later, another agreement addressed the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. Signatories of both became members of an “Intellectual

111 “And so, on 11 October 1947, the Convention of the new World Meteorological Organization was signed in Washington by the representatives of 31 countries... But further action was still necessary to bring this agreement into effect. The Convention itself stipulated that it would come into force only on the thirtieth day after the date of the deposit of the thirtieth instrument of ratification or accession. On 21 February 1950 the Government of Iraq deposited its instrument of ratification with the State Department in Washington. Thus, on 23 March 1950, the World Meteorological Organization was formally established... Although WMO came into existence on 23 March 1950, further action was still necessary before it would become effective as a new world organization. Steps had first to be taken formally to declare that IMO no longer existed and to make detailed arrangements for WMO to assume its appointed functions. This final action was taken in Paris in March 1951. The final Conference of Directors of IMO opened on 15 March 1951; it closed two days later, on 17 March. At the concluding meeting, the President, Sir Nelson Johnson, formally declared that IMO had ceased to exist and that WMO had taken its place.”

Property Union”. They committed themselves to respecting “common rules” relating to patents and marks, most of them favouring domestic law and some protecting inventor’s rights.¹¹² Such arrangements were provided on a reciprocal basis (“each contracting party must grant the same protection to nationals of the other contacting states”). They should be automatic (“protection [of intellectual property] is not conditional upon compliance with any formality”), and “independent of the existence of protection in the country of origin of the work”. Each convention was implemented by a Secretariat called the “International Bureau”. Soon, it seemed logical to merge the two steering committees into what became known as “the United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual Property”, in French BIRPI. In the 1970 WIPO chart, an International Bureau in the singular becomes the Secretariat General of the organization. At that time, the usual bodies of any IGO were complemented by a very original one, the “Coordination Committee of WIPO”, which unified the activities of the first two Unions (the Paris and Berne Unions). Other Unions followed, amongst which the Lisbon Union for the Protection of the Appellations of Origin or the Madrid Union for the International Registration of Marks. The number of Unions has grown from 2 at creation to 11 today.¹¹³ The rationale behind a new Union is the need to clarify and complete existing rules or to better implement freshly enacted ones. It is no surprise to see trademark, patent and copyright issues settled by treaties in 1994 and 1996 rather than being fully protected at the inception of the intellectual property system. The 1996 texts also cover computer designs and data compilation, two domains that could not even be dreamed of in the 1880s. Instead of amending and supplementing the Paris and Berne conventions, it was thought easier to issue a new legal document ratified by a distinct series of states, not all of them members of the oldest Unions. *Unions* not only conceal an absence of *unity*,¹¹⁴ they are archaeological strata embodying successive steps towards achieving the current WIPO.

The founding fathers of an organization dedicated to intellectual property tried to retain control over their creatures through “Bureaux”, and “Con-

112 An example of the former: States determine the conditions for the registration of marks; an example of the latter: “the inventor has the right to be named as such in the patent.”

113 In addition to the Berne and Paris Unions, the list includes the Unions of Madrid, The Hague, Nice, Lisbon, Locarno, Vienne and Budapest. I am not yet able to explain why some conventions are known as “agreements” while others seem to be named “treaties”; or why some treaties establish a Union and others do not (such as the Brussels, Geneva, Nairobi, and Rome treaties); or why particular Unions have an assembly of their member states, and other do not (such as the Strasbourg agreement).

114 Apparently, such complexity raises doubts about efficiency: it has recently been decided that some bodies would not meet any more. In particular, “Assemblies” now supersede “Councils” and “Conferences” that have a long history in IP, like the “Conference of the Representatives of the Berne Union” (WIPO, 2002-2003).

ferences” allegedly independent from states and able to impose rules on governmental behaviour. Great writers like Dickens and Hugo played a core role in organizing IP, alongside musicians and artists. They were then relayed by legal specialists whose legacy is a sophisticated system of ballots cast in “Assemblies” where voting rights are carefully exercised according to complex rules of procedure (WIPO website 1998).¹¹⁵ However this journey towards an effective WIPO remains unfinished. Past institutions coexist with new ones in a sort of cumulative frame with no definite hierarchy.

At the end of this overview of three IGOs we have enough information to come back to the research questions raised at the beginning of this chapter. Although tariffs, weather data and models, and intellectual property are very specific fields, they “exhibit an affinity for debate on general scope” (Verdier 1998: 104). Philosophical ideals nurture pragmatic policies, starting with domestic debates in the U.S. Congress, the British Cabinet, and the European Commission.

Given there was a lively debate among scientists, artists, engineers, and lawyers at the outset, political issues have always been intertwined with technical matters—work on the latter was justified by the conviction that the former must be included in policy measures. The high-spirited debaters are at their best when a new world is in the offing as shown by the use and abuse of French revolutionary and Constitutional vocabulary.

The genesis of organizations shares a number of characteristics. They stem from nongovernmental initiative by independent people, be they scientists, experts, or even politicians. They follow the same pattern—progressive formalization and governmental involvement—signposted by a change in vocabulary from “conference” or “convention” to “congress”, and then “organization”. In the very denomination of new organizations “international” is replaced by “world”. Lastly, the most important lesson drawn from the reconstitution of an IGO’s birth and expansion is as follows: they grow without state intervention, mature for decades or even centuries under the watchful eye of governments, before being reincorporated into inter-governmental affairs.

Let us now find out what the drivers behind such expansion are, once an IGO has been launched by first-movers and consolidated by diplomats.

115 This is probably the only IGO in which ballots are burned after having been counted, to protect their anonymity.

7.2 Drivers of Expansion

Expansion stems from contextual change and organizational dynamics. The former is external (there is a new division of labour; synergies emerge unexpectedly; welcome economies of scale are found). The latter is internal (regenerative policies are fostered; positive slack occurs; creative ambidexterity is encouraged).

The most visible sign that expansion has started is the enlargement of the initial mandate received at creation, which must be approved by member states (intergovernmental organizations) or activists (in NGOs). Stakeholders are allowed to raise a new issue when its discussion is supposed to be limited in time and scope. Allegedly, it will not be followed by a new initiative. As in the spillover process first described by Ernst Haas when he tried to analyse the progression of European institutions in the fifties and sixties IOs heads suggest a minimal extension of their activity from the core domain of competence of the organization to a neighbouring sphere.

In the past, for instance, ITU added other vectors of telecommunications to the telegraph (telephone, radio, GSM, Internet). WMO did the same around its emblematic meteorological services, with hydrology and then climate change. IMO protected sailors and cargo, then passengers, and long after that harbours and coasts, culminating recently with polar waters. Each step makes the process look like a hop-on hop-off bus route.

There is no other way to proceed, actually, except in specific contexts. For instance, the defensive strategy of NATO on the European continent has evolved into an offensive one in the Greater Middle East. However, when NATO soldiers spent time protecting human rights and reconstructing houses in Afghanistan, it was no longer a piecemeal process. This case is particularly telling: after the Cold War, military alliances should have been dismantled, but this did not happen. A Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) replaced the defunct Warsaw Pact. The Atlantic Alliance survived on another battleground with a completely new mandate: to rebuild cities and villages retaken from the Taliban. With the simultaneous arrival of new members and the decentring of military operations NATO went much beyond simple spillover. As security concerns demand reciprocity and encourage resource-pooling NATO, UNSC, EU, OCHA, ECHO, and Oxfam each expanded their own mandates in Afghanistan in a post-conflict and peace-making operations context (Egger 2017).

As the history of NATO shows, “expansion” is a keyword for a variety of changes. Mandate enlargement comes in various guises, with some constants across organizations. For most of them the number, size, and length of their activities on the ground never stop increasing notably, although this may not automatically translate into greater resources, e.g., funding and staff, which are just reshuffled.

7.2.1 *Expand or Perish: Varieties of Expansion*

There are four indicators of an incoming expansion of mandate: the launching of new programs; listing of new end users; adoption of new norms; production of new rules.

Typically, mandate enlargement starts when the list of targets expands. Competition with other IOs impacts the perimeter of action of each organization and the interconnection of issues compels a specialized organization to spill over at the risk of invading the territory of a partner.

The uncontested champions of mandate evolution are intergovernmental organizations, those that on paper are the less likely to drift away from the initial mandate received from their member states.

The rationale of the IMF came out of Bretton-Woods in 1944: guarantee the *stability* of the global currency system. It now concentrates its resources on monetary, financial and economic *instability*. Once the ultimate provider of the liquidities required by increasing volumes of trade between developed countries the IMF has progressively become the watchdog of economic orthodoxy everywhere, from North to South.

Likewise, the UNHCR itself was launched as an office of the UN headed by a high commissioner. It was established to attend *European* refugees after 1945, people who had temporarily left their homes to escape war. Instead of disappearing after the refugees were all decently resettled on the continent the HCR started to help refugees *outside Europe*. Later on, every new *assistance-needy group* was added to its list, e.g., internally displaced people, asylum seekers, migrants in vulnerable situations, stateless individuals, and (lately) economic migrants looking for work.

UNESCO, specializing in science, culture, and education, is less famous for its contribution to the building of school curricula or its support for research laboratories than for the protection of world heritage. The meaning of “heritage” itself slipped from material (monuments, factories) to immaterial (local cuisines) and from cultural assets (artistic and architectural landmarks) to natural resources (the aquifers, remarkable landscapes). Meanwhile, its educational mandate has evolved from conveying pedagogical knowledge to sponsoring the Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST). The WMO was initially dedicated to weather forecasting, but is now known for its climate diagnoses. The WFP established to treat hunger progressively encompasses all people suffering from malnutrition, in quantity then quality, and not only those who are actually starving.

Changes of perimeter require a change of tools. The technology for which an IO has gained its reputation is enriched. New instruments are invented, like interactive databases, certification and rating systems, auditing processes, or dispute settlement mechanisms. Instead of being considered a costly and

useless activity that only states can finance, research is now encouraged (as in Interpol, the WHO, etc.) and even organized (UNITAR).

This process can be observed within IGOs as well as NGOs. At inception Amnesty International supported people unduly prosecuted for their opinions and condemned to death. Now, it focuses on every sort of discrimination; it even campaigned for “yes” in the Irish referendum on the right to abortion. Emmaus International, born from poverty and exclusion in France now addresses trafficking in persons and migrations worldwide. Handicap International has provided crippled victims of war with prostheses; now it works for the reintegration of people suffering from any sort of handicap in society. ACF no longer focuses on hunger but works to prevent it. This is also true for QUANGOs like the ICRC. Along with the *victims* of wars that it has traditionally helped, it now targets the life condition of *non-victims* of violent conflicts (seeing it go as far as improving the sewage system in Kabul). In the same vein, OPEC was founded as a mere cartel of oil producers but recently established a new structure (OFID) to fund economic projects in developing countries.

7.2.2 *Mandate Volatility*

It is astonishing that an organization created to watch over treaties signed by states and ratified by their legal authorities can drift away from their initial mission and do it fast, sometimes at an ever-accelerating pace.

Despite precautions to set their mandate into the stone of their “constitution” (their status) and notwithstanding what Principal/Agent theory predicts (that principals will not let agents drift away from their assignments), IOs wander beyond their limits, making their mandate volatile.

Through anticipation, the process by which a mandate is drafted is full of control points. It took years to elaborate the organizational chart of the WTO, although most procedures and legal precautions had already been taken within the GATT. Typically, this is a continuous operation, with amendments and additional texts, as the “Acts” of the British political system and those fundamental texts inspired by them. This hectic process is nonetheless anchored in “regulations”, like the “International Sanitary Regulations” of the WHO, which had been voted in 53 years after the inception of the organization. It also uses “additional protocols” to the Geneva Conventions (as with the ICRC) or texts organizing the verification of nuclear safety (as with the IAEA).

7.2.3 *Mandate Enlargement: The Only Game in Town*

Rather than starting from theory, let us have a look at a real itinerary for two IGOs. Confronting IMO (maritime) and IOM (migration) is enlightening because (a) the former protects people at sea and the latter protects displaced people; (b) both organizations ostensibly lacked for decades visibility and legitimacy; (c) both expanded beyond their initial perimeter in the decades following their inauguration.

The IOM has gone beyond its initial mission: the resettlement of migrant workers in Europe during the post-war reconstruction of the continent. It now assists people departing their homeland for a new destination anywhere in the world. During this journey it has changed in both status and size. Once a side-lined Office, it has become a full-fledged Organization. Born outside the UN system, it eventually joined as “UN Migration”. While it once served the Global North it now also helps the South. In short, it took 50 years for a logistical agency to become a real institution.

As for the IMO, the UN created it after centuries of successive maritime regulations and 2 international conventions, one in 1948, the other in 1954. From a status of custodian of Maritime Treaties of the 17th and 18th centuries, the IMO became proactive after the major trauma resulting from an oil tanker going down in a marine reserve. From then on, the IMO needed to offer more than just referring to existing treaties. It has new ambitions. While its initial goals were rather technical and homogeneous (maritime safety and security, legal assistance, facilitation, etc.), its new objectives are more universal (protecting the marine environment, taking the “human element” into account, banning sulphur and greenhouse gas emissions, promoting litter reduction).

Each of these two organizations has long been insulated from the other by a meticulously drafted initial mandate: migrants and displaced people for the IOM; sailors, cargos, and passengers for the IMO. Everything changed with the 2015 Syrian crisis when refugees at sea and shipwrecked people (whom the IMO was expected to rescue) surpassed job seekers (whom the IOM was supposed to cover). As happened after the first disaster (the wreck of the *Torrey Canyon* in 1967) when new competencies were delegated to the IMO, the Syrian crisis was a shock, which served to jointly empower the IOM and IMO. Therefore, refugees who risked being drowned in great numbers in the Mediterranean eventually hoped to be rescued by IOM. Eventually, both organizations have been involved in protecting the environment of their initial targets despite their differences. They focused on sound waste management (in refugee camps, around coastal areas) and have aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

To gain notoriety and become more legitimate, both organizations now do unexpected things. The IOM has invented a “Missing Migrants Program” to

identify lost persons long after a wreck,¹¹⁶ plus another activity called “I am a migrant”, aiming to “promote diversity and inclusion of migrants in society”. The IMO launched new events like “the Day of the Seafarer”¹¹⁷ and a “World maritime day” devoted in 2019 to “empowering women”, far from just watching over sailors, passengers and cargo, as was the case in previous centuries. It produces films for exhibitions (like one in 2015 for the Greenwich Maritime Museum) telling the stories of both migrants and rescuers.¹¹⁸

Thus, both IOs have eventually enlarged their mandate although the expansion of the IOM is probably more spectacular than that of the IMO. Initially, the migration office was due to organize “*assisted migration*” (including migrants’ return to their country of origin and reintegration back home). Then, it started to address “*balanced migration*” (which would presumably be beneficial to the country of origin and the country of destination). This shift was followed by “*forced migrations*” (the organization rose against trafficking in persons). Now the priority is to sponsor a harmonious relationship between “migration and development” as well as caring for “*missing migrants*” (there were 1283 deaths at sea in 2019).

The results are clear: in less than 20 years (1998 to 2016), membership of the IOM grew from 67 to 162 states. The number of projects increased from 686 to over 2000. Expenses multiplied by four, and staff by seven (now 9000 people in 100 countries work for the Organization). The budget has recently reached a grand total of a billion dollars.

Such moves are proof of adaptation to a changing context since migration is no longer temporary. As an independent source of “benchmarks”, the new IOM intends “to be a primary reference point for migration information, research, best practices, data collection, compatibility and sharing”.

To this end, *new norms* must be enacted. The organization aims “to enhance the humane and orderly management of migration and the effective respect for the human rights of migrants in accordance with international law”. It also wants “to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants”.

New technologies are invented, for instance “the Displacement Tracking Matrix in use in 30 countries”;¹¹⁹ or the #MigrantHeroes social media cam-

116 “Even following the highly publicized sinking within sight of Italy’s Lampedusa Island in October 2013, the majority of the 366 victims remain unidentified more than a year later.” (IOM Website).

117 The 2017 and 2018 such days “have seen strong momentum in the industry to address seafarer’s mental health. To give further exposure to this important issue, our choice for the 2018 Day of the Seafarer theme was ‘seafarers’ wellbeing” (IMO website).

118 <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Facilitation/personsrescued/Pages/Default.aspx>

119 “In many countries, [the] IOM believes that migrants contribute to society and feels that the negative lens through which many people view migration needs to be changed”.

paign against increasing xenophobia and negative perceptions of migrants, which “highlights the many ways in which migrants contribute both to their countries of origin and their host communities”.

New programs are set up. Some are dissonant with the core identity of the organization. Within the IMO, the drafting of a “Polar Code”—entering into force in January 2017—is quite unexpected from an organization regulating maritime transportation. However, this new mission unfolds from the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Seas, or SOLAS, plus the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)¹²⁰.

Mandate enlargement developed from attempts to cross the Mediterranean on unsuitable and obsolete embarkations, causing a sudden and dramatic increase in 2015 in the number of victims lost trying to reach the Southern coastlines of Europe. There were not fewer than 3,760 missing migrants that year, and the death toll was still high in October 2019, some 1,087 migrants lost. Hence, the IMO (together with the IOM, the International Chamber of Shipping and the UNHCR) published a “Guide to principles and practices as applied to refugees and migrants” in order to enhance “guidance on rescue at sea”.

Of course, for just such a new sphere of activity, *new structures* are designed, and *new partnerships* created. Accordingly, the IMO has initiated seven partnerships, and affiliated bodies and programs by numbers.

7.3 To Sum Up

When intellectuals of different nations assume that a realm of human activity must be organized to provide global public goods, they convene international meetings. This eventually leads to some formalization and periodicity. Discussing intellectual statements is conducive to taking sides in the public debate. Debate, in turn, leads to organization: informal exchanges of views pave the way for official preparatory meetings; plenary conferences soon evolve into a permanent institution (Reinalda 2001, 2009, 2020).

Furthermore, internal pressure and a changing environment are conducive to uncontrolled expansion of the organizational units set and their respective activities, which in turn brings states back in—far from the founding fathers’ dreams of independence and transnationalism.

120 A noted on the IMO website “The Polar Code covers the full range of design, construction, equipment, operational, training, search and rescue and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in inhospitable waters surrounding the two poles”.

Growth in scope is made manifest by new goals, new norms, new techniques, new data collected, new work programs, new structures, new procedures, etc.

Epistemic communities gave IGOs life, diplomats made them grow, and governments eventually survived their turbulent coming of age by helping them to behave as well-educated adults working under the rules of international civility.

This is far from a linear process, however: regression towards initial mandates often happens. In the end, resilience is nonetheless achieved and then consolidated by the network of increasing interactions in which most IOs participate, as we shall see in chapter 9. This is not to say that every IO survives in the long run as it was designed at the outset. We shall examine this problem first, in chapter 8.

Part 4.
From Competition to Cooperation

8 Too Big to Fail: From Expansion to Dissolution

In the IGO world there is no Big Bang, just cosmic inflation. As in the still unproven history of the Universe cosmic particles and celestial bodies cannot expand off in every direction. Where possible they avoid collisions with other aggregates of minerals and gases.

This metaphor works well for IOs. Inevitably, mandate enlargement leads to mandate overlap. Whatever the rationale behind the division of labour as it was contemplated when the multilateral world was created there is now jurisdictional trespassing and political encroachment. However, IGOs benefit from duplication of mandate. Their staffs expect economies of scale, a strengthening of their collective position in hostile environments, and more legitimacy to decide without being reined in by national governments.

There is some truth to this belief. Confronted with a group of several organizations rather than isolated bodies, critics and opponents cannot easily demand reform and change of policy. As we shall see in chapter 12, this is particularly true in the case of IO networks. Consequent to the perspective of increased autonomy from states within a network, a troublesome newcomer's tentative appropriation of issues already owned by a well-established IGO is tolerated.

To explain such leniency, several factors come to mind: insufficient assets to operate adequately, so outside reinforcement is welcome (UNHCR and IOM facing massive and sudden migration?); uncertainty about the actual boundaries between the respective mandates of each organization, which raises doubts (WHO and WIPO on drugs?); lobbying of influential boundary-spanners in each organization to pursue some activities in common (WMO and UNEP confronting climate change?); sound common interest in pooling some activities to be empowered against their members (IAEA and FAO selecting seeds adapted to degraded soils ?), etc.

Of course, decision-makers are constantly watching over these areas to avoid a stressful overlap, *ad minima*; or, more ambitiously, to bring mutual acceptance. When useful, they justify collaboration through substantive arguments. When not, they pull back due to procedural constraints. To tame overlap they also pursue three strategies: containment, recognition, and nesting.

In the first case, staffs try to confine overlap within acceptable limits. In the second, they mutually recognize their respective identities. In the third, they convince any potential competitor to outsource them part of its mandate.

Most often the chief executives of IOs try to keep overlap under control, and opt for win-win cross-fertilization. They may nonetheless result in the generation of undesirable interference.

When do they accommodate significant others and if they do, how?

8.1 Mandate Overlap

However reluctant to trespass beyond their constitutional mandate chief executives and staff members may be, they cannot guarantee that there will never be any encroachment. Indeed, as predicted by the Network Growth Model, any creative expansion of the initial mandate inevitably raises concerns for the staffs of organizations operating in the vicinity of a historical operator—whether or not this neighbourhood is functional or geographic.

There are many concrete instances of such risk. In Iraq the IOM has competed with the UNHCR from 2010 onwards. Both helped the same victims (homeless and endangered people) but the IOM used specific means: it evacuated them to third countries like Jordan, Libya and Lebanon instead of settling them in their homeland. For instance, the IOM has distributed 3,500 non-food kits yearly in recent decades to displaced people in the Baghdad Governorate. Since January 2014, its agents have given over 105,000 such kits to the most vulnerable Iraqis. In Yemen, during the same period, IOM competed with the WHO to watch over the stock of medicines and their fair distribution in an Aden hospital. In the same city it fought water shortage in a traumatology department, a responsibility previously pertaining to MSF. In the Arabic peninsula and the Indian subcontinent the IOM helped the ILO and the GCG to press the United Arab Emirates to opt for “fair and ethical recruitment practices” of migrants from Nepal and Kerala. It also worked with the ICRC, an expert in early warning. The more solid logistics of the IOM relieved the ICRC once victims of mistreatment had been identified.

The story told by IOM operations in the Middle East is clear: its actions interfere with the daily business of organizations whose mandate is more in tune with the issue at stake (the HCR for refugees; the WHO for diseases; the ICRC for victims).

8.1.1 *Enhancement*

The rationale for not staying off a neighbour’s lawn is easy to understand: IGOs were established to fulfil a specific function: bolstering education or freeing trade. Should they succeed, maintaining complex and costly machinery would no longer be useful. Should they fail, they would pave the way for a more robust institution. Once their initial mandate becomes partially obsolete due to changes in their environment IGOs have no other alternative than inventing new programs.

A race to the top is therefore inevitable, because the constituency of an international institution changes more rapidly than domestic electorates do. Whereas states have captive citizens IGOs rely on their members’ goodwill.

Representatives who were hugely enthusiastic about the creation of a new organization to tackle emerging and urgent challenges like providing relief, fighting pandemics, filtering immigration, cannot support such activities when they have less priority. This phenomenon is accentuated by the lengthy delays in creating organizations. As a consequence of this time, the celebrated birth of a new international actor often coincides with the declining urgency of its mandate. The WTO, for instance, appeared just after the free trade norm reached its apex, long before the emergence of the notion of “fair trade” (Wallerstein 1995).

Secretariats are always looking for new ventures to fight irrelevance. Some just trim obsolete aspects of their mandate to replace them with more fashionable goals. As we have seen, the WMO progressively added the conservation of rare water and the mitigation of climate change to weather forecasting. The road was long from the 1951 conference of Paris (supposed to give birth to an international meteorological organization that was independent) to the then-current “Weather, Water, and Climate” section of the UN, but the legitimacy and popularity of the IPCC is incommensurate to the lack of reputation of the WMO.

In this process IGO staff members display a tremendously imaginative propensity to endorse emerging norms and apply them to their own field. Examples abound, from the “precautionary principle” to “education for all”, “food security”, or “creative heritage”. This is not only a matter of jargon, it actually pre-empts a realm of competence, highlighting competitors that cannot maintain the pace of change, and denying future competition.

8.1.2 From Interference to Encroachment

In a rationally organized world administrations should have no opportunity to pre-empt a field against a rival, since their respective missions were long ago assigned by their founding bylaws. Too long ago, actually: in the meantime, new opportunities have arisen through scientific progress, never imagined at the outset.

IAEA first focused on “atoms for war” or “atoms for peace” followed by “atoms for health”; now, we have “atoms for food” if not “atoms for art”. Expansive logic has worked as predicted. Onsite inspections of nuclear plants have been supplemented by processing of nuclear waste (as in radiotherapy), then selection of genes with radioisotopes (for the authentication of artwork and archaeological remains). Discoveries in nuclear physics made all this possible.

From time to time, shocks are inevitable and organizational bodies contest their respective competences over an issue. This is not unusual, though: police departments do this in every country, attempting to pre-empt a case

even when disputes over competence are detrimental to resolving it. This often occurs when it becomes urgent to intervene in a zone struck by disasters, military conflicts, or civil strife. Then, decision-makers assume that victims must be assisted, and there is little time to consult their peers. To put order into the chaos of rescue they must nonetheless rely on the best-positioned organization—an agency already well placed on the ground that can provide advice, support, and mediation. Such a foothold can be found through the UNDP, MSF, and the UNHCR or military/civilian steering committees (like UNISOM in Somalia). In an emergency, IOs pool their resources because they would have too few assets to be effective if they went it alone.

When the situation returns to normal, support welcomed in time of crisis is no longer wanted. Each organization reclaims sovereignty over its own field. The UNHCR gives shelter to homeless people; the UNDP helps local authorities with post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction; MSF care for wounded people; the ICRC assist people who have been jailed.

Reluctance to acknowledge unilateral encroachment, not to say condemning it openly, is due to the inability to make one principle prevail as no hierarchy has been enshrined in legal texts in the current world order (Peters 2006: 591). At that point encroachment is publicly considered an indicator of failure. Staffs therefore adamantly deny it, even when it becomes evident to outside observers. As we shall see in the next section, this stems from the fear of being either illegal or irrational. Uncontrolled overlap is a source of sanctions (for the individuals, whose career may be negatively impacted) and costs (for the organization, which must repair the harm done to peers or compensate them in future trade-offs for having been too proactive).

Overlap is conducive to intertwinement when the staffs of the two organizations feel their fate is linked, as if there was some bond between them. Such situations have been analysed as cases in “jurisdictional trespassing”, the last phase of a process of progressive overlap. However, de facto dispatching of missions may become de jure separation of competences. The latter becomes visible by default when the juridical order designed according to Hans Kelsen’s pyramid of norms is systematically transgressed.

To overcome the undesirable impact of repeated transgressions of boundaries, strategies have been elaborated, according to the context of action. They boost resilience and help IOs solve the puzzle of “cooperation”, benefiting from minimal inclusion but not maximum collaboration.

8.2 Survival Strategies

Investigations within IOs point to three distinct strategies: controlled overlap (or mutual avoidance); nesting (the smaller, more specialized organization takes shelter under the protective umbrella of a bigger, generalist one); and mutual recognition (they collaborate on an equal footing). As the latter option is by far the most common it deserves a closer examination.

8.2.1 Three Strategies

While incidental overlap due to simultaneous and contradictory initiatives leads to duplication and waste, *controlled overlap* eschews such difficulties. In this case, mandate enlargement stops at the doorsteps of potential partners' benchmark activities. Consider the WMO race to enlargement: it includes water management but leaves apart the monitoring of river basins as well as the depletion of non-hydraulic environmental resources because functional and regional organizations claim responsibility in these realms.¹²¹

Weak institutions become stronger when they ally to deliver a new service or a global public good. Beyond this broad framework, occasional association for a specific purpose in a limited span of time is tempting. Pooling skills to reach a common goal compensates for a lack of sufficient endowment and excessive redundancy. Division of labour is optimized. Knowledge is shared and private information reduced to a minimum. UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank do all this when working together to fight illiteracy.

Subcontracting may also help to fulfil an organization's mandate without facing excessive transaction costs since the "agency" to which part of the task is outsourced must meet the standards of the "principal" and accepts its terms of reference. As a counterpoint, the subcontractor will be fully in charge of one aspect of the joint program. However, when responsibilities are too decentralized contributors tend to interpret common goals with their own heuristics, which increases the probability that each achieves its own ends with no consideration for the broader mandate. On top of that, there is the risk that recommendations made by the agent will simply be discarded by the principal.

The second option is *nesting*. For the weaker IO a convenient strategy is to nest in a more powerful institution to which some experts are detached. UNEP does this in its relations with the WHO. Subdivisions of the latter like

121 In Sub-Saharan Africa, the NEPAD, African Union, International Commission on Large Dams and World Commission on Dams are expected to oversee such schemes, although they lack the hydraulic expertise present in the WMO.

“environmental health” are staffed with a couple of experts to whom particular tasks are assigned by the Nairobi headquarters and supported by the UNDP. Their mission is to persuade biologists and epidemiologists to adopt UNEP ecological views on sustainable development rather than address these problems through medical lenses. Detached experts must convince WHO’s staff members to launch pilot projects and test innovative hypotheses about possible links between ecological advancements, health improvement and financial savings (interviews at the WHO, 2010).

The IPCC is also a good case in point. In order to establish climate issues as an independent domain of competence this small group of geophysical scientists has benefited from the solid protection of WMO meteorologists who helped them gain a reputation until they were well enough known to receive the Nobel Prize. Therefore, an epistemic community of climate experts was smoothly converted into a new body without having to lobby to create a brand new organization. In the realms of trade and non-proliferation, national customs and the World Customs Organization detach experts to the WTO and the IAEA, respectively. As a consequence, the programs of these two organizations are slightly reframed to incorporate customs knowhow and their philosophy of random inspections.

A final telling example is IMPACT, the International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force, which is a joint venture between the WHO and the pharmaceutical industry supported by Interpol and the World Customs Organization. Although it does not even appear on the chart, this task force is housed at the WHO headquarters, and often considered part of its organizational structure. Consequently, it is openly suspected of endogeneity:

Serious concerns have been raised about how IMPACT, a body with a strong pharmaceutical industry presence, has been allowed to dictate WHO’s policy, especially in the sensitive area concerning counterfeit medicines... [M]any pharmaceutical-industry-affiliated groups took part at various stages of the planning and execution of the meeting, including the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), the European Association of Pharmaceutical Wholesalers, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Wholesalers, the Pharmaceutical Security Institute, the International Alliance of Patients’ Organisations (funded in part by Astra-Zeneca, GlaxoSmith Kline, Johnson and Johnson, Lilly, Merck, Novartis, Pfizer, and Sanofi-Aventis), the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association, and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations. Representatives of 57 national drug regulatory authorities (DRAs), seven international organisations, 12 international associations of patients, and ‘health professionals’ were also present” (Global Health Watch 3, part D1, 2012).

Be that as it may, organizations are intermingled: the WHO could not fight counterfeit drugs and medicines without the help of the industry, which in turn tends to strengthen standards according to which counterfeiting is defined in order to include intellectual property concerns.

A third form of strategic interaction is *mutual recognition*. Despite differences in purpose, status, scope, and funding, NGOs tend to build networks with IGOs. These networks hold “seminars”, “forums” or “international partners’ conferences” whose statements are endorsed by participant organizations and then disseminated via their websites. The network puts tremendous pressure on targeted IGOs and forces them to release all available information about sensitive issues. Conversely, heads of IGOs control the information they let circulate among NGOs. In this context information providing and processing is a two-fold process in which each kind of actor play its part.

Each IGO is flanked by a constellation of NGOs working closely together on a series of related issues. A sound division of labour eventually brings in a powerful advocacy coalition, itself comprising policy networks, activist groups, and epistemic communities. The multi-positioning of prominent scientists, experts, jurists, economists, physicians, etc. is a guarantee that demands will be heard and recommendations examined. Time after time solid connections are established on a piecemeal basis between NGOs and IGOs, even though a full organizational partnership is not yet reached.

The relationships between these strategic “partners” are both positive and negative. Although views are exchanged, the overall legitimacy of the spokespersons and the reputation of the organization on whose behalf they issue statements are increased. This is a sort of cross-validation of each organization’s claims. Of course, two constraints must be accepted by both partners: a minimum respect for the other, and sufficient open-mindedness towards the opinions expressed—provided they are conveyed with minimum honesty on the IGO side and with sufficient professionalism at the NGO end.

I think it plausible that the IGO-NGO cooperation nexus is the marginal type of weak ties that topples networks comprising stronger interactions. “Marginal” here must be understood in its primary utilitarian meaning (i.e., as the marginal cooperative relationship that gives in last resort its average value to all sorts of partnerships) and not in the ordinary sense (as “negligible”, or “residual”). Although a marginal strategy cannot bring full-fledged cooperation and will probably remain limited, it nonetheless serves the interests of all organizations, both governmental and non-governmental.

8.2.2 A View from IGOs (WTO, IAEA)

The WTO (for customs) and the IAEA (for atoms) have become really prominent after the end of the Cold War, as if both came to the fore simultaneously to promise a brighter future. Each puts “peace” at the heart of its activities: “commerce helps to keep the peace” is the first of the ten benefits expected from the WTO; “atoms for peace” are the IAEA’s *raison d’être*.

From the outset, the WTO has come in for severe criticism, something from which the GATT was preserved. This difference is probably due to a coincidence between the birth of the new trade organization and the emergence of a so-called “international civil society”. It may also stem from the capitalist nature of commerce, communism having lost out to capitalism. The new-born organization arrived just in time to become the scapegoat for any unfair distribution of economic resources between North and South.

The IAEA had started its activities nearly four decades before the Marrakech agreements were signed. During this time its activities remained concealed and it led a discrete life in Vienna, far from the headquarters of most IGOs. Although it dealt with the most threatening planetary issues (the annihilation of the human race) it did not cover ozone layer depletion or the greenhouse effect, which gained priority over any other challenge faced in during the nineties. Fame nonetheless came with the Gulf war, when inspections of potential nuclear sites in Iraq were under the spotlights. Moreover, atomic energy and nuclear weapons did not seem related to the major stake of the North-South conflict (economic development) while trade negotiations continuously addressed this issue. Lastly, the range of problems discussed within the WTO was larger than the specific problems raised within the IAEA and few scientists were able to understand atoms unlike the countless experts involved in trade deregulation, intellectual property, drug patents, agricultural exports, and access to domestic services. This may explain why the elder of the two organizations was the latest to be targeted by NGOs and less exposed to criticism than the WTO. Consequently, the relationships between the atomic agency and NGOs are less structured today than is the case in commerce.

Within the WTO a TRIPS committee is in charge of intellectual property. It is beyond doubt the body in which and about which debate is the hottest. The TRIPS agreements were so focused that the organization’s mandate evolved from “peace through commerce” to “respect via trade”, a much more attractive motto for NGOs.

The issues debated within the WTO behind closed doors and among governmental members only have been so divisive that negotiations long tended to be inconclusive. In the case of medical drugs it was difficult to balance the producers’ need to cover R&D development costs and the authorization to grant national governments of LDCs compulsory patents, even when medicines had not yet been grandfathered. In the case of GMOs used in agriculture, goals were conflicting. The precautionary principle adopted in the North contradicted the need for an increase in agricultural yield advocated by the Cairns Group. As for traditional knowledge, the dilemma was to switch from the merely individual copyright and patents to protecting collective knowledge and designs. Confronted by a possible stalemate, NGO militants pleaded for recognition of the specificity of the

situation in the South and promotion of indigenous and natural designs over global and elaborated ones. What followed was a compromise on intellectual property issues.

According to the texts, IP is governed by opposed principles: the “special and differentiate treatment” clause plus the “biodiversity/sociodiversity” clause, on the one hand; the “one size fits all” clause as well as “free trade”, on the other. This confusion is a permanent source of strife for member states trying to provide citizens with pharmaceutical drugs and vaccines at an affordable price. They also dangle between authorizing GMOs (so as to increase yields) and banning them (so as to re-use seeds year after year).

However, vagueness gives some leverage to NGOs. One step prior to member states unanimously consenting to free trade policies, NGOs demand a preliminary review of all possible impacts of the decision made on populations. They want to ascertain how and to what extent commerce can affect health, creativity, and income in the poorest countries. They reject the so-called “harmonization of patents” and support policy “flexibility” to interpret legal documents and treatises according to particular contexts.

“Working groups” have reinterpreted a couple of stipulations of the TRIPS agreements to make sure that freedom does not impede justice. This is for instance the case with article 27 on the protection of recent inventions and with the not yet grandfathered “discoveries” that may result from traditional use or new uses of the same drug. Other articles have been amended, like # 30 (listing exemptions to patent rules) and # 31 (framing the right to issue “compulsory licenses” and legalizing the use of generic drugs). This is clearly a vindication of NGOs’ claims: post-1999, several organizations launched a worldwide information campaign on both topics. The CP Tech website and the Quakers’ Training Centre, two very active NGOs in the field, were inaugurated that very year. As a consequence, eight years later the WTO could express pride in organizing the third workshop for delegates “aimed to ensure that the participants have the information necessary so that their countries can make use of the TRIPS Agreement’s flexibilities *for public health purposes*” (WTO website, 7 December 2007, my emphasis).

This achievement was made possible because the spokespersons of NGOs are or have been “consultants” for IGOs. Thus, they know how to frame their claims in acceptable terms for staff members and government representatives. For instance, as early as 2000 James Love (on behalf of the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue) expressed concerns for drug developers’ financial losses and suggested compensatory measures much beyond the conditions that should be met before authorizing compulsory licenses (as listed in the TRIPS). The same year, Carlos Correa from South Center tried to assess a threshold beyond which a new patent had to be registered and argued in favour of differentiated regimes of innovation. If a product is not truly “new”, then it cannot be protected by a patent, and consumers have a right to produce

it at no legal cost (Correa 2000). The following year, Graham Dutfield from Bridges advocated a precautionary policy of patenting plants, living organisms, and their traditional uses. This recommendation went against the reluctance to “patent life” in Southern countries without discriminating between positive and negative effects. Patenting living organisms could bring several advantages. It could limit bio-piracy in the South without raising legitimate fears among Western firms that research and development would become impossible for undercapitalized firms (Dutfield 2001). In July 2000, a hundred NGOs attended a joint Oxfam, MSF, and TWN press conference on patents and medicines, recommending a global North-South agreement. They deliberately proposed a trade-off between respectful application of the TRIPS and recognition of specific contexts. The outcome of such mobilization came as a surprise in Doha, when a 2001 joint declaration on patents and drugs was agreed upon by WTO member states. Even more surprising, on the eve of the Cancun conference in 2003, the WHO, the WTO and pharmaceutical laboratories sponsored an agreement on a compulsory patent framework.

This brief review of the unfinished journey to Doha shows that dialogue, mutual understanding, and insider knowledge of the negotiation frames allowed experts and scientists to reframe how both Southern and Northern countries perceived the TRIPs.

Compare this outcome with the achievements of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which operates in a field where “idealistic” and “realistic” views compete to frame the future. Although people in charge of NGOs that are dedicated to peace manifest their fears about proliferation, nuclear armament, and atomic weapons use, their voice does not strike a chord in an agency which is constantly under scrutiny by its member states. According to a constraining statute the IAEA must work within the limits of its mandate. It is governed by a precise legal apparatus in a realm where sovereignty costs are expected to be higher than in trade negotiations. Here, the two sides have been less collaborative. While member states converged on most issues, their non-governmental challengers contested the agency’s core policy measures. While the IAEA must promote safe and clean energy, advocacy coalitions called for a ban on using nuclear energy and an end to supporting the atomic industry. Whereas the former sticks to its mandate (the non-proliferation of *atomic weapons*), the latter hoped to reach for something more ambitious (the non-proliferation of *all weapons of mass destruction*). When IAEA experts debate about “safeguards”, NGOs militants speak of “disarmament”. Lastly, the blurred distinction between security issues of different kinds is conducive to unrealistic and vague claims (“no more nuclear powers”, a far cry from the fact that nuclear weapons are conceived to deter aggressors without being used); or demands for “responsible science” and a “responsive agency”.

When there is little room for interpretation—a point repeatedly made by agency staff during interviews—few opportunities are available to express dissenting opinions. In spite of this, an “NGO turn” is observable within the IAEA, even in such a sensitive issue as nuclear containment. According to a high-ranked staff member, “over the years we have enhanced our interactions with NGOs, even when their goals are in contradiction with our mandate” (interview, head, external relations, 14 February 2008). Although the first resolution on IAEA/NGOs relationships was adopted two years after the establishment of the agency (INFCIRC/14, 7 November 1959), it might take some time before full recognition.

Initially, restrictive criteria framed the granting of a “consultative” status—one step below full accreditation. Cooperation with “certain categories of intergovernmental organizations” was accepted at the very inception of the organization.¹²² However, agreements were signed separately with each partner organization. As a consequence, duties and commitments varied from one to another. NGOs could not benefit from the privileged treatment reserved for those IGOs that had no permanent cooperation agreement with the IAEA because they were too small to be addressed separately and too heterogeneous to be dealt with on a uniform basis. They were later integrated into the broad consultation process (GC (XVI)/RES/291, November 10, 1972). While member states held a monopoly over intelligence for decades, NGO statements are now recognized as a legitimate source of information (interviews, policy officer, division of information management, 14 February 2006).

Indeed, the dissociation made within the IAEA mandate between the military, industrial, and welfare uses of atomic science opened the door to a strict specialization of the NGOs that contested the agency’s decisions in each of these three sectors. Promoting nuclear energy and verifying its use are contradictory goals. Therefore, building a coalition in this sphere is more difficult than in intellectual property. To be successful, each NGO must focus on a specific issue and mobilize experts therein.

Debate is fierce on more diverse, common sense topics such as “disarming rogue states trying to produce nuclear weapons”. The IAEA is actually active in every atom-adjacent field, however slight this connection may be. Beyond searching for possible armaments it also checks the safety of nuclear plants producing civil energy; intervenes in disputes about uranium extraction; disseminates scientific knowledge about atoms; fights uranium smuggling; gives legal advice and contributes to the drafting of legal docu-

122 See the 26 September 1958 agreement with UNESCO; the 21 November agreement with the ILO; the 28 May 1959 agreement with the WHO; the 12 August 1959 agreement with the WMO; the 1 October 1959 agreement with the International Civil Aviation Agency; the 18 November 1959 agreement with the FAO (INFCIRC/20/23 September 1960). Later on, the agency signed agreements with major regional organizations (Rainer & Szasz 1980).

ments in the nuclear sector. The agency also contributes to research into cancer; it cooperates with experts in agriculture, museums, and hospitals to help them master the use of isotopes. The agency has recently been involved in selecting the most appropriate seeds for saline or sterile fields to increase crops in developing countries. More amazingly, “a series of radiotracer studies on sturgeon carried out in 2006 by the Agency determined how sturgeon accumulate a range of metals from water under the varying salinities that occur in the Caspian Sea and from foods contaminated by metals in sediments” (IAEA at a glance: 38).

Such ubiquity is ingrained in its mandate. Since atoms have a *dual* use so the agency has a dual mission. The enlargement of the agency’s mandate therefore has two consequences. Firstly, non-governmental coalitions that address such issues are *dichotomized*. Depending on the dimension they favour, they either target “peace now” or “cancer therapy first”. Secondly, in the domains covered by the agency scientific and professional cultures are *divided*—mind-sets differ from physicians to physicists. This in turn facilitates the proliferation of non-governmental networks, comprising the former or populated by the latter.¹²³

It is of note that this duality is also present for free trade. It brings peace and growth but also tears down obsolete economic enterprises and accentuates gaps in development. In the field of commerce, however, this

123 The way the IAEA presents itself is singularly instructive: on a single page (*The IAEA at a glance*), 8 logos are arranged in an unexpected way (from top left to bottom right: 1. Treating Cancer. 2. Helping Poor Countries. 3. Safer Food. 4. Controlling sources. 5. Cleaner Energy. 6. Safeguarding Materials and Facilities. 7. Better Products. 8. Nuclear Safety. The related abstracts describing each component of the mandate are arranged in a slightly different way, with the three military activities (4, 7 & 8) now at the end of the list. On the IAEA website, the major issues facing the agency are listed as follows: “The Agency’s Programme of Action on Cancer Therapy (PACT) seeks to assist developing countries in integrating radiotherapy into the broader framework of cancer prevention and control” (Annual report, 2006, 5); “Under a regional technical cooperation project, countries throughout Central America have used the sterile insect technique (SIT) as part of an environmentally friendly programme for controlling fruit flies. In addition to reducing insecticide use, the result in many cases is far greater capacity to produce and export fruit and vegetables.” The text continues: “A novel application of nuclear techniques is in the conservation of objects of art and the protection of cultural heritage. A portable X ray fluorescence spectrometer was designed and constructed at the Agency’s Laboratories, Seibersdorf, as part of a CRP. Following a request from the Museum of Fine Arts in Vienna, the instrument was used in 2006 to examine the famous 16th century gold sculpture ‘Saliera’ by Benvenuto Cellini. The spectrometer provided data on the chemical composition of the various parts of this sculpture in support of evaluations of the optimum conservation strategy... In China, four ancient production kilns from the Tang dynasty were discovered, and shards from them were characterized to determine their mineral composition. In Lebanon, Byzantine amphorae were analysed to establish their origin and place of production. And in Peru, nuclear techniques were used on Inca pottery samples to distinguish fraudulent from authentic samples, identify the place of production and shed light on the production process”.

duality had been accepted by states when the WTO was created and placed alongside UNCTAD and WIPO. To the great lament of most NGO spokespersons no such division of labour is contemplated in the realm of the atom. The IAEA has a monopoly over all nuclear issues, be they military or pacific.

Heterogeneity of goals leads to fragmentation of partnerships. On the one hand the Board of Governors intervenes to grant “observer” status to NGOs, but, using its own selection criteria, each department then compiles its own list of accredited organizations¹²⁴. Whether or not to consult them will eventually depend on the goodwill of the most active governments in each department. On the other hand, NGOs are divided between “militant/political networks” and “scientific think tanks” (e.g., “Institutes that deal with radioactive sources”). Whereas the latter are regularly consulted, subcontracted, and even co-sponsored, contacts with the former are avoided as often as possible. Periodical Forums (every two or three years) are but rare occasions to invite both sorts of NGOs to Vienna although only a small number of organizations selected to guarantee geographical representation participate in the decisive debate as “friends of the chair”, among them NTI and INMM that advocate a pacific use of nuclear energy.

Lack of resources and personnel also explains why IAEA staff members are not especially open up to more non-governmental actors. Although this restrictive policy leaves aside a number of contenders it has one merit: it really associates on a temporary basis those NGOs that may “have an impact on decision making” and help upgrade its outcomes (interviews, policy officer, external relations and department of safeguards, 14 February 2006).¹²⁵ However, it has side effects: part of the IAEA predicament is due to a protectionist attitude towards non-proliferation-avoiding proliferation is after all the core job of its inspectors. As a consequence NGO experts who could arguably be helpful in related areas like the violation of the NPT by the bilateral Treaty between the USA and India tend to be barred from access to the agency (interview, director, division of information management, 14 February 2008, Swiss Pugwash, 18 March 2008). Such obstacles to advocacy are not easily overcome: contrary to commerce, few NGO spokespersons have the capacity to force the head of the IAEA to take their statements into

124 19 non-governmental organizations have formal consultative status with the IAEA. The IAEA Board of Governors has invited twenty others as observers to the General Conference or to undertake specific tasks.

125 According to a note by B. Andemicael (18 April 2001, IAEA website) “The distinction between facts and opinions, awareness building and advocacy should be recognized in any outreach activities. Learning should aim at a full understanding of the problems and possibilities and at constructive action. Thus dialogue based on accurate information should be encouraged between the providers and recipients of the “education” and public information. The constructive role of well-informed and concerned NGOs as interlocutors in reaching the wider NGO community should be fostered.” Source: UN-NGLS (Non-Governmental Liaison Service) website <http://www.un-ngls.org>.

consideration. Except for the Nobel Prize winner Jozef Rotblat—not to mention Einstein and Russell, who aroused a physicist’s conscience about atoms—big names are rare in this sphere. The field is actually populated by hundreds of physicians and physicists, plus some legal advisors contributing to the creation of norms with the help of “papers” presented in academic style to local workshops and world congress audiences (interviews, Swiss Pugwash, 2008). The anti-nuclear advocacy network is therefore weaker than the anti-free trade coalition.

Even when knocking on the doors of the agency for the first time NGOs are not lacking in influence. Dealing with every possible threat and particularly the most dangerous risks (“as long as nuclear weapons exist, they will one day be used”, Pugwash Newsletter, July 2007), NGOs in the field have (or may have) considerable sway over public opinion. Even though atomic science is complex, the demands addressed to states and IGO are moderate (which governmental actor could turn down suggestions that “great changes in history have come through concerted political action”?). They are also popular (who will be opposed to “ensuring the continued moratorium of nuclear testing” and to a “complete prohibition on the deployment and use of state weapons”?). Calls for a “responsible science” are consonant with chief executives’ concerns about the future of a jeopardized world—a fear they have periodically expressed in international seminars with academics and NGO representatives. Experienced physicists and diplomats are the most likely to fear any loss of control over the nuclear industry. Memories of past incidents like Hiroshima and Nagasaki and long exposure to science fiction scenarios vis-a-vis “nuclear winter” give them the strength to act despite their age. On several occasions when campaigning for a renewed mandate, El-Baradei himself expressed his concerns for an ageing staff while the mobility of ageing activists is simultaneously diminishing. As time passes, people feel an increasing need to share their experience and give back to the world community part of the knowledge they have acquired during their professional lifetime (be it working in atomic or particle physics or drafting comprehensive bans on nuclear weapons).

However, dealing with nuclear dangers could balance the asymmetric relationship between the IAEA and its partner NGOs. The arch-debated problems of nuclear waste and a possible proliferation of on-site nuclear incidents have led to intervention from an increasing number of organizations. Whereas the security sector is tightly controlled by member states with little counterweight, expertise on atomic issues is so rare that the environmental impact of nuclear activity is a source of empowerment for members of civil society. Attractive for so many activists, “disarmament” is not even part of the IAEA mandate. This misunderstanding pushes the agency to keep them at bay despite loud protests because NGOs could overwhelm the IAEA as norm-setters and rules-implementers in environ-

mental and climate issues (interview, safeguards information analyst, 14 February 2006).

Comparing trade deregulation to nuclear disarmament shows that the success of mutual recognition as a strategy depends on the degree of specialization achieved by the contending non-governmental organization compared to its intergovernmental partner. In commerce, the growing focus on intellectual property issues such as patents, rules of origin, traditional property, GMO, etc. has been conducive to empowerment of non-governmental coalitions. Since disarmament is the only common ground between those that are operating in the field of security they can but envy such an achievement.

Hence, when IOs are highly specialized mutual recognition is an option. By contrast, being involved in a field where IGOs have more general coverage is an obstacle to influence. NGOs leaders may feel abused when confidentiality and concern about misperception lead IGO staff to manipulate information and declassify data with excessive parsimony. This could precipitate the withdrawal of activists from any fragile non-governmental coalition (interviews, IAEA, policy officer, division of information management, 14 February 2006).

This broad albeit limited narrative details the history of the relationships between NGOs and the WTO or the IAEA, as briefly described in this section. Can we generalize from these case studies, and propose an all-compassing rule on the interactions between any IGO and NGO?

8.2.3 *The NGO Case*

NGOs are would-be contenders of IGOs. They emerged in the last decade of the 20th century as global dissenters of the new international order. Their leaders expressed repeated demands for a more participatory democracy at world level. They even claimed that they could express the voice of the people in an internationally representative regime to come, hopefully. The success of their project depended on two factors: firstly, a switch from activist repertoires to more conventional forms of protest; secondly, the opening up of IGOs and their capacity to accommodate and integrate such new stakeholders' demands. In the process, a couple of trade-offs were negotiated. NGO executives promised less vociferation in favour of more consideration. In order to be accredited they became less militant and more professional. Conversely, heads of IGOs released classified information to limit normative harassment.

However, asymmetrical bargaining brings benefits to every negotiator. Despite the imbalance between partners such negotiations gain in saliency and legitimacy. Contesting decisions and statements is the first step towards

validating accepted partners and become less vulnerable to threats from member states.

Reviewing perhaps the two hardest cases shows that in the long run this coalition in the offing is a promising format for all international organizations, be they intergovernmental or non-governmental. “Ally or lose”; “compromise or perish”: there is little choice but to get along even when going it alone seems more comfortable in the short term.

Despite critical NGOs having obtained some toleration from the top management of IGOs they do not have access to every organization. Most IGOs convene joint seminars and forums. Some grant NGOs a permanent observatory status. Others accredit them on special occasions. A few remain blind to their demands. The tough responses made to NGO militants’ claims do not come from the Secretariats of IGOs, though, they are rather expressed by member states that are all very much attached to their privacy when bargaining in closed sessions.

As time passes NGOs’ leaders become aware of their limited capabilities. The communication battle is not as easy to win as expected: IGOs respond to criticism with particularly well designed websites, a new complicity with journalists, an increasing pace of publication of their reports, and a successful mobilization of their own experts. Whatever the efforts made to attract public attention in the media and on the Internet the real balance of power between a single NGO and a specific IGO will ever remain asymmetrical. So far, the form taken by strategic cooperation between IGOs and NGOs remains limited in scope and shape. It is “mutual recognition” rather than full cooperation.

Nonetheless, such recognition brings immediate benefits. Cross-pressure between governments and social movements, IGOs welcome NGOs’ help. They are no longer satisfied with paying lip service to an alleged convergence of views. Given they both face the same “principal”—the states as members or donors, respectively—IGOs and NGOs share a common objective: “speaking the truth to power” (IAEA interview, head, non-proliferation and policy-making organs section, 14 February 2008). NGOs make a frequent and public use of “naming and shaming” tactics (“acrimonious finger-pointing”, to quote Alasdair Young, 2010: 126) as do IGOs discretely behind closed doors. As their “militants” are dedicated to development or disarmament, they single out every member behaving inconsistently with Treaties they have ratified. NGOs militants’ harassment helps heads of IGOs to urge non-conformist governments to stick to their prior commitments.¹²⁶ In this sense, activists in advocacy organizations are objective allies of international bureaucracies when they abandon their advocacy stance and

126 As stated by NTI, “The United States should immediately begin working with the other Global Initiative participants and the IAEA to detail the essential elements of an ‘appropriate effective system’ for nuclear security”.

remain committed to multilateral outcomes rather than being ideologically aligned. Objective complicity is based on a trade-off between recognition/legitimization (of NGOs by IGOs) and an effective/efficient contribution (from NGOs to IGOs). Once this implicit political pact is enforced new collaborative opportunities may be open.

To sum up, the strategic partnership between IGOs and NGOs brings mutual recognition when four conditions are met: 1) NGOs become more instrumental than expressive; (2) they find proper access to the decision-making process via personal connections or member-state support; (3) they are considered as positively contributing to the improvement of such outcomes instead of “politicizing the debate” (the “UN way”); (4) they find allies and coalesce in an impressive NGO network instead of remaining isolated (like GRAIN in GMO issues, whose record is poor).

Conversely, NGOs may fail to become recognized partners of interstate organizations in three cases: 1) When they cannot find shelter under the umbrella of an empathic IGO; 2) When their coalition collapses for lack of significant lobbying outcomes or because the fear of being used is too great; 3) When organizations are not sufficiently specialized. In such contexts, some NGOs may die. By contrast, few IGOs do. The termination of IGOs remains an issue, however. Why and how, and how many do disappear from the landscape?

This is an important issue although not one requiring an immediate answer. One preliminary matter is of even more interest to our theoretical concerns. Is failing to control overlap the cause of the dissolution of an IO? In other words, are the expansion and consecutive invasion predicted by the NGM model the root of its obsolescence?

Hypothetically, such causal relationships could be explained by a dramatic change in the environment (the end of a war or the fall of a political regime, as in 1815, 1918, 1945 and 1991). A sudden decline of legitimacy could also impact military alliances. NATO survived the fall of the Berlin Wall because its core values (freedom and popular sovereignty) were at the time embodied by every member. By contrast, the Warsaw Pact disappeared because it had helped the USSR to dominate its Central European neighbours. Once free to act, they immediately opted out of any military alliance with Russia. Lastly, the link between organizational expansion and the death of an IO could be traced to dissent among founding states. The Axis Powers in the thirties tore down the League of Nations. The victors of the Second World War fought against each other during the fifties. The likeminded allies of the West are now fighting about hot issues. In the seventies, they put an end to regional pacts such as CENTO, SEATO or ANZUS.

In principle, a fourth factor could explain this unanticipated termination of an intergovernmental endeavour: states might renounce the benefits of pooling resources to avoid a long-standing imbalance between profits

accruing to them and the costs of maintaining a common structure—a recognized threat to the WTO and the WHO in recent years. However this last causal link is mostly theoretical, as there is no concrete evidence that in the real world leaders consciously calculate before deciding to withdraw from an organization.

In such cases, factors that may be either quantitative (the number of members) or qualitative (the perimeter covered) have here and there made expansion lead to disaster. This happens when the hegemonic powers and their clients can no longer support the intergovernmental structures they themselves have created. Such a tipping point occurs in particular when votes are equally distributed to every member, notwithstanding their relative weight within an organization, giving small and weak states a kind of power of veto. This might explain why the non-egalitarian UNSC, IMF, World Bank and IMO have proved more robust than egalitarian UN agencies (UNESCO, UNIDO), OESC, OPEC, and now the WTO.

8.3 Death at the Crossroads

What is the secret behind institutional endurance? It all depends on the span of time under review. The UN seems long-lasting when the reference point chosen for assessing its resilience is 1945. This duration would be less impressive if, say, the organization eventually breaks down in 2025 after 80 years of service compared to the ITU, which has already passed its 155th birthday.

Estimating that an IO has disappeared from the landscape is also linked to its core identity, which cannot vary following a change in name (the OECE becoming the OECD), status (an independent organization like the WMO joining the UN system after decades of existence), or format (a Commission being converted to a Council, as with Human Rights).

That IGOs fail is less well documented than the reasons why they survive many tough crises. One explanation for this lack of documentary evidence is the high proportion of security alliances among the list of dead bodies. History is full of enlightening stories about the rise and fall of international security coalitions. We have the dissolution of the third millennium Sumerian League after the Akkadian conquest of Mesopotamia; the fusion of the Peloponnesian League into a more encompassing Hellenic League; the end of a European Concert born after the Napoleonic invasions when the Crimean War broke out; the shutdown of the Warsaw Pact at the end of the Cold War.

The unification of ancient Iraq by Semitic invaders, the truce in ancient Greece after the confrontation with Persia, the peace of Vienna in 1815, and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991: These mega events entail huge

rearrangements of military alliances. This also occurs when hegemony is on the horizon, as with the “Indo-Pacific” concert to contain modern China.

For most IOs, though, failure is not an option. While it cannot be ruled out a priori because some IOs do fail and even die, collapse is a rare phenomenon.

8.3.1 *IGOs that Fail*

Although few IOs shut down, military alliances backed by an international secretariat and onsite inspection bodies sometimes do. When war coalitions do not have a permanent decision-making organization they may dissolve rapidly. The military collaboration of Iraq with some of its neighbours is a good case in point. Iraq was at the core of the February 1989 Arab Co-operation Council (with Jordan, Egypt and North Yemen), a weak body that disappeared after the invasion of Kuwait. In April of the same year Iraq signed a non-aggression pact with Saudi rulers to buy their complacency, which was as ephemeral as its predecessor (Gause III 2002: 57).

In some regions, establishing an enduring international organization dedicated to security seems to be out of reach because of on-going historical and anthropological divisions that can be traced back to centuries. However, even non-military alliances can also suffer obsolescence because they are too closely connected to sovereignty issues. The end of the Cold War plagued the COMECON. The rise of emerging markets has weakened UNIDO, which is now an industrial coalition created by less industrialized states to fight against advanced societies, seemingly a Chinese-led alliance of a so-called agrarian Third World against post-industrial Western Powers. This may be the reason why it is still standing despite major withdrawals in recent years.

In such specific contexts is it meaningful to claim that the Warsaw Pact or UNIDO have “failed”? Do such “failures” invalidate the Network Growth Model? Before going any further, we must keep in mind that proliferation is a form of expansion but not of the kind addressed by the NGM. In our model, IOs can be shut down. This perspective is actually at the roots of the model (once successful, they should close).

The addition of increasingly weaker members does not contradict the prediction. What could undermine it would be an inability to adapt to changes and to control overlaps. Even in such cases, periods of mega geopolitical shocks should be set aside when estimating IOs survival ratios. They are trials, tests, rehearsals or blueprints of a system in the offing as was the League of Nations for the UN, and not full-fledged organizations considered as established to last forever.¹²⁷

127 As observed by Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020, 9-10 “Global termination rates increased sharply during decades marked by broad geopolitical upheaval, with the highest death-

8.3.2 IGOs that Fall

Scholars agree on an IGO death/birth ratio of about two-fifths (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2018). For every three organizations that survive in the long run, two will disappear from the landscape. The ratio drops tremendously when military alliances are removed from the list: they only have periodical Meetings of the Parties (MoP) and no permanent organizational structures.

IOs are terminated when “their founding treaties can expire; they can be explicitly dissolved by state parties; they can be formally replaced by, or merged with, other organisations; or they can simply fall into disuse” (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020: 5).

Disarmament organizations fall into the first category (expiring treaties). This was temporarily the case for the New START Treaty and the MoP that governed it for decades until a US President decided to withdraw from it—a decision reversed by his successor who renewed American participation for 5 years. Note that this was not without precedent, since Georges W. Bush had already denounced the ABM Treaty (Anti-Ballistics Missile) in 2001 while Russia soon afterwards suspended its participation in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. To consider military alliances as international organizations is somewhat far-fetched, however. Few have a Secretariat and most rely on a handful of members (sometimes only two), which means that a specialized office of their *national* Defence administrations can effectively handle their activities. Logically, those that have passed away should not be included in the “death” column.

In the second category (IGOs dissolved by one or several of their member states), there is the Transpacific Partnership from which former President Trump withdrew spectacularly in 2017. However, a more confidential “Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership” replaced it just one year later. The US also withdrew in 2019 from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) that had been signed in 1987 by Ronald Reagan. Similarly, the US and Russia also left the “Open Skies” Treaty in 2020.

There are lesser candidates to exemplify the fourth and last cause of decay (obsolescence) while the third category (merging) is the most populated. In the last two centuries a number of organizations changed in name only. While statistical processing indicates an end to operations, in reality the organization upgraded and expanded its mandate. The new branding just signals that the previous one had some defects; but without abandoning the original

ratios (deaths in proportion to existing population) [are] recorded during the 1930s and 1940s (coinciding broadly with the Great Depression and World War II), followed by the 1910s and 1990s (coinciding with World War I and the end of the Cold War)”. However, “exogenous shocks alone are insufficient to explain variation in IGO terminations. Wars and economic depression may undermine many IGOs, but many more survive”.

headquarters, sacking the staff, or reopening access procedures there is no substantial motivation to consider this as a “death”. There was no revolution within the Customs Co-operation Council just because it was to become the World Customs Organization. The International Committee for Migrations has been boosted rather than degraded by its transformation into the Organization for Migration. Even though the International Trade Organization did not come to life, offering a better case in point for evaluating the death ratio, the GATT was a sound interim institution until the inauguration of the WTO at the same William Rappard building in Geneva. Formally, though, the ITO counts as a stillborn organization (Graz 1999).

Death is preceded by sudden decline, itself following decades of growing obsolescence. Taking the level of vulnerability as a key, this fate could therefore be predicted. The end can come to those organizations with members who are either too few or too peripheral. They are too ambitious, not specialized enough, or too political and politicized rather than technical, too new or too old (far from the optimal fifty years duration). To sum up, the main inhibitors to resilience recorded by scholars are “narrow mandate, low centralisation and small size” (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020: 7, 11).

What dead organizations have in common is the paucity or even absence of insurance coverage against unexpected risks. The bigger, broader, and more bureaucratized IGOs the more they benefit from early planning and sound hedging.

Authors also underline the role of temporality in the survival rate of IGOs. Longevity and a good sense of timing consolidate them. On the one hand, “newly created IGOs seem more likely to reflect current state preferences, whereas older IGOs would seem at greater risk of obsolescence”. On the other hand, investments made by the parties and increased structural complexity make dissolution less likely (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020: 13). A longer lifetime offers more opportunities to draw lessons from failures, activate feedback loops, and initiate adjustment policies.

Except when they become obviously archaic, the oldest IGOs are also the least vulnerable: UPU, ITU, and the ICJ have so far fought against the tide of technical revolutions and the proliferation of more specialized international firms, agencies and tribunals, e.g., DHL, ICANN, and the ICC.¹²⁸ They are those from which new norms and new ambitions can emerge, due to the scores of experts, negotiations and offices they harbour.

We are therefore left with a smaller number of organizations that may actually die: once odd cases are removed from the list what remains is of

128 A case in point is the ITU, which “has been in continuous operation since 1865 whereas later IGOs dealing with telecommunication (e.g. the Radio-Telegraph Union, 1906–1932; the International Telegraph Committee, 1925–1956; the International Long-Distance Telephone Council, 1925–1956; the Inter-American Radio Office, 19371–1963) have all had shorter life-spans, eventually ceding their functions to the ITU” (ITU website).

little significance. We must forget military alliances, first attempts at creating an institution, and temporarily threatened generalist IGOs or insufficiently protected risky organizations. To this list we must add organizations that change names or whose functions are now fulfilled by a newer and more encompassing organization like the EU integrating the 1952 European Community of Coal and Steel in 1967, UNESCO welcoming the International Bureau of Education in 1969, or WIPO opening its doors to the International Copyright Organization. We must also leave aside very technical organizations whose missions have been fulfilled by other IGOs, such as “the International Red Locust Control Service ... dissolved in 1970 due to growing tension between South Africa and Portugal and a group of newly independent African states that withdrew from the organisation to form an independent grouping” (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020: 18).

8.4 To Sum Up

In this chapter I have discussed matters of expansion and contraction. Firstly, strategies to control inevitable overlap have been presented and options explained. Secondly, differences between IGOs and NGOs have been explored. Thirdly, IO vulnerability has been put into perspective.

As for overlap, win-win strategies depend on two prerequisites. On the one hand, NGOs must *coalesce* to be interconnected and act together. On the other, IGOs must *specialize* and make a clear distinction between issues to address each of them separately in the most appropriate forum. Whereas states can survive without establishing permanent cooperation between them IGOs and NGOs must get along together to achieve their goals.

NGOs, in particular, should professionalize. They must become more instrumental than expressive and less militant than expert. When they gain access to decision-making via personal connections, or member-state support, they contribute to the provision of specific outcomes. They are nonetheless exposed to a high rate of transformation, creation and destruction.

As for IGOs, they must gain autonomy from states and divide their mandate into clearly identified issues. They must accept a division of labour with non-state actors. Besides, an implicit if not explicit alliance with them may counter-balance the power of their principals. However, the cases reviewed here put limits on their capabilities. The more responsible chief executives and staff members feel towards future generations, the more responsive they are to vocal calls for nuclear or commercial disarmament, and the less easily their proposals will be endorsed by state leaders or their permanent representatives who see security and trade as sovereignty issues.

Part of the non-issue of the so-called “death” of IGOs is due to a lack of enforcement power. Another part is attributable to a lack of focus when the imperious necessity to collaborate with peers and other international agents is missing, a matter which will be raised in the next chapter.

9 Coordination, Collaboration, and Cooperation: How Different Really?

If there is but one common factor across organizations it is the claim that they are always ready to coordinate their activities but less prone to institutionalize partnerships.

A benevolent attitude towards each other is driven by a quest for better outputs. The literature tells us any joint operation can yield synergistic outcomes instead of conflicting results (Biermann 2008, 2011) since “one institution can aid the activities of another, leading to positive spill overs, but an institution can also impede the activities of another, leading to negative spill overs” (Biedenkopf 2017: 652).

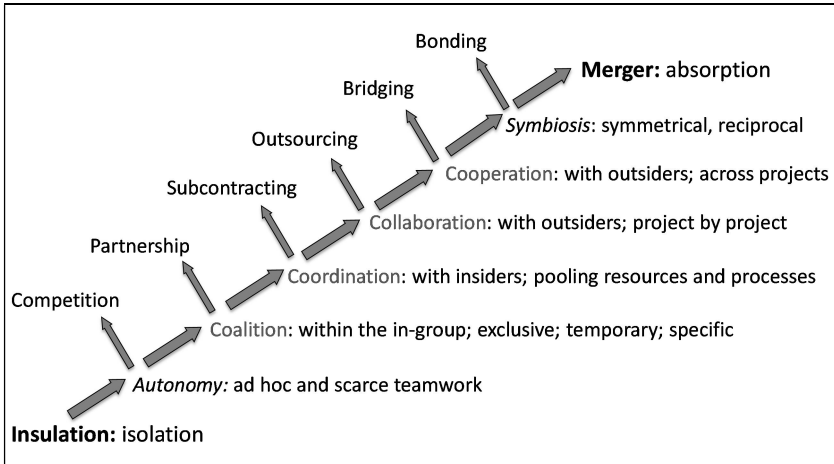
In the scholarly literature there are but two alternatives: either IOs compete or they collaborate. The word “collaboration” is misleading, though, because it is used to describe various types of links, which may differ greatly from each other. Suppose we want to be more specific, and distinguish between four modes of distinct positive interactions with other institutions, which I shall position within the generic concept of Collaboration (with a capital C): coalition, coordination, collaboration, and cooperation. How are they related? Can we find “negative spill overs” blocking their flow towards closer interorganizational relationships?

A figure (graph 7) can help us understand how the issue can be framed. Conflicting or collaborating interactions are not dichotomized, but gradually ranked from the less involving (left) to the most committing (right). At one end, risks of conflict stop Collaboration. At the other end, perspectives of merging that would make individual organizations disappear are on the horizon.

9.1 Partnership Models

Here is how to read this figure: the diagonal runs from the complete absence of relations to the disappearance of most interactions, with just one solitary interaction maintained. The two poles are ideal-types; one is characteristic of a zero-sum game, the other annihilates cooperation.

The minimum expected from a reluctant staff is a preference for “autonomy”, hence making room for some unavoidable rivalry (step 2). The maximum would see an informal symbiosis synchronizing moves between two or more staff (one step short of a “merger”).



Graph 7. A model of decision-making: Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, or from insulation to fusion

9.1.1 Getting Closer to Peers

The most significant phases of this trend are represented on the graph as the intermediary steps (those linking coalition to cooperation, via coordination and collaboration). So, we must discuss each sequence in depth.

Let us start first with “coalition”: coalescing with selected stakeholders can be fine-tuned, as was the case with electoral alliances so well understood by William Riker. The number of allies expecting selective incentives for their efforts is contained to a minimum (whatever is necessary to defeat rivals or enemies). If they were too many their demands would take an excessive toll on expected returns. Were they too few, victory would be out of reach (Riker 1962). Conversely, alliances may be one shot, or limited in scope, activated only in particular circumstances once a number of pre-listed conditions are met. They link like-minded countries only, and leave aside potential allies whose cultures do not match those of the core group. Examples of such norms are: the Copenhagen criteria for continental Europeans in the nineties, which were detrimental to Turkey; or Arab nationalism for the Arabs during the sixties, which made them blind to Iranian sympathy for their cause.

Next comes “coordination”: since IOs must avoid counterproductive overlap and hazardous interference, like providing aid to the same group of victims in a civil war twice while ignoring apart another community desperately in need of help. It may also be a technical requirement, like

avoiding a clash in the sky between two air forces; or, less appalling, downsizing transportation costs by sharing lorries or boats to send food and medicines where they are needed. Lastly, division of labour can dictate gestures of goodwill: the UNHCR bringing tents, the WHO sending doctors, the IOM mandating visa staffs, or UNESCO providing school textbooks. As with procurement, coordinating involves the pooling of resources and the adoption of common procedures.

Then there is “collaboration” (with a small “c”): the tipping point beyond which there is no return. The word is frequently used as a synonym for cooperation and even coordination, which does not do justice to its specific content. This kind of Collaboration is more committed: work is shared with strangers who are not operating in the same sector or in the same region. However, it is limited to specific projects, assessed on a case-by-case basis, whereas full cooperation occurs in the long run and across projects.

Lastly, there is “cooperation”: this tends to unite people and make them ready to address issues that matter less for them than for their peers, the so-called “general interest”. Reciprocating can be postponed to a later date and will not necessarily be proportionate or disproportionate (as in potlatch contexts) in terms of the increased value that will be gained from involvement.

9.1.2 Branching out or Going one Step Further?

Let us now examine bifurcations, a less intuitive notion. A crossroads describes a possible alternative to linear progress towards the Northeast section of the graph (“absorption”). At any moment staff may choose to depart the main itinerary. Depending on the number of IOs involved at each turn this could stop the process, delay the journey towards more “cooperation”, or makes it much more hazardous. Even within alliances, reinforcing a bilateral partnership may suffice to stop the move towards more coalescence with more agents. Examples include “special relationships” between the US and the UK, the Franco-German grip over Europe, or the Franco/British “entente cordiale” before World War I. Less decisive instances could be found, such as the narrow relationships between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia within the GCG.

It is always possible to withdraw from the cooperative process, as occurred with the Trump administration in the US and the Johnson government in the UK. Instead of improving coordination, agents may simply mandate an institution to do the job. For instance, the International Conference on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) validates drugs in Europe, the US and Japan; the Global Tuberculosis Program helps great powers to bypass the

WHO; the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is a national alternative to the WHO. As for other sectors, ICANN was until 2016 a private partner of both an American public administration (IANA) and an intergovernmental organization (ITU).

These are but a few well-known cases of subcontracting to secondary agents instead of truly coordinating among equals. Rather than paying the costs of coordinating peers or taking the risk of being coordinated by one of them, stakeholders may prefer to pay a lump sum to subcontractors whose mandates are limited in time, space, and scope.

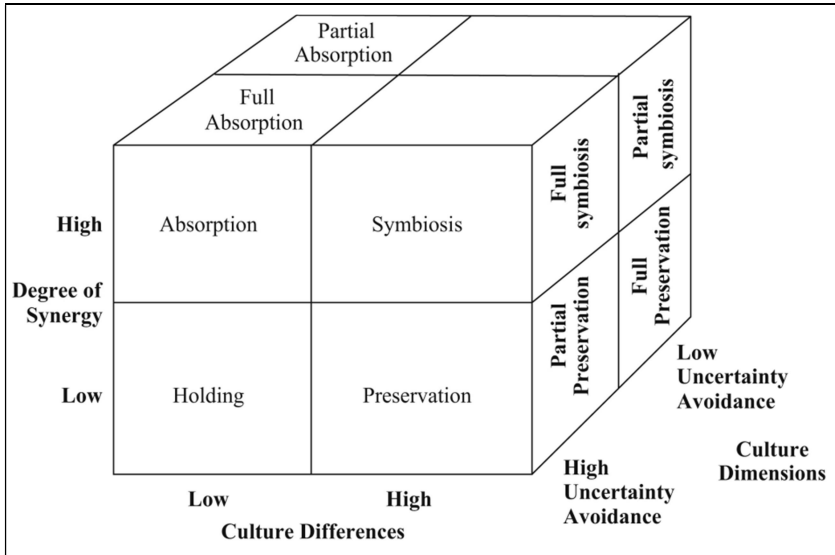
Even when agents are confronted with a seminal choice—cooperate or stick to more controllable collaboration—they can nonetheless decide to “bridge” their ties, acknowledging their difference of nature and divergence of interests but ready to neglect them when required. Bridging is more positive than other bifurcations but if IOs leave it at that, then a more emotional “bonding” situation will never be reached. A *bridge* can be closed for rational reasons while social *bonds* are not easy to break because they are also affective since they add the pleasure of working together to the sense of duty.

Likewise, “bonding” is both positive (one step *above* “bridging”) and somewhat negative (the satisfaction given is sufficient to remove any incentive to merge into a bigger and more powerful organization). This will undoubtedly allow symmetrical and fully reciprocal relationships, but it will also stop any move towards “fusion”.

One last remark: intergovernmental relations can be read with the help of management models, especially those that confront competition and takeover. However, such takeover is rare and quite limited to states. While Russia took over the Crimea peninsula, no IO has ever succeeded in swallowing an entire rival organization. Nevertheless, comparing interstate processes to managerial trends sheds light on some specific aspects of expansion.

As shown in graph 8, aspiring to teamwork makes staffs balance between an ideal of synergy and the reality of self-preservation. Empirical findings in management studies suggest that opting for one or the other pole of this axis depends on managerial cultures: a risk-taking culture leads to symbiosis; risk-averse one tends towards avoidance.

When profit and investment rather than power and influence are the standards of good governance, *seven* options are open to firms oriented towards privately-owned benefit-making decisions. My model of Collaboration applies to organizations committed to the public interest. It includes *eight* options from “insulation” to “merger”—and this cannot be mere



Graph 8. The management prism (Source: Weber et al. 2009¹²⁹)

coincidence.¹³⁰ However, the most striking divergence does not stem from this slight variation. It comes from the fact that, in the IO world, opting for any of these alternatives does not rely at all on cultural differences.

Moreover, private firms are less cautious operating in markets than public entities whose activities are non-tradable. While the former focus on successful M&A (“mergers and acquisitions”), the latter hardly move out of their comfort zone (minimum coordination and occasional collaboration). Reluctance among diplomats to publicly assume a strategy of fusion makes manifest a latent disinclination to reach a stage at which governmental control would be lost. Conversely, staffs at enterprises, banks and financial agencies try to enhance support among shareholders by bringing them into more ambitious and allegedly more profitable ventures.

129 Weber, Y., Tarba, S.Y. and Reichel, A. (2009). “International mergers and acquisitions performance revisited–The role of cultural distance and post-acquisition integration approach”. In *Advances in Mergers and Acquisitions*, C. Cooper and S. Finkelstein (Eds.), 8, New York: JAI.

130 Note that a scrupulous reading of Barnett and Finnemore’s seminal work on the pathologies of IOs (1999) would skip the “insulation” stage, because it means that an organization irrationally shuts itself off from feedbacks from the environment: then our account and the Weber et al. list would meet. However we cannot do this here just for the sake of symmetry: insulating one’s IO may not necessarily be pathological per se but rather a necessity to shield the organization from political pressures from the various particular interests—a virtuous rather than a vicious attitude.

Comparing private and public (as well as national and international) organizations is conducive (1) to assume that Collaboration between firms or between IOs is scaled; (2) to look for those incentives that are most able to trigger a collaborative attitude among IOs staff, despite caution when scaling up.

What leaders of IOs can easily accept, though, is basic coordination of activities to face a challenge like malnutrition, refugee crises, or transgressions of International Law and to solve specific problems like an epidemic or a pandemic, a natural or an industrial disaster. The possibility of closer cooperation is not necessarily on the horizon at the outset. As firms must protect their industrial secrets, keep their sales force mobilized, and compete for market shares, they proceed the other way around. They tend to see coordination as unnecessary and concede that cooperation may become strategic at some point. This is an obvious discrepancy with the public international sphere.

9.2 All in the Family: The Rush Towards Coordination

The international order is a complex and dynamic nonlinear system whose uncertainty can be reduced by splitting the real world into functional sectors. However, coordination may be recognized and practiced as necessary within a sector while not necessarily working smoothly. According to a study commissioned by the UN Interagency Steering Committee in charge of the humanitarian sector, “the simple reality is that within the diverse UN family, no element has adequate authority to command, coerce or compel any other element to do anything” (Minear 1999: 300). In other words, even when the need to coordinate is acknowledged it does not necessarily take place within a given sector or across sectors when none of the collective actors has the means to enforce it. Such obstacles could occur at three levels: within an organization; between organizations operating in the same functional area; and between organizations across different functional areas (a good case being the environment).

Expansion leads to a potential trespassing of jurisdiction. To overcome this difficulty without altering the architecture of the partnership or changing organizational cultures that are “striving for independence, conflict avoidance... and cooperation only when mandated or necessary” (Freytag & Kirton 2017: 572-574), IOs muddle through a labyrinth of coordinated programs and select the most promising. They also consider proximity a driver towards more cooperation, opting for a step-by-step strategy.

Coordination cannot be avoided in specific cases, though. For instance, it occurs when there is a strict division of labour and resources. Then, each

stakeholder brings in their own assets and decides whether to share private information. It is also the rule when organizations are branches of the same overarching system, as the UN and the EU are for their respective agencies or NATO with its regional commands. Sharing information and cultural values, as well as avoiding overlap are the two main drivers of coordination.

Keeping this preliminary warning in mind, we can now examine the process of coordination within the UN, which is both the oldest and the most formalized. We shall then move onto the EU but skip NATO (because in a military organization coordination is taken for granted).

9.2.1 *The UN System*

Coordination is serious business within the UN. The various UN officers in charge meet regularly, devoting considerable time to the mutual adjustment of various specialized agencies. They do this through the regional headquarters of the UNDP, which accommodates periodical interagency consultation meetings. Upstream, a “Bureau for the Prepcoms” coordinates the work of the preparatory committees (the BGLS Guide for NGOs 2003: 23). This shows how challenging “simple” coordination can be when coordinators themselves have to be coordinated.

There is at least one domain where cooperation is more or less automatic: organizing joint conferences, like the Earth summit, the Rio Conference, and world symposiums on women, climate, AIDS, biodiversity, etc. This is of course a privilege of the UN system. Nevertheless, several non-UN and even non-governmental organizations join UN agencies in these ventures. The private sector is invited to contribute, bringing ideas, funds, and products, as was the case during the “Partners for Development Summit” held by UNCTAD in 1998. This same organization has also sponsored country conferences (the 1995 summit on Uzbekistan jointly organized with UNDP and UNIDO) and global summits (the 1999 “World Alliance of Cities Against poverty” co-sponsored by UNDP and HABITAT) (Weiss, Forsythe & Coate 2019: 251). Interestingly, the intense UN activity in the coordination business seems proportionate to its decaying operational capability since the WTO was established. As it is more than a “routine” exchange of views this kind of collaborative framework is called “partnership” (Mezzalama & Ouedraogo 1999). Yet, as is well known, partnerships are clearly limited and do not necessarily translate into inter-organizational cooperation.

Another strategy of mechanical cooperation is best described as “harmonization” of procedures, statistical methods, and uses of emblems, logos, and standards. Harmonization may either be an outward-oriented partnership or an inward-directed harmonization. Nevertheless, these schemes resemble

those collaborative processes that fall short of full-fledged cooperation. As mentioned in the Joint Inspection Unit 1999 report:

“Inspectors wish to underline... that sharing information and harmonizing policies and procedures should not necessarily lead to the adoption of one single set of standard guidelines for the whole United Nations system. In fact, many agencies caution that the diversity in their mandates and activities would probably not allow them to agree on anything but very general principles, and that excessively rigid procedures must be avoided at all costs. Others, however, stress the need for some common point of reference from which each Organization can make an appropriate decision.”

From the way the UN system handles its coordination problems we can infer that some agencies are created to coordinate other agencies, operations, and programs, but each eventually fails “to serve as an effective system-wide coordinating mechanism” through a lack of adequate funding.

At that point, coordination units tend to become super think tanks. Although it could coordinate other IGOs like the Organization of American States (OAS), UNEP and its predecessor (the Commission on Sustainable Development or CSD) were “superimposed on existing inter-organizational systems”.¹³¹ This is why “neither UNEP nor CSD were given primary responsibility to take on operational functions that might interfere with the work of others”, say, UNDP or the WB (Weiss, Forsythe & Coate 2019: 254-5).

Coordinating agencies are not cooperative organizations because they are deprived of any means to implement collective decisions. Having few resources of their own, they only play a “performative” or symbolic role, as does UNCTAD in the face of the more powerful WTO (Finger & Magarinos-Ruchat 2003). Clearly, the lesson to be drawn from the UN experience is that cooperation is an asymmetrical activity. As “coordinating” agencies UNEP and to a lesser extent UNDP are less powerful than their “cooperative” partners (the World Bank, the International Maritime Organization, the UN regional economic and social commissions, etc.).

Coordination occurs as a cascade with several levels of decision-making. Each level has its own interagency task Force. This is a pragmatic, efficient, informal way for IOs to adjust to each other. Worthy of mention here is the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on NCDs (UNIATF), which superposes informal coordination on formal mechanisms and adds another layer—the “Friends of the Task Force”—on top of the system. Or the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics, which brings together the FAO, ILO, UNHCR, UNESCO, WIPO, and the WHO to coordinate their joint tasks in cloning, experimenting on foetuses (and animals), trafficking human organs, attributing intellectual property rights to “inventors”, etc. In this system

131 A 1996 coordination program with the UN “suggests the establishment and monitoring of effective collaboration and coordination mechanisms among the OAS, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and other bodies”.

“Associate Members” have a minor status, although some (like the WTO, INTERPOL, the OESC, the CoE, or the World Islamic Organization) can play a major role when their assistance is requested.

Within the UN system there is a Global Migration Group, which has a telling and rather smart motto (“acting together in a world on the move”).¹³² Collaboration, as understood in this book, is also of the essence for the IOM, notably with the UNHCR¹³³ or the EU, with which a strategic dialogue on global immigration was launched in February 2016, not to forget a partnership with Italy in Lebanon where a joint committee of six psychologists have evaluated the mental needs of Syrian children in the refugee camps.¹³⁴

Given such recurrent problems always plague the same regions (the Sahel, Tropical Africa, the Caribbean, Palestinian territories, the Caucasus, etc.), the United Nations’ collaborative frameworks survive long after the incident that brought them into existence. After a hurricane, an earthquake, or a drought the collaborative pattern is consolidated, and it will continue to evolve in the long run.

The same could be said of the European Union, partly modelled on the UN and partly original.

9.2.2 *The EU Model*

Despite being cherished, coordination does not work efficiently everywhere in all circumstances. As an example, one could take the reform package submitted to the EU council with its 300 or so technical measures to be adopted which then became the Single European Act (March & Olsen 1998: 956). Scholars mention a competency trap within which professionals become more and more efficient but remain so unaware of change in their environment that their activities tend to become obsolete.

The EU is not the only “European” institution confronted by the challenge of coordination. This also proves a nightmare for bodies like the UN/EU

132 The story is told on the IOM website: “The GMG grew out of an existing inter-agency group, the Geneva Migration Group, which was established in April 2003 by the heads of IOM, ILO, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNHCR and UNODC. In early 2006 membership in the Geneva Migration Group was expanded to include UNDESA, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank. The Geneva Migration Group's Terms of Reference were updated, and it was renamed the "Global Migration Group". In November 2007 the GMG admitted a further four members—UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Regional Commissions and UNITAR. In 2010, WHO and UN Women were and in 2014 FAO and UNU were admitted as members, bringing the total GMG membership to 18 agencies.”

133 Two IMO programs in 10 are joint programs (humanitarian urgency with the HCR; fight against trafficking in persons with UNODC). Most partnerships are coordinated by an agency like the “Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons” or the “UNHCR Partnership in Action initiative” (PARinAC).

134 <http://www.psychosocialet.net/home.php>

(ESCWA, ECHO, etc.). ESCWA monitors a number of operations in the Middle East. Its “Statistics Coordination Unit coordinates the activities of the ‘Comparable Statistics for Improved Decision-Making’ subprogram... in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and other United Nations international and regional agencies.” (ESCWA website). For ECHO, created in 1992 to harmonize work done thus far by distinct administrations under various chapters like “urgency” or “food programs”, coordination is engraved into the marble of its acronym (i.e. “coordination of humanitarian affairs”). However, to select the end users that will contractually benefit from European aid, ECHO must pass through a coordination agency to which a number of activities are outsourced. The 83 NGOs encompassed in VOICE delegate it their power to lobby European institutions. As a counterpoint, when contracting with VOICE its Secretariat quickly immerses them in European Humanitarian culture through training sessions and information seminars. Nonetheless, few NGOs (about 30) can access the working committee that oversees the Framework Partnership Agreement with the EU (Egger 2013: 13-15).

9.2.3 UN + EU: Ineffective Coordination?

In a country crisis like the one in Somalia as many as 9 European bodies and agencies must be coordinated (vs. 18 UN organizations)¹³⁵: ECHO, EEAS, EUCAP Nestor, EUNA VFOR, EUTM, the Office of the Special Envoy to Somalia, and the Office of the Special Representative of the EU. With so many stakeholders, coordination is of the essence. Here, “the key coordination mechanism is the cluster system... Eight clusters are active in Somalia: Food Security, Education, Health, Protection, Logistics, Nutrition, Shelter, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. Inter-cluster coordination is ensured by a ‘central inter-cluster working group’ led by ECHO, as well as ‘comprehensive approach meetings’ ” (Egger 2013: 24).

The lessons to draw from Somalia (since 1995, then 2007) are confusing. On the one hand, coordination seems unavoidable; on the other, it is not effective. As interviews of agents on the ground show “the lack of effective coordination is due to the absence of a legitimate coordinating body, a clear roadmap and inter-institutional rivalries, which have led to the multiplication of small-scale coordination mechanisms that mainly recruit via co-optation” (Egger 2016: 23-24).¹³⁶

135 FAO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFP, UN-Habitat, UN-Women, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, the Office of the HC/RC, United Nations Department of Political Affairs, UNPOS, and UNSOM (a 2016: 17).

136 “Diplomats and UN staff point out that coordination is hindered, not by the lack of coordination mechanisms, but rather by the plethora of committees, clubs and working groups: ‘In Somalia, there are several issues. We cannot say that there is no coordination,

So much criticism of coordination mechanisms understood as a waste of rare assets shows that the return on investment is not sufficient to legitimize the efforts made to accept being coordinated by others or to pay the cost of coordinating others. Therefore, scaling teamwork up to reap the benefit of a more demanding involvement may become a serious option.¹³⁷

9.3 Accommodating Strangers: Occasional Collaboration

Assuming that collaboration entails additional costs before providing uncertain benefits caution is a logical option for heads of IOs. Awareness of the need to find external support is compensated by prudence when establishing new partnerships.

Why do these collaborative processes go beyond coordination, despite the UN exhortation to favour this minimum form of consultation? This is due to the necessary inclusion of non-UN bodies, as is the case with the licit and illicit drug trade. Success would be beyond reach without the collaboration between the World Customs Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, and International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) “in action(s) targeting the online sale of counterfeit and illegal medicines”¹³⁸. Without effective border control, calls for reinforcement of the anti-drug laws would be doomed to fail.

Whether staff like it or not, collaboration cannot be avoided when things get out of control—as in a pandemic—or when the consumption of drugs

yet coordination is very protean. There are a worrying number of coordination structures’.” Coordination “requires a lot of capacities and a lot of time: there are monthly cluster meetings in Nairobi, and bi-weekly meetings in Mogadishu, in Somaliland and in Puntland. Therefore small understaffed organizations cannot afford to spend their time in cluster meetings” (Egger 2013: 24-24)

137 Note that the other alternative is to rely on informal teamwork “Given the proliferation of coordination structures, distrust among partners, inter-institutional rivalry and the exclusive nature of formal coordination mechanisms, most actors rely on informal and inter-personal relationships to organise their activities. Informal cooperation is perceived as more intense and effective because it relies on a shared understanding of the issues at stake, a common identity and values and the recognition that cooperation can be a useful way of solving problems” (Egger 2016 b: 25).

138 “Operation Pangea III (5-12 October 2010) is the largest Internet-based action of its kind in support of the International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT). It was coordinated by INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Permanent Forum of International Pharmaceutical Crime (PFIPC), the Heads of Medicines Agencies; Working Group of Enforcement Officers (HMA WGEO), the pharmaceutical industry and the electronic payments industry”. Major non-UN IOs include: the IMF, the WB, the WTO, the EU, the CoE, the OES, and NATO).

suddenly spikes among specific populations. The accelerated frequency of emergencies operates as a driver towards more permanent collaboration. They are prerequisites to unconditional cooperation at later stages.

When their respective perimeters occasionally overlap IOs collaborate on an ad hoc basis. In times of crisis, they launch a joint “operation” to which a nickname (like Pangea) is assigned. This is not the end of the story, however. They also have the structural ability to be part of permanent sets of organizations, e.g., in health, an issue that will be addressed in the next section.

9.3.1 Crises, Projects: One-Shot Partnerships

2019-2023 saw the world battered by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. At its height, organizations that had very scarcely or never worked together joined forces in helping people and the economy survive. A world system for public health exists. Its numerous bodies are centred around the WHO and its peer veterinary organization, the OIE (the World Organization for Animal Health).

Some units operating in fields very loosely related to health are unsurprisingly collaborating with these two historic pillars of the health community. Specialized branches of the FAO working on the impact of agriculture, fishing, and forestry on health, as well as hygiene, are jointly supervised by the FAO and the WHO;¹³⁹ the IAEA, which oversees radiotherapy and the sterilization of insects carrying viruses, is focused on radioactivity after a nuclear catastrophe. During the 2011 Fukushima incident, IAEA agents were the first arrived on the ground. Fund-raisers like UNAIDS, the UN Fund to fight Pandemics or the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis with its Global Partnership initiative work together. Others are even more distant from epidemics although their help is needed from time to time. Such is the case with the World Bank, which lends money to build hospitals; the ILO, which sets workers’ rights to health; UNICEF, which ensures children’s health; UN Women, doing the same with victims of genital mutilations; and UNESCO, which should (but only moderately does) weigh in on research strategies in medicine (Charpak 2006: 529).

This tendency is illustrated by the use of “partnership” as a keyword in most documents issued by the WHO. Partners help to disseminate international sanitary norms and convert them into rules of behaviour, as do public research laboratories, the pharmaceutical industry, and auditing groups. GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance,¹⁴⁰ and GAELF (the Global Alliance to

139 There is a FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, which is “the relevant standard-setting organization for food” (FAO website 2020).

140 By “improving access to new and under-used vaccines for millions of the most vulnerable children, the Vaccine Alliance is transforming the lives of individuals, helping to boost the economies of low-income countries and making the world safer for everyone” (GAVI website 2020).

Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis) implement policies on the ground.¹⁴¹ Other IOs are oddly placed at the top of partnerships lists although they have just joined them, to prevent contagion through trivial activities like travelling. The WHO and the UNWTO (the World Tourism Organization), were quick to pledge to work together, share knowledge, promote proportionate policy measures inspired by the latest sanitary advices, and call for a responsible communication by all tourist and travel sector stakeholders (UNWTO website 2020). The WHO also works closely with unlikely partners—Interpol and OPCW—offering them its knowledge and knowhow on the long-term impact of bioterrorism on societies.

The collaboration between the WHO and UNDOC (the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) follows a similar pattern. They are both full members of a coalition led by the International Narcotics Control Board to “reaffirm their treaty-mandated roles” and “improve the application of the international scheduling process” in order “to develop comprehensive and integrated approaches to the detection, analysis and identification of new psycho-active substances, trends and possible negative health and other impacts of those substances”. They also “ensure the adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control”. Hence a joint ministerial statement in 2014 called “for continued cooperation between Member States, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the World Health Organization”.¹⁴²

Balancing licit and much-needed uses of drugs with illicit trafficking and the abuses of addictive substances is not so easy to achieve, however. To overcome these huge obstacles a cluster of collaboration has been built. It comprises four or five organizations among which UNAIDS and WCO are the most prominent. The WHO is now leading a group of IOs that monitor the supply of opiates used in medicine to fight the side effects of AIDS. Alongside UNODC and UNAIDS, in 2012 it published a “Technical Guide for Countries to Set Targets for Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care for Injecting Drug Users”. The same year, Dr Haik Nikogosian, at the time “Head of Secretariat of the Single Convention on Narcotic

141 This extends domestically to the partnership between WHO national offices and national health authorities or institutions. Note, incidentally, that the Washington Health Bureau for the Americas, a Federal office, was established long before the WHO (and may indeed have been its blueprint).

142 Commission on Narcotic Drugs Fifty-seventh session Vienna, 13-21 March 2014, Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 High-Level Review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the Implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, New York, UN, 2014.

Box 2. Goals of the joint UNODC-WHO programme

The programme “Leads a global collaborative effort for improving coverage and quality of treatment and care services for drug use disorders in low- and middle-income countries.

- Promotes the development of comprehensive and integrated treatment systems that are able to deliver a continuum of care for drug users and link services at municipal and national levels.
- Maps population needs, legislative frameworks and available services and programmes for drug dependence treatment and care.
- Supports policy and legislation revision to achieve balance in drug policy and to support humane and effective drug prevention, treatment and care.
- Develops low-cost outreach treatment and care services, and increases access in rural and remote areas.
- Places prevention, treatment and care of drug use disorders into the mainstream health care system, linking with NGOs and ensuring full coordination with the health care system, as part of an integrated continuum of care.
- Provides alternative measures to imprisonment for dependent drug users where appropriate and, where this is not possible, provision of drug dependence treatment in prison settings.
- Supports universities at the national level to promote research and training curricula on drug dependence treatment and care.
- Provides and supports training programmes for professionals involved in the provision of treatment and care for drug users, including those whose professional primary focus is not in that area.
- Develops international recommendations, guidelines and standards aiming at the knowledge transfer from research to practice and supports adaptation and implementation at country level.
- Supports regional networks of quality service providers, working on drug dependence treatment, social support services and HIV/AIDS prevention and care”.

Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol”, addressed a high-level meeting of WCO and UNODC, calling for support for this Protocol.¹⁴³

Significantly, such occasional collaboration goes beyond simple coordination because it relies on pre-existing common work. For instance, a “Joint UNODC/WHO Programme on Drug Dependence Treatment and Care”, has already succeeded in developing the 2016 “International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders”. This has proven the opportunity to preempt the fight against drug and related diseases by the two organizations working together.¹⁴⁴

Eventually, piecemeal partnerships snowball and become official: during the 2019-22 pandemic the WHO inaugurated a “COVID-19 Partners Platform” in order “to support the planning, implementation and resourcing of country preparedness and response activities”. On August 20, 2020 the WHO issued a joint statement with those organizations already mobilized on drug trafficking and addictions (INCB, and UNODC) about the supply chains of medicines, calling “on governments to ensure that the procurement and supply of controlled medicines in countries meet the needs of patients, both those who have COVID-19 and those who require internationally controlled medicines for other medical conditions”.

The three organizations also reminded governments and the WCO “that in acute emergencies, it is possible under the International Drug Control Conventions to utilize simplified control procedures for the export, transportation and supply of medicinal products containing controlled substances, especially in those cases where the competent authorities in the importing countries may not be operating at full capacity”.¹⁴⁵ Here, the prominent role of a customs organization is clearly detailed: only WCO can let in drugs at the borders for medical use while blocking drugs for hedonist pleasure.

143 See (https://www.who.int/ctc/mediacentre/news/2013/UNODC_WCO/en/). “Multisectoral coordination, particularly with the involvement of sectors such as health, customs and law enforcement remains critical for the work of the Protocol. In this regard, the Protocol calls for enhanced cooperation between the Convention Secretariat and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO), addressed high-level meetings of these organizations, namely the Enforcement Committee of WCO (Brussels, 17-21 March 2014) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice convened by UNODC (Vienna, 12-16 May 2014), calling for support to multisectoral awareness and coordination which would promote the ratification and entry into force of the Protocol”.

144 “UNODC and WHO both have constitutional mandates to address issues presented by drug use and dependence. Moreover, taking into account the health, socio-economic and security implications of drug use and related disorders, the two agencies are uniquely positioned to lead this initiative” (WHO website 2020). There is no better way to install a monopsony on the topic.

145 Source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/14-08-2020-incb-who-and-unodc-state-ment-on-access-to-internationally-controlled-medicines-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

Box 3. The UNODC collaborative Program (‘UNODC, Resolution 20/6, “Countering fraudulent medicines, in particular their trafficking”. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 19 February 2013)

“Requests the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in accordance with its mandate and in close cooperation with other United Nations bodies and international organizations, such as the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization, the World Customs Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization, as well as relevant regional organizations and mechanisms, national agencies that regulate medicines and, where appropriate, the private sector, civil society organizations and professional associations, to assist Member States in building capacity to disrupt and dismantle the organized criminal networks engaged in all stages of the illicit supply chain, in particular distribution and trafficking, to better utilize the experiences, technical expertise and resources of each organization and to create synergies with interested partners, and invites Member States and other donors to provide extra budgetary contributions for the relevant provisions of the present resolution, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations”.

9.3.2 *Working in the Neighbourhood*

More than just a temporary collaboration within the same field of activity in times of emergency, links may last longer than expected. In that case, they will tie agents that are less and less similar. Within the same health sector, UNICEF has built long-lasting bridges with temporary partners, as shown in Figure 2.

Two separate intergovernmental systems are represented (the UN and the WB, respectively) in this set of IOs and IGOs’ member states, plus NGOs and firms, all linked to research agencies and one powerful Foundation. This works well for vaccination (a concern shared by UNICEF), in which the private sector invests significant amounts of money to save children’s lives worldwide. Vaccines protect human beings from birth to death, and not only in the aftermath of a pandemic. So, they tie agents in the long run, albeit only in one limited subsector of a specific realm (global health).

Civil aviation is a different case. The WHO is present, of course, because health regulations weigh heavily on air transportation, and so is the UN in its actions to protect the environment and mitigate climate change under the umbrella of the GEF (Global Environment Facility) and the EMG (Environment Management Group).

Meanwhile, ICAO (the intergovernmental organization in charge of the sector) was quick to ratify the 2016 Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). Endowed with a Committee on

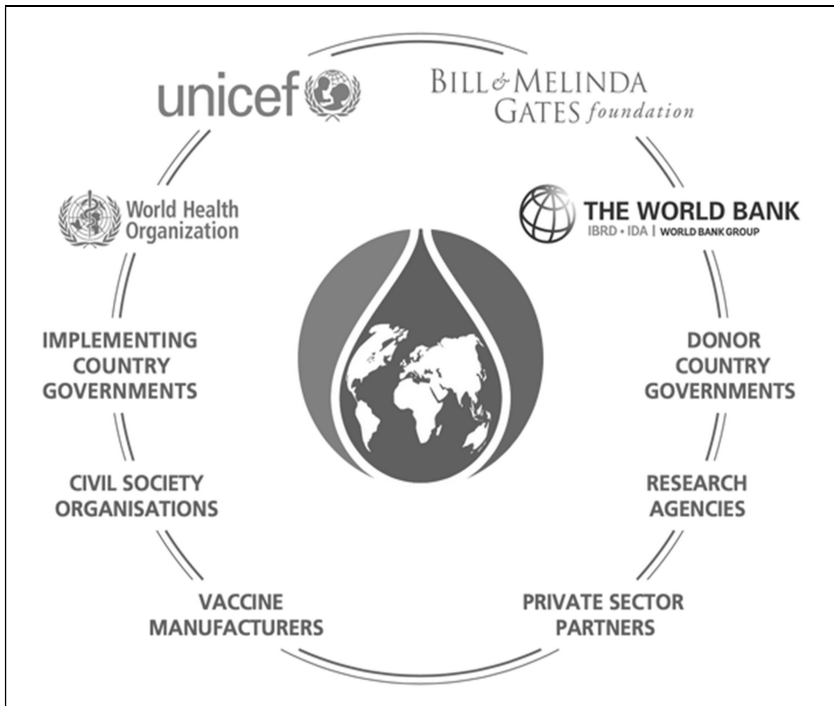


Figure 2 . UNICEF collaboration in the health sector

Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), it therefore tackles a source of growing protest. Noise due to airport activity was debated in its “Special Meeting on Aircraft Noise in the Vicinity of Aerodromes”, in line with the EU from which funding comes. ICAO also collaborates on a regular basis with safety and security bodies¹⁴⁶ (among which every national Organization of Safety Investigations).

146 Note that each country has its own office of investigation into air accidents. Most are interwoven within several international associations; for instance: ENCASIA (European Network of Civil Aviation Safety Investigation Authority, 2011, 27 members); ECAC (European Civil Aviation Conference, 1955, 44 European countries); ITSA (International Transportation Safety Association, 1993, a federation of every safety agency); ISASI (International Society of Air Safety Investigators, 1964, includes safety agencies plus carriers, and manufacturers of any kind of transportation worldwide; it has a European branch, ESASI). To these bodies one can add the 1947 Flight Safety Foundation in which the whole community of civil aviation is represented. AIR (Accident Investigators on Recorders) is a support group of engineers specialized in the decryption of flights recorders (ICAO website).

The major targets of ICAO are safe and clean trips as well as sustainable air transport. To guarantee such Commons, it has several “bureaus”, like the Air Navigation Bureau, which develops and maintains a Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASeP) and a Global Air Navigation Plan; an Accident Investigation Section (AIG)¹⁴⁷ as well as a Flight Recorder Specific Working Group (FLIRECSWG); and a Special Group on Explosives (involved in the collaboration with INTERPOL).

Several “committees” and “commissions” of the institutional bodies of ICAO—like the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection, which was established by the Council, and a Special Group on Explosives (a “Working Group of the Whole, i.e. the Assembly)—round out this system. Additionally, “regional branches” and “invited organizations” (most IGOs, in fact) contribute to the way ICAO works.

ICAO is an IGO. Air carriers belong to a parallel non-governmental organization. IATA, the International Air Transport Association, is mandated to “represent, lead, and serve the airline industry”. Members are “partner[s] for mutual benefit”. They also “build standards through expertise”—two tasks that are normally assigned to ICAO (IATA website). Therefore, while ICAO enacts norms, IATA provides guidance. Including this non-state actor, the air transport cluster comprises five global organizations (WCO and UNCTAD included), three regional IOs, and eight other structures. The use of acronyms may seem fastidious but it makes this set of interrelations more visible.

Looking at the following statement and the related box, it is clear that a difference is made between what I call “coordination” (i.e. “internal collaboration”), “collaboration” (i.e. “external collaboration”), and “cooperation” (i.e. “formal collaboration”). These links tie together ICAO and other organizations, either regional (NEPAD, OECD) or technical (TIACA):

“Building upon internal collaboration, ICAO is actively in cooperation and collaboration with various external stakeholders from the air transport community-governmental and industry. The aim of the cooperation is to enhance information sharing and understanding of perspective with the goal to provide Member States the needed guidance to develop and revise as necessary rules and regulations that impede the benefits of air cargo and e-commerce. ICAO has formal collaboration with a number of organizations”.

Whatever forms of collaboration may have arisen in recent decades to face successive threats to air transport (terrorism, contagion, accidents, “flight shame”, cyber-attacks, etc.), collaboration is destined to live on for several more decades. The story of civil aviation shows how emergency plans result in stabilizing collaborative processes and structures in the long run. This effect is enhanced by the increase of confidence-building measures.

147 This section is dedicated to “monitoring developments in accident investigation techniques and practices as well as accident prevention matters; monitoring developments in system safety concepts and practices” (ICAO website).

Box 4. The ICAO “cooperation and collaboration” system (ICAO website, consulted on 4 February 2021, my emphasis)

- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)—On 8 May 2018, ICAO and NEPAD signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide a framework for cooperation between the organizations and to promote aviation infrastructural development and capacity building for sustainable development of air transport in Africa.
- The International Transport Forum at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (ITF-OECD)—ICAO and the ITF-OECD signed, on 25 June 2015, a Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) to provide a framework for collaboration between the organizations in activities related to air transport with the view to achieving the sustainable development of air transport.
- The International Air Cargo Association (TIACA)—On 18 April 2013, ICAO and TIACA signed a Declaration of Intent to strengthen their cooperation on technical matters. Under the terms of this agreement, ICAO and TIACA will work more closely on air cargo and mail security and facilitation, accelerating the evolution from paper-based to electronic practices, environmental stewardship, the liberalization of market access for air cargo services and air cargo safety.
- World Customs Organization (WCO)—Signed by ICAO and the WCO on 27 June 2011, this MoU aims for increased cooperation to protect air cargo from acts of terrorism or other criminal activity and for speeding up the movement of goods by air worldwide. One of the outputs from the cooperation with WCO has been the release of the second edition of ICAO-WCO Moving Air Cargo Globally”.

9.3.3 *Trust and Mistrust in Peers*

Let us return to the main issue in this section: Why does “collaboration” rarely evolve into full-time and cross-sectoral “cooperation”? Because trust is key.

Coordination entails costs in terms of funding, human resources, and reputation. As shown by a study of the crisis in Somalia, “trust is a crucial determinant of informal interorganizational relations, leading to more intense information-exchange, especially in the security realm”. Among the many obstacles on the road towards more cooperative attitudes, refraining from sharing important information and opting for alternative informal forums are noteworthy (Egger 2016: 18).

On the matter of trust, a quick review of the relationships between organizations like the WHO or the WTO is very insightful. Quoting the latter, “[a]lthough there is no formal agreement between the WHO and the WTO, the WHO has *observer status* in the Committee on *Sanitary and Phytosani-*

tary (SPS) Measures and the *Technical Barriers to Trade* (TBT) Committee, and it has ad hoc observer status in the Council on Trade-related Aspects of *Intellectual Property Rights* (TRIPS) and the Council for Trade in Services".¹⁴⁸

Naturally, health concerns lie everywhere but some sanitary issues in particular can impede commerce, for example "health exceptions", which could become "unnecessary obstacles to trade".¹⁴⁹ The fight against tobacco, for instance, led to the creation of an "Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control" in which the hierarchy within the partnership is inverted: the WTO now has observer status in meetings that are convened by the WHO.

The WTO and the WHO have a troubled relationship as is the case domestically between economic and health institutions. The first organization insists on the fact that "any measure taken to promote public health that restricts trade should be targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary" while the latter wants to "ensure that health technologies, including diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and other medical supplies vital to treating patients infected by COVID-19, reach those in need quickly". Therefore, "avoiding disruption of supply chains" is combined with its opposite, "protecting lives".¹⁵⁰

No doubt such a contradiction in terms will slow down any process of long-term collaboration between these two organizations once the crisis has passed. At that point their staff members will have but one wish: to return to business as usual.

The Trilateral Cooperation on Public Health is another instance of collaboration between the WHO, WIPO, and the WTO, although it is meant to be "informal" and "practical" instead of institutionalized because it simply takes stock of the extant overlap between three existing programs (the WHO Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and IP; the WIPO Development Agenda; and the WTO Declaration on the TRIPS

148 https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/coher_e/wto_who_e.htm (my emphasis).

149 A telling example is the WTO SPS agreement: "The SPS Agreement contains specific rules for countries which want to restrict trade to ensure food safety and the protection of human life from plant- or animal-carried diseases (zoonoses). Its objective is two-fold. It aims to (i) recognize the sovereign right of Members to determine the level of health protection they deem appropriate; and (ii) ensure that a sanitary or phytosanitary requirement does not represent an unnecessary, arbitrary, scientifically unjustifiable, or disguised restriction on international trade" (WTO 2002).

150 Joint statement by WTO DG Roberto Azevedo and WHO DG Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/igo_14apr20_e.htm: "underlining their support for efforts to ensure the normal cross-border flow of vital medical supplies and other goods and services. 'Protecting lives is our top priority, and these efforts can be impeded by unnecessary disruptions to global trade and supply chains', they declared"

agreement and public health, respectively). Hence, “common activities” are planned “*within the possibilities* of their respective mandates and budgets”.¹⁵¹

Underlining informality, consistency with the framework of their mandate, and resulting from involuntary overlap means that enthusiasm is obviously lacking. Not that interorganizational trust is missing but no staffs want to tie their hands and commit themselves to a more demanding collaboration.

Additional examples can be provided by numbers, to such an extent that this looks like an evidenced tendency. For instance, physicians from the WHO are not welcome in discussions on intellectual property between the WTO and WIPO, because they have a protracted tendency to equate the protection of patents with crimes against humanity. Likewise, the WHO’s health specialists allegedly torpedoed any attempt by UNEP to adopt a new approach in studying the environmental impact of sanitary conditions because they fear this could subordinate specific health issues to environmental ones. Thus, they limit their involvement to “environmental health” (a subfield of medical knowledge) rather than venturing into a new promising realm of “health and environment” that is open to cooperation with non-doctors.

The story of the relationship between the WHO and UNEP is therefore a complex one. The best case in point is the strengthening of the Health and Environment Linkage Initiative (HELI) launched by UNEP, which initially encountered some resistance from the WHO. HELI is described as “a global effort by WHO and UNEP to support action by developing country policy-makers on environmental threats to health”, a program that “encourages countries to address health and environment linkages as integral to economic development” (HELI website).

UNEP has targeted the economic realm as the best sphere in which to reach an epistemic community of economists, demographers and ministers of planning. Instead of raising more funds to spend, UNEP suggested saving money, which would depend on investments made in public utilities such as water adduction. UNEP also emphasized child welfare, thereby winning paediatricians and public health specialists on the ground as additional allies. The first conference convened with a HELI spirit took place in Amman (Jordan), March 2005, and it was co-sponsored by the well-established CEHI (Children’s Environmental Health Indicators initiative).¹⁵²

151 https://www.wipo.int/policy/en/global_health/trilateral_cooperation.html (emphasis mine).

152 “This conference assessed and quantified the health, environmental, and economic costs and benefits of water efficiency measures”; “[d]emonstrated clearly the inverse relationship between increased water consumption and reduced diarrheal incidence”; “[q]uantified the health benefits (in disease and in money terms) which would accumulate from additional liters of water which could be made available to people through water efficiency”; “[d]emonstrated with benefit/cost analysis that investing in water efficiency will bring about favourable health and environment benefits.” Regarding HELI “[t]he expert consultation noted outstanding breakthroughs: the demonstration of quantifiable linkages

This advantage/costs idiom allows UNEP to make the best use of the formal/informal scale. At the formal end there is the WHO and to a lesser extent, UNEP. At the informal, there is their joint venture, HELI. This informal status allows HELI to provide both organizations with its own added value, expressed in the language of utility—a currency that conventional international wisdom reckons as legitimate.

9.4 Pooling Resources: Acceptance of Full Cooperation

When the WHO and the WTO pledge to work together in times of crisis they do not need to sacrifice part of their meagre resources. Information sharing is not a zero sum game. Reaffirming former commitments does not cost much since the interval between two crises is rather long.

I have previously defined cooperation as a full, mutual, enduring involvement, whether at cruise control or at warp speed. I can now add to this preliminary description that cooperation occurs across several nodes, each comprising a dyad or triad of partners each connected by a series of ties.

In the long run, even the most modest coordination remains deliberate. Each stage requires an additional decision to continue. Alternatively, coordination can become routinized when nobody has to endorse the pursuit of joint work as long as the context remains the same. This happens when decisions are made about daily implementation of prior commitments and not about the ultimate goals of each partner. In both hypotheses, there is no incentive to build bridges with peers across different sectors. Security and humanitarian affairs are very close but health and the environment or energy and climate change are not. Hence interorganizational relationships rarely go beyond what I call “collaboration”.

True “cooperation” needs more determination to make a partnership live whatever challenges are to be met.

between increased water consumption and incidence of diarrhea; a well-defined process for identifying, quantifying and valuing the environment and health benefits of various policy options; and the utilization of a combination of risk assessment and economic valuation tools to facilitate decision-making. The consultation drew plans for further development for incorporating environment and health considerations into policy-making at the national and regional level” (HELI website <https://www.who.int/heli/en/>).

9.4.1 Cooperating Across Time and Sectors

It is not surprising when coordinating structures link the WHO and the FAO. What we eat makes us either healthy or unhealthy. When we do not have a balanced diet we are less able to resist most diseases. Eating too much or too little makes us vulnerable to bacteria and viruses.

Once collaborative schemes saw the WHO and UNEP ban the use of toxic chemicals (like lead and mercury), the rationale behind investing together in a joint Geneva office dedicated to putting additional “bastards” on the list became less easy to understand.

The utmost confusion stems from the partnerships involving the IAEA. Of course links with the WHO are a logical priority since radiotherapy requires the evacuation and recycling of nuclear waste. However, the Atomic Agency has less expected links with the Health organization because it uses radioisotopes to sterilize mosquitoes that could potentially carry malaria (through the “Sterile Insect Technique”).

Partnerships between the IAEA, FAO, and WIPO are more surprising. The first two started to collaborate long ago through a “Joint Program of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture” in 1964.¹⁵³ From then on this program has been extended in several directions. Firstly, the IAEA and FAO worked together against soil degradation to Enhance Food Security in Africa, using “nuclear techniques in developing improved soil, water and nutrient management practices” (to quote the title of a joint 2005 memo).¹⁵⁴

“Prior to 1964 both FAO and IAEA *each had their own programmes* for the application of atomic energy in food and agriculture: FAO in the Atomic Energy Branch of its Agriculture Department and the IAEA in its Unit of Agriculture in the Department of Research and Isotopes. In order to *better coordinate* this work, the FAO and IAEA Directors General negotiated “the *Arrangements for the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Atomic Energy in Food and Agriculture*”... *The Joint Division staff are members of one of the parent organizations*, and report to both FAO and IAEA. The Joint Division *merges the mandates of both organizations* and carries out the activities of the Joint FAO/IAEA Programme... Today, both FAO and IAEA *strive to mobilize commitment and concerted action* towards meeting the Millennium Development

153 “Established on 1 October 1964, the FAO and IAEA created the Joint FAO/IAEA Division as a strategic partnership in order to mobilize the talents and resources of both organizations and hence to broaden cooperation between their Member States in the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology in a safe and effective manner to provide their communities with more, better and safer food and agricultural produce while sustaining natural resources” (<http://www-naweb.iaea.org/nafa/joint-fao-iaea-50th-anniversary.html>).

154 FAO/IAEA Technical Meeting: Combating Soil Degradation to Enhance Food Security in Africa: The Role of Nuclear Techniques in Developing Improved Soil, Water and Nutrient Management Practices. ICRAF Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya 10-12 October 2005.

Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals through the appropriate integration of nuclear and related technologies *for sustainable agriculture and food security*.¹⁵⁵

This long quote deserves a number of comments. It is of note that the IAEA lab is housed near Vienna where the IAEA has its headquarters and not in Rome, the seat of the FAO. What prevailed at the inception of the program were the means (cutting-edge irradiation technologies)¹⁵⁶ and not the ends (a better life for farmers). The channel chosen to disseminate such tools provides additional evidence of caution within the FAO, which takes great care to underline that “technical cooperation projects are funded by the IAEA's technical cooperation programme” and not by the food agency.¹⁵⁷

This expresses a reduced propensity to collaborate beyond specific limits. Each partner brings its own expertise, leaving politics to other forums like the UN itself (which elaborates the sustainability and security norms) or containing it at the level of a competition to chair committees¹⁵⁸. Chinese lobbying says something about how geopolitics weighs on science and technology. Diplomatic activism puts a ceiling on attempts to increase the autonomy of joint structures.

It is also remarkable that each organization already had its own costly programs before scaling up its activity and sharing costs, at least to some extent. Firstly, the management of human resources remains a separate

155 <http://www.naweb.iaea.org/nafa/about-nafa/Joint-FAO-IAEA-History.html> (my emphasis).

156 “Mutation induction methodologies have been developed to treat seeds, organs, tissues and cells of plants with chemical and physical mutagens, especially the use of radiation and machine resources such as gamma-ray, neutron, and X-ray or ion-beam irradiation... New and more effective techniques have been developed and shared to detect and select the mutations induced... Highly sensitive isotopic technologies have been developed to increase the efficiency of artificial insemination and improve animal reproduction... Tools and tests have been developed that have proved to be vital for the early detection of animal diseases, even before the onset of clinical signs... Fallout radionuclides (FRNs) technique: The FRNs technique has been developed as a tool to assess soil erosion and land degradation... Nitrogen-15 analytical technique for biological nitrogen fixation (BNF): The BNF is a process whereby grain, forage and tree legumes acquire/fix nitrogen (N) from the atmosphere, hence reducing the need for nitrogen to be purchased and applied to a crop and/or livestock production... [T]he stable isotopes of carbon-13 and nitrogen-15 have been used to measure precisely the C-N interaction to optimize both C and N capture as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture... Genetic sexing methodologies [using] Sterile Insect Technique... invariably relies on the ability of released sterile male insects to effectively compete and mate with native female counterparts. The Joint Division has developed genetic sexing strains, including one based on female temperature sensitivity in Mediterranean fruit flies. This has enabled the separation of males from females as early as possible in the life cycle on a large industrial scale... Food Irradiation technology: This technology has been developed to treat food to ensure improved quality and safety, as well as for quarantine purposes in international trade” <http://www.naweb.iaea.org/nafa/about-nafa/technological-achievements.html>

157 <http://www.naweb.iaea.org/nafa/about-nafa/index.html>

158 Since August 2005, Chinese diplomats chair this joint program and two out of five subprograms.

activity. Secondly, the staff members of both IOs are deeply attached to their home organization, two additional limitations to working together in the long run.

There are other obstacles. The program requires constant commitment to its usefulness. Action is “concerted” rather than centralized. The maximum targeted is “coordination”, in particular between national laboratories: 30 local “coordinated research programs”, 200 “technical cooperation projects”—and not only between the two founding IOs. The most elaborate institutionalized body is modestly called an “arrangement”.

9.4.2 Structuring Cooperative Arrangements

How to consolidate the sort of ties which can resist a change in perimeter of operation or a change of norms pursued?

IOs need specific instruments to achieve this end. One example is the Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratories (a joint FAO/IAEA venture). They cover several topics like insect pest control, plant breeding and genetics, soil and water management and crop nutrition, food and environmental protection, or the optimization of livestock health and animal feed.

The outcomes of such collaborations are indicators of the way nuclear resources can help, since this applied research program

“develops and transfers molecular and immunological methods for the diagnosis and control of transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases”; “focuses on food irradiation, authenticity and traceability, the analysis and control of chemical contaminants, and nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness, response and management”; “uses isotopic and radiation methods to measure and monitor the interaction between soil, water and nutrients in cropping systems”.¹⁵⁹

What pushes two IOs towards each other is no longer the wish to share information or establish joint training processes before sending in experts on the ground. What ties them now is the use of shared toolkits, which are as many milestones on their way to consolidating mutual relations in the long run. Examples abound, among which the relationships between ICAO and the WHO are enlightening (box 5).

Such tools are widely used globally by various stakeholders of different status. Their suitability to solve delicate problems makes them useful to all. Member states endorse the enlargement of a mandate without noticing the autonomization potential conceded to an IGO.

159 <http://www-naweb.iaea.org/nafa/about-nafa/areas-work-nafa.html>

Box 5. Sharing toolkits (ICAO & WHO, respectively)

ICAO: the organization has developed several instruments of collaboration with other IOs, like the Satellite Distribution System for information relating to Air Navigation (SADIS); the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs); the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP); the Accident Investigation Panel (AIGP) and the Flight Recorder Specific Working Group (FLIRECSWG). ICAO also held a “Drone Enable 2021 Symposium” on 21 April 2021. During the pandemic, ICAO Council built an Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) dealing with “biosafety”, “restarting aviation”, and “reconnecting the world”, in which IATA (with its “Health Safety Standards Checklist for Airline Operators”) and the WHO as well as the UNWTO each plays a role.

WHO: the International Health Regulations (IHR); the Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC); the International Classification of Diseases (ICD); the Prequalification of Medicines; the Incident Management Support Teams (IMST); the Pandemic Supply Chain Network and coordination mechanism; the country readiness checklist to review capacities to detect, manage, and respond to suspected cases and clusters; a disease commodity package for 2019-nCoV outlines the supplies needed for surveillance, laboratory analysis, clinical management, and infection prevention and control; the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)”. The WHO had also convened in February 2021 a side event on “indoor air pollution”. Note that house pollution impacts on several other IOs like the IPCC, WMO, and the IAEA. Plus those that are already in charge of these issues, like the UNFCCC Secretariat plus the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC).

9.5 To Sum Up

What we have seen here is a good illustration of the explanatory power of the NGM. Expansion leads to overlap, which in turn brings a collaborative framework. This trend can stop early on—when coordination suffices to reach a minimum division of labour between stakeholders—or at a later stage, when cooperating has become reflex.

Between these two ends, most IOs test various ways to work together and pool resources. Awareness that some modalities of collaboration are more successful than others plus the power of best practices will increase their propensity to consider networking as the most preferable option.

We may nonetheless wonder under what conditions one head accepts to defer leadership to the staff of another organization rather than trying to steer the set of IOs involved in person.

That is the goal of the next chapter.

10 The Taming of the Shrew: Avoiding the Other

As in the worst nightmares of Shakespeare, Sartre, and Goffman, “hell is other people” (Ashworth 1985). Although these three most quoted authors in Political Science and Organization Studies lived in different periods (late 16th/early 17th, early 20th, late 20th), worked in different fields (drama, philosophy, ethnology) and came from different countries (England, France, and Canada), they converge about the essential difficulty of living with people you distrust.

Politics—and democratic politics in particular—is about living with people we do not like (as Ariel says in *The Tempest*, “Hell is empty, and all the devils are here”). Hence we try to avoid politics and all its paraphernalia, everything from bargaining to politicking.

Organizational staffs are themselves persuaded that politics is bad. At the very least politicking is damageable. Providing expertise free from ideology helps them remain within their comfort zone. Although they are prepared to face rough confrontations in agonistic *arenas*, they prefer to build consensus in collaborative *forums*. Expertise is preferred to advocacy, and problem solving to prosecution and the propagation of local rumours via the famous (or infamous) “Geneva noise” (meaning that reasonable negotiation is parasitized by excessive mediatisation if not gossiping).

However, most chief executives of IOs concede that coordination is an imperative. In the literature, accepted practice is “to work effectively with one another” and overcome differences in “visions and approaches” as well as in “organizational cultures” and even tactical goals. Coordination is required because IOs must avoid redundancy, increase reciprocity, and build coherence (McEvoy 2017: 430, 437; Keohane 1986 b). Beyond vague acceptance of this necessity, coordination is what practice makes of it. People coming from different organizations meet; they establish committees, which convene periodically, and attend them with divided feelings; they attend coordination meetings to show the flag and prevent unexpected blows to their interests in absentia although they consider them as time-consuming and even “boring” (Egger 2016). On such occasions, participants can eventually find similarities between their respective activities and adopt best practices. As recognition of the other’s excellence is very demanding this process often stops at the standardization stage, as with NATO procurement and equipment (McEvoy 2017: 433).

Note that “coordination” in natural language covers different processes of mutual adjustment operating under the same name. This ambiguity is addressed in detail in chapter 7; suffice here to quote a recent chapter written on interorganizational cooperation in peace building, in which “coordination”

in Bosnia is described as having happened between a civilian and a military body (The North Atlantic Council and the Peace Implementation Council) during a single “action-set” (McEvoy 2017: 435-38). In our own vocabulary this is the very description of a more involving, enduring, and cross-sectoral “collaboration”.

Before refining the concept, we can temporarily assume that coordination implies sparing some time and assets to accommodate the goals and preferences of others instead of mobilizing every resource to support a self-centred conception of success, performance, effectiveness, etc. All of which starts at the first encounter. Each time people must share unbiased information with strangers or update their knowledge about a specific issue they “coordinate” with them. Thus, in the end, coordination is both a rewarding social activity (because newcomers are socialized and integrated into the group) and a frustrating political dispossession (the last-come is the first-served). Such ambiguity explains why active coordination is positively imagined while passive coordination is contained or rejected.

10.1 A Shakespearian Dilemma: To Coordinate or not to Be Coordinated?

In Hamlet characters can live if they socialize and behave according to accepted rules rather than being an isolated misanthrope. Likewise, national administrations are connected through inter-ministerial bodies. IOs have their own connectors although fulfilling this connecting function is not particularly popular among their staffs. SGs and DGs are not always enthusiastic when they must launch a protocol of coordination as most interviews with top agents show in the great majority of organizations under review. One major concern for them is the prevention of a concrete infringement even when it is balanced by a pledge to help. Assistance should never put those who help in a dominant position, much less so if the field of magnetic forces brings the UN to the centre of the system, as a supreme and permanent Coordinator (Koops 2017: 200 on Smithers 1979). The same could be said in security issues with NATO or regional affairs with the EU.

Functionally, coordination may be desirable because it magnifies the comparative advantage of each participant unit, hence facilitating a sound division of labour. However, this assumption does not apply to *universal* organizations like the UNDP, to which several mandates have been assigned in various fields at the same time. Propensity to cooperate also depends on a perceived compatibility (Biedenkopf 2017: 653) as well as the congruence of organizational cultures (Biermann and Koops 2017: 681). This could be the reason why “[t]he number of formalization efforts of inter-secretariat

relations has increased considerably during the last decade. Following the signing of Memoranda of Understanding, key member states, executive heads and bureaucracies resolve to create joint bodies in order to implement major inter-organizational initiatives”, like the UN/EU Steering Committee (Koops 2017: 206). Hence vectors like Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Joint Press Releases and bilateral/trilateral Communiqués greatly contribute to the implementation of collaborative pledges. As with tools like the instruments listed at the end of the previous chapter, technical items play a greater facilitating role than imagined. Given form prevails over substance, the formalization process by which all stakeholders are constrained is eventually conducive to power sharing among them.

What MoUs make plain is not what they say but what they do not. Silences are sometimes more significant than written statements. A MoU simply lists a number of points on which an agreement has temporarily been reached in negotiations between agents, which is expected to prevent any return to the prior status quo. At that stage other issues are not officially addressed, or they are simply postponed to better times. However, when coordination mechanisms follow (e.g., dedicated structures, liaison officers, and protocols to respect) MoUs will lead to a consensual solution and facilitate commitments to address matters arising from the agreement.

In short, organizational staff in any IO is split between *internal* and *external* affairs. While one agent focuses on the core activities of their IO—those that are the most specific, for which it has an actual comparative advantage over competitors—the other deals with the environment of the agency for which they both work. The former considers coordination as a loss of time, and a dilution of competence since generalizing arguments and scaling up problems look like a loss of their specific capabilities. The latter shuttles to and from other institutions, seeking to build consensus. Rivalry between them is nurtured by differences in training, academic disciplines, and types of positions occupied over a career. Hence there is confrontation over their respective influence within their IO, and an external negotiation for control over the joint outcome of their work in common.

10.1.1 *Comparative Advantage and Division of Labour*

The more autonomous and less vulnerable IOs are those organizations that cannot be replaced at all; and those from which power cannot be withdrawn. Therefore, resistance to collaborating is understandable among the others. Agents whose ambition for their organization is going it alone and being recognized as unique are not lacking.

Conversely, managers are well aware that nobody can ignore the benefits expected from pooling assets and outsourcing tasks that would better be

fulfilled by others. Heads of organizations also know that refusing to show goodwill will inevitably generate transaction costs, if only to justify their unexpected and allegedly asocial “splendid isolationism”. Therefore, economics and politics converge, considering collaborative attitudes as somewhat normal.

Ideally, working together should be limited in time and scope. Too much teamwork could simply indicate a defective design. Not enough work in common would make manifest an absence of solidarity and a lack of consideration for management skills. Once aggregated these two factors bring some collaboration, preferably in the guise of simple coordination—at least until the advantage of belonging to a network becomes undisputed (something we shall discuss in the coming chapters).

Every single organization should share its own technology and specific knowhow. At best, each can contribute to the welfare of their end-users. At worst, some can cancel the negative impact of others on them. For instance, a humanitarian NGO like Sea Shepherd rescues migrants at sea while a sovereign IGO like Frontex ban their landing on the shores of its members.

One success story is the management of camps for displaced people, where coordination is at its apex. The UNHCR provides tents; the IOM examines applications for asylum or jobs in a foreign country; Interpol tracks criminals; the WHO is concerned with settlers’ health; and the ICRC deals with the wounded and victims of mistreatment and warfare.

In comparison, there are many more stories of failing to properly coordinate. The relief provided to the local population in Haiti after the earthquake is unfortunately known as a tragic counter example. Numbering among the more inconclusive cases is the intervention of the UN and other regional organizations to separate militias and communitarian armies in Africa (Rwanda, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Mali) and in the Middle East (Afghanistan, Lebanon).

Economies of scale and the fight against redundancy are serious motives to collaborate with peers but coordination is considered preferable when it can be controlled from the top. In that case, one IO keeps a monopoly of control over operations and benefits from recognized ownership of an issue, which then brings gains in influence and legitimacy.

10.1.2 From Power to Influence, then Control

Accepting coordination implies a loss of power (within the relative distribution of power among collaborating IOs) plus additional costs (in work time and sharing resources). For advocacy and humanitarian organizations, there is also a loss of ownership over a cause.

To avoid any waste of time and assets or any politicking, coordination must be limited. Even the least involving level of Collaboration (coordination) already comprises excessive interaction with unpredictable people.

Most IR specialists believe that IOs have no legitimacy to play a power game; organizational theorists believe in a managerial turn; sociologists signal a culture of conflict avoidance; political scientists contest the distinction between daily routine and moments of crisis, or depoliticized public action vs. political decisions (Petiteville 2017: 10-11). Within IGOs understatement prospers. Backed by technical, juridical, and ethical knowledge, divisive problems can be converted into technical obstacles (Müller 2004). The more technical debates are, the less political they become (Louis 2017).

However, politics becomes manifest in three situations: when nations compete for decisive positions in organizational charts; when a scandal stains the reputation of an IO; and when the precise wording of a final resolution is disputed. An example of the first is the nomination of judges to the Appellate Body of the WTO. International judges are good professionals but they are not selected on the sole criterion of adequate juridical expertise (i.e. their experience in trade law and court proceedings). Being the “trustees” of their own government they must share with it and with like-minded delegates of other countries a global vision of trade. Consequently, their appointment cannot be fully depoliticized. The nomination process became progressively less judicialized over its first 15 years of existence, as states insisted on anticipating new judges’ views “on hot-button issues of interest to (them)”. Like US Justices appointed to supreme courts or federal positions and potential jury members in penal prosecutions, “candidates perceived to be activists or biased against (one party’s) preferences” have been eliminated, the result of strategic interaction between key players rather than the outcome of an objective evaluation process. Since the nomination process selects new members of the Appellate Body among former negotiators and panellists, the judges who are eventually appointed are “those who say little or nothing controversial” during their audition (Elsig & Pollack 2014: 393, 407; interviews, 2018).¹⁶⁰

An illustration of the second situation (avoiding scandal) is the powdered milk affair. This is an instance of negative publicity made by NGOs against the industry, followed by governmental attempts to depoliticize the story. The bulk of the effort to depoliticize the case was assigned to the WHO, with the hope that the industry could be preserved from naming and shaming. Nestlé has been accused of causing an unseemly death rate among new-borns. A boycott campaign pushed the WHO and UNICEF to publish a code of conduct on the international trading of substitutes to maternal milk. This

160 To quote Elsig & Pollack 2014, p. 398, “[M]ember states typically engage in extensive lobbying, bargaining, and ‘horse-trading’ on behalf of their national candidates, and final appointments are often the result of messy compromises among the members.”

document was not endorsed by the US administration, which accused the WHO of pushing hard politics under the guise of “coordination” (Guilbaud 2017).

As for the third depoliticization factor (disagreement on wording), any reference to dissenting parties is duly trimmed from the content of communiqués. Being “sites of political contention” and “battlegrounds for different normative preferences”, naturally IOs are victims of tough antagonism even in the most technical debates. As there is “tension between science and politics in script-writing within international organizations, competition between, or reconciliation of, staff-driven scientific worldviews and political positions within governing boards determine script content” (Kentikelenis & Seabrooke 2017: 1067-8).

Note that these activities can either scientize or politicize issues: the more they touch the board and its relations with the rest of the staff, the more political debates tend to become within plenaries. A case in point is the work of the IMF on VAT “as the cornerstone of fiscal revenue generation” over export taxes: “relative inattention from the executive Board allowed staff to institutionalize their preferred policy script, which was carefully constructed and defended, over time and on the basis of academic theories”. However, politics was reintroduced into the debate because the senior management itself had opposing views about the problem, unlike a minority of agents comprising policy staff and junior professionals (Kentikelenis & Seabrooke 2017: 1083-4).

Research converges on one finding: once collaboration has started, avoiding politics entails avoidance of contexts in which a problem so far settled here re-emerges there. Evicted from an IGO, hot debate makes its comeback when discussions start within other organizations. Such confrontations are conducive to a loss of control over agents’ norm-making activity. Sharing responsibility with others is therefore viewed as a cause of potential decline.

10.2 The Great Fear: Side-lined, Shut Down, or Merged?

In each IGO the staff plans to keep a monopoly over legitimate intervention. If other organizations can help, they must do their fair share of the teamwork but no more. Such limited collaboration does not shield anyone from the risks of being either forgotten when IOs are mobilized to face a crisis or closed once the crisis is over. Another threat comes from countries that occasionally communicate on plans to merge several organizations into a bigger one. A good case in point would be the fusion of the WMO, IPCC, IPBES, UNEP,

CoPs and the Secretariat of the UNFCCC into a single Environmental Organization.

The very people who, as long as they can, repeatedly avoid the opportunity to collaborate with others are the first to protest when they are not consulted about decisions made in their field. Remaining permanently at the margins would be a one-way trip to liquidation.

To hedge against risks and optimize the resources and reputation of a single organization its staff must therefore strike a balance between interventionism and isolationism. Since this operation must be repeated time and again, it may become obsessive. Perhaps too much, though, because risks avoided are but the flip side of missed opportunities. In addition, everyone knows that prime movers will be in a better position to lead coordination instead of being coordinated by others (Gehring & Oberthür 2013: 138).

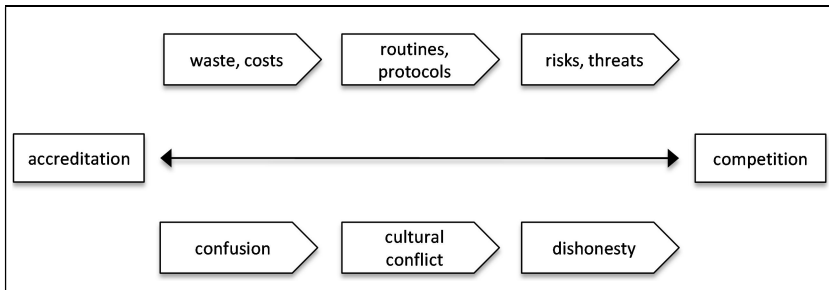
10.2.1 A Recurrent Concern

In every organization collaborating with selected others is a legitimate goal on paper. However, collaborating with any IO on a specific issue or a particular country is less evident. Concerns stem from the impossibility to select partners and to secure for each a perimeter of capacity. This is why much attention is given to accreditation procedures (in the WTO) and security clearance (in the IAEA). The idea behind such rigour is to limit the potential harm caused by applicants.

On the left of the axis leading from bargaining to treason (graph 8) there is the awareness that loss of time and efforts to build a partnership are not justified when, in each unit, staff members do not know how people work in other communities. Misunderstandings follow, grounded in *cultural* differences. The next step on the continuum is the *ideological* rivalry vis-a-vis each partner's vision of a problem. This encourages people to go to the third step, *denunciation* through naming and shaming actions. The last step on the right of the line is characterized by a fear of suffering from *cheating* and the looting of ideas or resources. The time comes to denounce collaboration, though it may have been mutually beneficial for years.

In other words, concerns can be managerial or ideological, rational or emotional. Within each partner organization, various groups of agents try to avoid waste while others are mobilized to prevent risks. Few, actually, are prepared to work honestly and sincerely with peers belonging to another organization against which they are seriously prejudiced.

Collaboration is tricky and full of well-known traps. The more experienced staff members are, the more reluctant they will be to open their arms to potential competitors for fear that they could be side-lined or



Graph 8. Potential harm stemming from collaboration

replaced. Of course, they also know that harm can also be avoided through coordination, which has the great advantage of keeping collaboration to a minimum. For peace operations, however, collaboration can be a matter of life and death: without coordination of air raids, for instance, collateral damage would be unavoidable, as in post 2013 Mali or Syria and Iraq under ISIS rule.

10.2.2 *A Minor Risk or a Major Opportunity*

IOs heads can nonetheless neglect the risks entailed by voluntary collaboration with other IOs beyond strict necessity or historical continuity (what the scholarly jargon calls “path dependency”). Agents are informed about the best alternatives to uncoordinated activities, which are more often than not a limitation of harm-avoidance behaviour.

Experience helps, since most agents have occupied many positions during their international career. Theoretical knowledge about the best possible outcome of a negotiation or deliberation matters. Decisions are always suboptimal, as shown by Herbert Simon’s “bounded rationality”; Nicolas Rescher’s “least harming solution”; John Rawls’ “minimax”; and “Pareto’s efficiency”.

The combined lessons to draw from peers on the ground and chair-bound scholars are to opt, firstly, for a modest ambition when making collective decisions; and, secondly, for enough prudence when interacting with others. The perfect equilibrium and full satisfaction are ever out of reach.

As a consequence, even when kept under the control of one staff, every measure taken in an IO is doomed to integrate some provisions that will be unwelcome to another staff. This will inevitably alleviate its impact—as if poison were injected with cure, albeit at homeopathic doses.

Two opposite conclusions can be drawn from this assumption, nurtured by real world situations as well as more abstract readings. Either coordination

is a source of risks that must be avoided; or it can generate opportunities that must be taken.

Coordination can certainly make joint operations heavy and slow. Nonetheless, it also has the potential for achieving consensual outcomes. These results would be impossible without embedding opponents into the decision-making system of a collaborative set of IOs, albeit in a position of inferiority.

Instead of the strategic plans of the stronger IO being upended to please its partner organization the less powerful of the two will try to insert part of its vision into the grand strategy of its hegemonic partner. The latter will contain opposition to negotiated achievements from frustrated allies, once they are made public: this is a win-win solution.¹⁶¹

More balanced trade-offs are the rule when organizations are on an equal footing, none of them being able to coordinate the others from above. Coordination, in this case, simply means “compromise”. The only question to ask before jumping into a collaborative process will therefore be: will that compromise be more satisfactory after egalitarian and collective measures of coordination have been made than before collaboration starts? The answer is clear: it will! Thus, the risk taken in compromising with equally powerful and resourceful organizations is a little higher than in the case of an asymmetric partnership, but it is still advantageous.

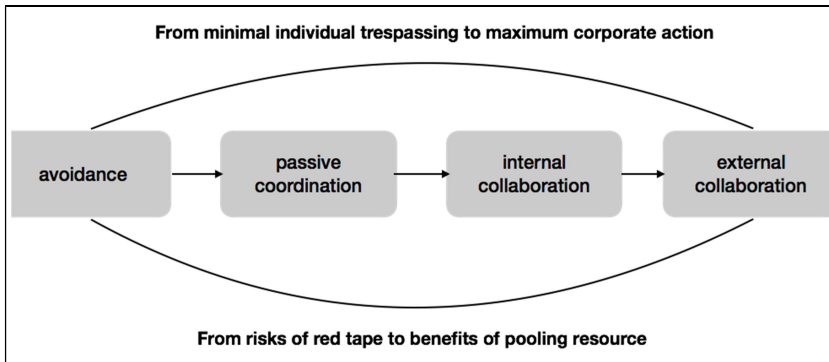
This issue has mainly been addressed by scholars working on the EU and other “complexes of regimes”. Why would member states of corporate Europe assign it the task to speak on behalf of each member? Because they are able to coordinate within the Union according to shared norms, which define the specific perimeter of action delegated to the corporate level.¹⁶² They do so “in committees”, which help to secure a common position, hence making corporate decision-making possible at no risk.¹⁶³ Hence, the corporate actor (here, the EU) shields its members against external pressures. Without prior internal coordination it could not itself become a “comprehensive block”, more powerful and durable than episodic coalitions of like-minded countries—certainly when compared to the alliances that formed prior to the outbreak of the First World War.

In other words, no corporate actor could emerge from systems of states if they did not establish collaborative mechanisms first, because it would not have enough “actorness”. The major benefit of collaboration is to be part of a

161 For a theoretical development of a similar argument, see the analysis of interactions between a “source” and a “target” institution by Gehring & Oberthür, 2009.

162 “[N]orms that influence organizational decision-making... provide a solution for a coordination problem of the actors involved... and allow concentrating on certain issues... rather than having to deal with all aspects at the same time” (Gehring & Oberthür 2010: 8)

163 “Once a solution has emerged... it will be quite stable, because no actor can gain from unilateral deviation. Changes must be made by collective agreement and cannot be expected unless preferences have changed significantly” (Gehring & Oberthür 2010: 8).



Graph 9. Harm avoidance vs. benefits of collaboration

collective agency, which by its size and resources can prevail during negotiations with outsiders, and be recognized by them as powerful.

In short, internal coordination between members of any intergovernmental system is a condition of recognition by non-members of this system (Gehring et al. 2013).¹⁶⁴ A cluster organization will have no coordinating system until its members do collaborate because intra-organizational coordination offers them new opportunities to draw a greater negotiating capability from their experience under the umbrella of a paramount corporate actor.

In a way, working together is not only an occasion to exchange information and send signals about acceptable solutions. It also generates commitments to reshuffle preferences in order to collaborate as much as required in overlapping issue areas (Gehring & Oberthür 2009: 136). From this observation a general conclusion can be drawn: the greater the overlap, the more likely coordination will evolve into collaboration.

Admittedly, agents can protest from the bottom of their heart that coordination is limited to a minimum for fear of trespassing the jurisdiction assigned to them by their founding fathers and go against their will. In truth, they never explicitly decide to collaborate with the staff of another IO, let alone deliberately convert this coordination into necessity. The mechanics of collaboration are automatic. They work without human intervention.

Another interpretation is possible: there is a conscious “orchestration” of non-state national and transnational actors when “IOs can draw on a relatively ‘weak’ set of coordination tools in their dealings with state; these tools are also available for orchestration” (Abbott & Snidal 2001: 325). Such

¹⁶⁴ According to the three authors, in the case of the EU, “non-EU states will recognize the EU as an additional actor within an international institution if the EU is capable of contributing to an international co-operation project separately from its Member States” (Gehring, Oberthür & Mühleck 2013: 850).

a statement reminds us that collaborative instruments are “weak” compared to the power of states, although they are also “smooth”, “discrete”, and “soft” tools or skills. Be that as it may, nobody will claim credit for using them when they are seen as “directive” instead of being simply “facilitative”. Taking for granted that governments always consider the level of “sovereignty costs” they are prepared to spend (Abbott & Snidal 2001: 326), this assumption seems truer with specialized IOs. Whereas the identity of a state and its universal outreach are indisputable, the identity and reputation of an IO are what its partners recognize in it in one particular field only (climate, defence, humanitarian affairs, communications, food, health, etc.).

IGOs do indeed have a perimeter to protect from invasive and uninvited trespassing. Moreover, they may gain autonomy from their member states when they use successful recipes against them for efficient orchestration learned when dealing with non-state actors.

The conclusion to draw from such an analysis is that, for an IGO, coordination with external NGOs is easier than coordination with governmental insiders. Among the latter, coordination with weak members will be easier than collaboration with the core group of powerful countries on which the funding and the functioning of a specific IGO depend. It will be also less contentious.

10.3 To Sum Up

IOs are cross-pressured between contradictory goals. Success implies encroaching on the activity perimeter of peer organizations, hence triggering a counter-process of collaboration. This weakens and sometimes ruins attempts to depoliticize debates. So efficiently suppressed or euphemized until internal dissent suddenly explodes during coordination meetings with liaison agents from other IOs.

The keyword in this chapter is “avoidance”. Avoiding the politicization of technical or scientific debate entails avoidance of coordination and what could come with it: the risk of being caught in an intergovernmental power play.

However, there is another clue to the explanation of agents’ behaviour in matters of collaboration: “attraction”. Coordination may be seductive when joint benefits can be expected from a minimum collaborative spirit; for instance, a corporate identity in intractable negotiations, which is necessary each time there is a risk of being side-lined or bypassed by other IOs. This may be unavoidable when agents’ physical or judicial security is at stake. Working together is a sort of insurance against threats of being named and

shamed, and for individual agents, being prosecuted, abducted, or even killed.

It seems that relations between the Self and the Other are ruled by a “double bind” that sees alternating gestures of attraction and repulsion alternate. However, this should not be considered a discretionary choice, let alone an emotional attitude. The whole process is merely mechanical and quasi automatic. Norm-making in one sector where an IO has achieved a monopoly of legitimacy¹⁶⁵ leads to encroachment. Overlap brings undesired jurisdiction trespassing, or accepted coordination and later full collaboration. Negotiating about joint involvement in a field reintroduces political debate, thus far expelled from expert discussions. No matter what, staffs must get along together.

Such involuntary growth of collaborative structures nonetheless affects the life of every IO, which is now compelled to abandon isolationist temptations. It also generates a proliferation of “coordination cells”, whose combined effect is to reshape a field and tie together individual organizations. Instead of a landscape made of well-identified IOs created according to a sound division of labour, the horizon is now full of sets of IOs—some basic (like clusters) and others more sophisticated (like “meta-organizations”).

Repeated internal coordination is actually a condition for the emergence of corporate actors, which themselves comprise other organizations operating in one or several fields. Such “international regimes” and “complexes of regimes” are but steps on the road towards more enduring networks, as we shall see in the next two chapters.

165 Such monopoly is the outcome of an intense competition for ownership of an issue in specific field (Maertens & Parizet 2017: 56).

11 From Clusters to Networks

“Inter” is the keyword to use when studying the world today and IOs in particular. As everything happens in the interstices and at the interface of extant units, interactions imply various and severe transaction costs to handle the externalities generated by every IO. At a minimum, “brokerage” makes the machinery work. To achieve ambitious processes of “coordination”, “liaison” officers are needed if only to exchange information on their respective activities and achievements in the same field.

“Inter” also qualifies national, state, and organizational—processes that, most of the time, start with inter-staff consultations. Two consequences unfold from such parallel processes: firstly, intermediation entails additional autonomy for mediators; secondly, bodies that specialize in inter-agency affairs emerge and progressively evolve to become sets of units more or less linked to each other on a temporary or permanent basis.

In this chapter, I call any semi-formalized group of bodies dealing with the non-national an international “cluster”. Scholars usually define them as “sets of international organizations-base actors (most often staff of these organizations) working on specific policy, scientific, programmatic, and legal dimensions” of a sector (Margulis 2017: 506). On the path framed by the NGM, which connects basic aggregations of IOs to structured inter-organizational networks, evolution goes from an addition of ad hoc groups to less informal organizational fields, complexes of regimes, and formalized networks.

At the bottom of this scale a cluster does not say anything normative or predictive about the nature of its content. As a merely descriptive notion, which is not yet a concept, clusters may be as anarchic as multi-coloured fruit loops. Alternatively, they may be semi-organized like rubbish bins. They may even be as fully structured as a ball of wool. Using this chameleon term keeps us neutral about the teleology of specific entities, at least until differences lead to diverging trajectories—some being conducive to less formal groupings, and others driving towards regime complexes or proactive meta-organizations.

This done, we are ready to address two more delicate issues once the principles at the heart of the evolution or non-evolution from informal sets to hyper-organized contexts are known: How does a cluster become a meta-organization, and how does the latter evolve into a network? What explains such changes, and what makes each pattern differ from the others?

This is where recently coined concepts might help, e.g., “organizational field” (to define strategic interactions between IOs), “regime complex” (or “complex of regimes”), and “meta organization” (an organization that has

other organizations as members). Each underlines basic conditions to make any international cluster evolve from a concatenated and formless set of actors to a more structured system of interactions. Each is both clear and parsimonious enough, making it simple to use—possibly too simple to accommodate hybridity, as we shall see.

What such concepts miss are the non-taxonomic, non-deliberate and polycentric properties ingrained in networks. As noted in chapter 1, typologies are not very informative; they just help one look at aggregates in depth. Remember that the type of order we are looking for is non-deliberate. Unlike operators in a free market in a context of pure competition, leaders of IOs cannot predict the aggregated outcome of countless daily decisions, not even when they have long-term strategies. The polycentric aspect of the system is a sign that there is no single hierarchy, hence no arrows linking several peripheries to a unique centre. Instead there are various nodes with many ties. Consequently, we have multiple candidates for influential positions and not just the one, which all operate at the same level of uncertainty.

Before reaching a better understanding of inter-organizational evolutions let us start from the simplest transition, formless clusters leading to more organized packages of IOs. Then we shall conclude this chapter with a first review of what network theory in general can bring to the explanation. The next chapter will be devoted to international organizational networks per se.

11.1 How Clusters Give Birth to Complex Organized Systems

Concerted action or pooled resources do not suffice as such to permanently change the architecture of IOs collaboration. A “Concert” (such as the Congress of Vienna) is a basic group of equal countries, all having veto rights on forthcoming decisions. Even when consultation is compulsory it does not entail any political commitment. A discussion with peers may sometimes authorize rulers to refuse further collective action as if taking stock on the advice given by other governments was sufficient to probe one’s goodwill. This can happen at any time, but especially during the last meeting of parties having so far worked together (prior to a military victory, for instance). Victors now tell their allies what their intentions are about the future of the recently pacified world, and then everyone can go back to their (national) business as usual.

The same can apply to a “partnership”: This fuzzy notion identifies contracts specifying a clear-cut division of labour between “partners” or coordinated activities relying on daily consultation. As we shall see, “organizational fields” may also accommodate partners orienting their behaviour

towards each other with no need to centralize their arrangement from the top. Likewise, “communities of practices” make networks manifest even when they rely on invisible ties—actors behaving as if they were constrained by an institutional structure.

11.1.1 *What Clusters Are and What They Are Not*

And then came the vague but all-encompassing notion of a “cluster”. Scholars have tried to clarify their views about theoretical and actual clusters in different ways. Some have looked for glue, able to cement or seal temporary relationships and make them evolve into a consolidated aggregate. “Trust” immediately comes to mind as an example of glue. When a collaborative experience runs smoother, decision-makers are ready to take the leap to reinforced cooperation phase, which will be more enduring. Unfortunately, there are serious problems to solve before making such a jump realistic. Firstly, psychological feelings can add some fuel to collaboration but cannot trigger it. Secondly, such emotion may simply result from cultural differences because in some countries confidence is assumed by most citizens to be general and in other countries it is not. Thirdly, we do not know who or what entrusts to whom or what. The latter objection may be the most challenging because putting trust first implies that collective bodies do “think” and “feel” just as humans.

Additionally, using trust as a major driver of collaboration helps to identify “trustees” and those who trust them, as if the former were faithful “agents” and the latter were trusting “principals”. Note that a psychological propensity to trust partners differs slightly from rational choice processes or systemic constraints (both very popular in IR). Confidence “suspends” risk; it deters potential cheaters in the interest of all parties. During social intercourse, being benevolent and optimistic makes the distrust zone shrink and facilitates anticipation. It also decreases the cost of “information gathering, hedging, monitoring, and verification”. Open-ended institutional designs, confidence-building policies, and active liaison officers help to generate such trust. However, if trust and control are two sides of the same coin then it is impossible to assess the net explanatory power of the former compared to the latter (Brugger et al. 2017: 409-416).

Given the fuzziness of the word “cluster” some scholars switched to “*organizational complexes*”. This seems justified, in particular, when “loosely coupled” IOs work together “without a central actor concerting and planning its design in its entirety”. With this last concept, authors focus on the quality, intensity, and iteration of shared activities. Instead of simply sending unidirectional information to a larger audience via its website, each component of the complex shares information with every other. In some

cases, the process can go as far as implementing a policy decided from the outside on behalf of the staff of another IO; or contributing to a joint program conceived elsewhere and led from there (Biedenkopf 2017).

This approach raises three substantial problems. Firstly, the perimeter of the organizational complex is vaguely defined. Secondly, most ties are loose. Thirdly, nothing is said about the permanence of an organizational complex. Assuming that such a complex will remain unchanged while its level of fragmentation or integration evolves is too far-fetched. In effect, the more integrated a complex the less vague and unstable it will be, and the closer to a meta-organization it will become. If we aim to go beyond mere description,¹⁶⁶ we need to show that competition, collaboration and synergistic activities require different sets of IOs, analytically different from each other.

Another term, “*regime*”, selects certain organizations sharing paramount rules, norms and procedures that may eventually transform an anarchic field (say, security or trade) into a norm-led sector or make it evolve into a set of fields, as in “regime complexes”, which encompass overlapping fields (say the environment and climate change). When such a context emerges, several IGOs and NGOs combine their strengths to standardize behaviour in a particular realm of activity (like protecting whales or intellectual property).

Leaving aside a not-so-obvious sociological motive to replace “regime complex” by “*organizational complex*”, a regime complex has some comparative advantages over rival concepts. Since it comprises two or more sectoral regimes, it bridges them and leads scholars to opt for a cross-sectoral analysis (Raustiala & Victor 2004; Orsini et al. 2013). While a single regime entails paramount norms and principles, plus treaties, plus IGOs and NGOs operating in a single sector, a complex of regimes houses several regimes.

However, the theory of regime complexes itself still lacks a solid synthesis of the “deterministic causality” behind stacking regimes. What this approach has in common with pure networks is its absence of hierarchy, which puts “complexity” at the core of its meaning (without providing a testable hypothesis about what complexity exactly mean),¹⁶⁷ whereas clarification is much needed to avoid confusion with “vagueness”. Besides, regime complexes are “loosely integrated”, contrary to networks, so they lack both authority and centrality. How, then, could they evolve and why should they?

Unlike “international regimes” and “regime complexes”, “*meta-organizations*” do connect real organizations to each other. They do not merely comprise “institutions”, understood as a mix of intangible and tangible com-

166 The straight presentation of the climate change complex takes 9 pages in Biedenkopf’s chapter.

167 For a concise critique of the notion, see Brosig 2017; pp. 448-449: “While the regime complex has a causal impact on the performance of its component units, regime complexity rarely helps to explore the exact mechanisms through which this causal impact is executed” because “complexity brings about ambiguous results”: it is “used as a metaphor”.

ponents of brick-and-mortar organizations (Biedenkopf 2017: 649). They organize organizations, a specificity that becomes even clearer in international relations since “[t]he large majority of international associations have other organizations as their members: they are ‘meta-organizations’ rather than individual-based organizations” (Ahrne & Brunsson 2008). Such members can be multinational organizations or non-state actors (as in the Internet, with the IGF, ITF, WSIS, etc.).

11.1.2 How and Why Do Clusters Evolve?

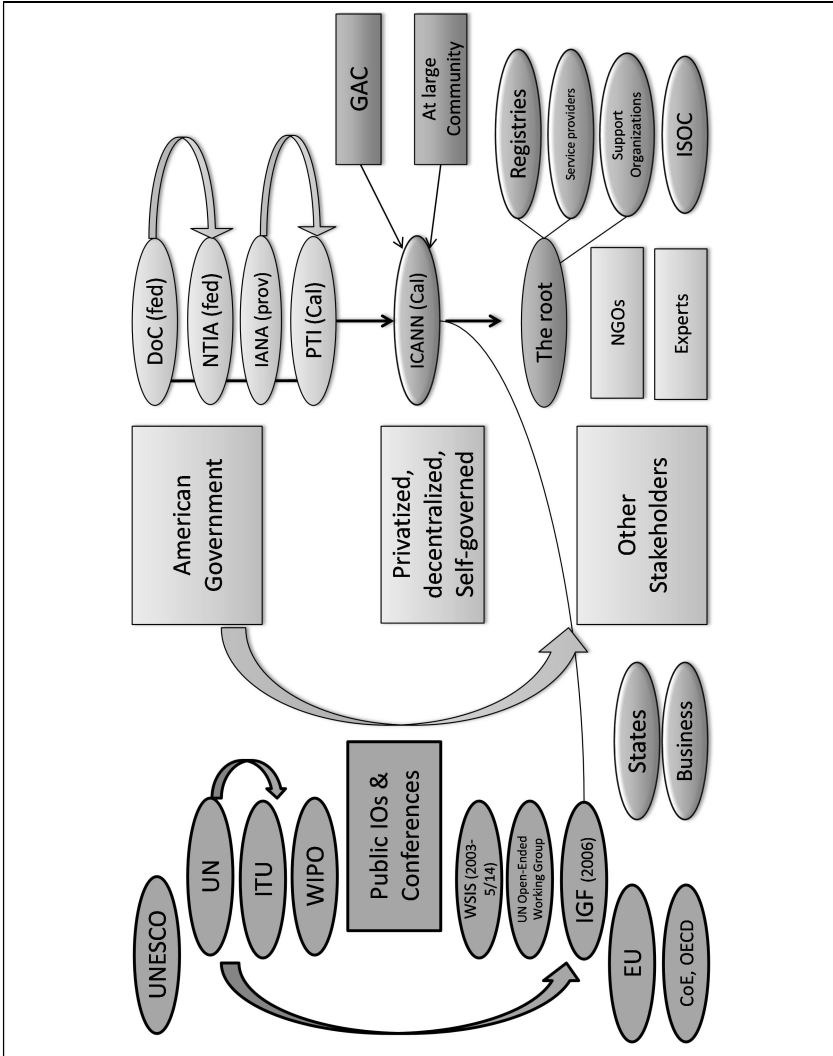
We can now return to one of our central questions. How do we go from scattered clusters to aggregated meta-organizations? The field of the Internet is a good case in point because it remains undetermined. Is it a cluster or a meta-organization, or, why not, a quasi-network?

What makes the set of IOs in charge of the Internet differ from a cluster is the absence of respect for the role usually assigned to states. The pillar of the Internet regime is ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) from which foreign governments are absent. They are not full and active members, packed and parked as they are in a Government Advisory Committee (the GAC). This Committee must “[p]rovide advice to the ICANN board on policy matters” (ICANN bylaws). As one of the best-informed observers once said “the founders of ICANN” created the GAC not as an assembly of member states but as a body able “to boost support for the (Internet) regime among other governments” (Mueller 2015), as if this Committee was a mere legitimizing tool without any influence on policy-making. On the ICANN organizational chart, the GAC is on an equal footing with the “At-large committee” (composed of non-state actors). Proof of their minor status lies in these bodies operating according to California’s Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation law. Non-American components of the constellation are marginalized. The ITU and the EU were evicted from it at the outset because servers and users were overwhelmingly American.

What makes scholars hesitate to see ICANN as a cluster or as a meta-organization is the backing of the GAC (and within it, international and regional organizations) in recent years; and with it, states and IGOs other than the US administration. Since then this consultative committee has “progressively extended its influence”. Originally, “the GAC only provided advice when the board asked for” it; now, it can make recommendations off its own bat. After the demise of the WSIS it even became able “to have the last word” each time its claims departed from those of the Generic Names Supporting Organization, a central piece in ICANN operations.

The organization of the Internet as it is now is therefore more complex than many other sectors, and certainly more so than clusters. It can be stylized as shown in graph 10.

To understand how clusters of IOs may become meta-organizations and then networks of collaboration a detour via Management Studies is helpful.



Graph 10. The Internet governance system

11.2 Meta-organizations and their Limits

Firms and public administrations are engaged in a great variety of cooperative processes, from mere links between distinct activities to more structured relations within networks. Scholars from various disciplines explain the intensity of cooperation among organizations through the motivations that drove them into a cooperative cluster. This is far from being simple.

Network analysis is not new. It had long been a branch of mathematical and statistical modelling before the tremendous development of psychosocial networks called for a better theoretical understanding of the phenomenon: (Bohn et al. 2014). Research recently showed that organizations did not behave like numbers or persons. Once triggered by organizational expansion the intensity and final structure of interorganizational cooperation is not only determined by the structural properties of networks like relations between dyads, the number and solidity of ties, and the centralization or decentralization of the network. Rational calculus, cultural differences, and environmental constraints also matter (Abri & Aulakh 2014).

It may be difficult to extrapolate from micro-behaviours to meta-organizations, although most studies in the field of management are focused on factories, offices, hospitals, or firms. Having a transversal research question (“how does organizational context shape the optimal design of coordination?”) helps to overcome this obstacle. This can happen at any level of teamwork, at least “where integrating diverse knowledge is required to solve novel problems” (Young-Hyman 2016: 3-4).

11.2.1 *Some Empirical Evidence of a Turn Towards Meta-organizations*

Scholars now assume that “meta-organizations constitute an inflating, diverse, and undeniable phenomenon of collective action among organizations and that collective scholarly efforts are necessary to improve our understanding of meta-organizations in their multiplicity” (Berkowitz & Bor 2017: 1).¹⁶⁸

To understand what a meta-organization is, a metaphor may help: “What if we knew nothing about sports leagues, but only particular teams?”. Such an image identifies what matters most in such conglomerates. There are

168 Berkowitz and Bor (2017: 2) give the following examples of meta-organizations: “A wide set of empirical settings can also be included from the European Union (EU) and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), to the UN Global Compact or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On the EU as a meta-organization, see Kerwer 2013.

“encompassing organizational forms” or “cooperative organizational” schemes. They appear when “minimalist” associations of organizations themselves become structured in order to cement functional relations with cultural productions like collective identity and even “camaraderie”. They also “coordinate autonomous organizations around shared goals”.

Meta-organizations produce information and advice in the trade sector. They build a collective and, if possible, prestigious image of the field through efficient public relations that help to advertise their activities and make profit-seeking activities look “civic” (Spillman 2017).¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, meta-organizations are low-cost, “easy to set up and maintain”, which distinguishes them from ordinary organizations (Berkowitz & Bor 2017: 3).¹⁷⁰

In short, meta-organizations are educators. They educate the staff of their member organizations, the general public, and policy-makers, something that cannot be done separately by each of their component parts.

However informative a “turn” towards more academic concern for such units can be, any vision stemming from the business activities of private lobbies must be complemented before applying it to IOs. Coordinating governments and governmental organizations (all more or less public and national) across state borders differs widely from coordinating private and domestic actors, the more so when these component organizations are themselves multinational, as shown by the International Institute of Finance (IIF) which represents multinational banks (Kerwer 2013: 42).

Nevertheless, work done on meta-organizations is too focused on the premise that the only organized units are states. Such an assumption ignores configurations in which a “central” IO is flanked by non-state actors, e.g., the Internet with the IGF, ITF, WSIS, etc. Meta-organizations in international relations do not simply establish a “playing field (which) facilitates dialogue, negotiation, and even ‘coopetition’... (i.e.) the combined advantages of cooperation and competition, between very diverse, potentially competing actors, from firms to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and governments” (Berkowitz and Bor 2017: 3). They are not “characterized by perpetual conflicts over autonomy between the meta-organization and its organized members”. They are not residual since they do not “draw on a reduced repertoire of organizing” because “competencies will only be delegated in a narrow decision-making area” (Kerwer 2013: 42-43). They do not bring together unlike-units; and most are not optional (could a state boycott ITU or UPU?).

169 “From their members’ point of view... associations offer one distinctive, relatively low cost way of connecting firms and business people into their broader environments, and developing mutually shared understandings of those environments” (Spillman 2017: 2).

170 Although “meta-organizations subsist even when their direct objective has vanished (e.g. price negotiation [in the oil industry]) and they become ‘dormant’. Such ‘ghost’ meta-organizations may therefore stack up and occupy organizations’ environments” (Berkowitz & Bor 2017: 3).

Hence, the central question in international studies is not “what associations do for members compared with other organizational forms of coordination and governance” that are better incentives to participate (Spillman 2017: 4) but “how individual organizations may escape being placed under the umbrella of a meta-organization”? For sure, gaining higher status and increasing one’s reputation are both facilitated by belonging to a meta-organization.

11.2.2 *Increasing Influence or Dilution of Authority?*

Unlike States, meta-organizations have less direct influence than capabilities of inducement and incitement.

When ranked according to their enforcement capability, international meta-organizations are assumed to be weak and decentralized, due to a balance-of-power issue between top and bottom units since “[t]he meta-organization and the members undermine each other. The organizations compete for identity and autonomy” (Ahrne & Brunsson 2010: 6).

However, they are not as weak or as uninfluential as assumed by those scholars working mainly on *domestic* meta-organizations¹⁷¹ who simply extrapolate from the characteristics of private confederations of firms and just replace conglomerates of individuals, companies, or national administrations with webs of nation-states. In my view such a substitution is definitely not sufficient to tell what a meta-organization actually is, or why this label could be helpful.

In organization studies, theorists have invented this concept to make room for the “indirect influence” of the top-most units of the pyramid on their members, be they governments or non-governmental agents. For instance, they are assumed to “induce structural change” in member countries, to such an extent that they sometimes compel states to establish an independent authority alien to the national tradition.¹⁷² They also reckon they have some leeway for acting *on behalf* of their components. Hence, deciphering their decision-making process is of crucial importance. They cannot just be considered opaque “black boxes”.

Let us examine a “hard case”, UNEP. As a “program” of a universal IO it is a meta-organization by nature and a hybrid because it coordinates several other components of the UN community like the UNPD (itself a “program”... of the General Assembly of the UN!) and several UN agencies

171 Due to this postulated weakness (“[i]n Meta-Organizational Theory, IOs are weak actors but may nevertheless have important long-term effects”), the meta-organization model best suits the EU (Kerwer 2013: 51 & 44).

172 “Italy’s independent antitrust authority, which has become an important ruler in competition matters, is alien to the Italian administrative tradition and seems more like an extension of the antitrust unit of the European Commission” (Kerwer 2013: 48).

(UNESCO, UNIDO, UNCTAD) plus organizations born outside the UN that joined them long after the San Francisco conference (the WMO, the WHO, the FAO, and the IAEA). Non UN IOs are also part of it (like members of the World Bank group concerned with the “greening” of their loans).

UNEP is the outcome of the 1972 Stockholm world conference followed by a fierce UN debate on the opportunity to create some new “institutional arrangement”. It could actually have been stillborn for several reasons. Firstly, it was conceived as a second-tier organization and not as a full-fledged specialized agency. Secondly, it was contested by the staffs of big IOs, eager to keep their sovereignty on environmental issues. Thirdly, it was soon confronted with rivals (the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Global Environment Facility). Fourthly, it was put under surveillance by Southern states prone to contest “green imperialism” in “fear that development aid might be sacrificed to ecological values” (Ivanova 2007: 343).

However, despite all this and the fact that “UNEP’s performance has been significantly affected by the early choices on its design and its location”, it did not become a mere office of the UNSG or a basic committee of the ECOSOC, it eventually proved resilient. Therefore it was able to gain leadership as a cross-sectoral body, an “anchor institution”, which eventually built “the world’s ecological conscience” (Ivanova 2007: 339).¹⁷³

Hence, “in February 2007, forty-six countries supported the upgrade of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to a United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO) and a ‘friends of UNEO’ group was established comprised of developed and developing countries alike” (Ivanova 2007: 340). All this is evidence of the increasing influence of this organization despite tough beginnings and proof that legitimacy is the major ingredient behind the influence of any meta-organization over each of its component parts.

However influential they can be, meta-organizations do not concentrate enough authority. They rather dilute it and disseminate consensus-seeking protocols. Compared to individual organizations they lack for resources, enforcement capacity, and a clear self-image. Those operating only domestically seem weaker than their members, hence unable to prevent defection (Ahrne & Brunsson 2008: 5, 77; 2010: 4). This may impede the building of a clear common identity, preferably a high-status one (as evidenced by the merging of French universities to get better scores on the Shanghai ranking). A telling example is the CEMS (Community of European Management Schools and International Companies) in which only the “best”

173 As stated by Ivanova, 2007: 339, “the mission of the new environment program was to ensure coherent collective environmental efforts by providing central leadership, assuring a comprehensive and integrated overview of environmental problems and developing stronger linkages among environmental institutions and the constituencies they serve”.

management school in each European country can be a member. At any rate, strong similarities among members reinforce the identity of the meta-organization while weakening the identity of member organizations: too strong similarities with their peers prevent any of them to claim uniqueness.

Whether or not this description fits domestic situations, it is not fully convincing when applied to international contexts. Admittedly, meta-organizations can shape their environment and reduce uncertainty stemming from it—something single organizations cannot do well (Ahrne & Brunsson 2008: 63). This would matter equally beyond national boundaries as it does inside a country. Moreover, meta-organizations can place limits on the decision-making autonomy of their members,¹⁷⁴ and conceal their own identity, which will then become blurred to outsiders such as non-members¹⁷⁵ (Ahrne & Brunsson 2010: 6).

The EU, for instance, has turned its meta-organizational weaknesses into strengths. The national administrations of each member state have adapted to the needs of the Commission. They coordinate with it, and even establish regulatory agencies to monitor its resolutions. The administrations of non-members are exposed to greater pressure to comply—“[t]he more states in Europe become members, the higher the pressure for those remaining outside to adapt to the EU”, Kerwer 2013: 48-49).¹⁷⁶

This performance, however, can be ideologically undermined by neo-nationalistic tendencies (as seen in Central Europe and in every trade organization of which the USA is a part). It can be functionally shortcut by excessive overstretching of meta-organizational capabilities. To resist any sort of domestic or regional politicking what matters for meta-organizations is having a direct and immediate¹⁷⁷ structural and procedural influence—something only networks possess, distinct to basic arrangements like clusters.

174 “A meta-organization is threatening the autonomy of its members when it has the right to make and enforce decisions of its own that affect the members—even when the members have influenced the contents of these decisions” (Ahrne & Brunsson 2010: 7).

175 “A situation in which the members have similar objectives, programs or organizational structures is not only practical; it also creates an image of the meta-organization as an entity with great internal consistency and a representative for a distinct type of organization. For the member organizations the effect is the opposite: too strong similarities with the other members threaten their identity, their ability to claim uniqueness” (Ahrne & Brunsson 2010: 7).

176 “In many policy fields, it has become a routine activity of the public administration to closely coordinate with European counterparts... The EU has promoted a trend toward regulatory agencies among its members. As European regulatory agencies are networks of national agencies, they constitute strong incentives for member states to create national counterparts” (Kerwer 2013: 48).

177 “According to Meta-Organizational Theory, IOs are weak actors but may nevertheless have important long-term effects” (Kerwer 2013: 51).

11.3 From Meta-organizations to Networks

We have reviewed a list of words in our natural language that are often mistaken for theoretical notions. Some are concepts in the offing like “meta-organization”. Their very proliferation is per se a sign that scholars working on IOs are increasingly looking for a tool able to capture the essence of interorganizational collaboration. What happens when this relationship passes a threshold beyond which rivalry is no longer likely?

According to the famous “resource dependence theory” (Brosig 2017), dependence of one IO on the assets of another should lead to a consolidated partnership. Does this per se make clusters evolve into networks?

The answer is not easy. The concept of network cannot be allegoric. It should add something to existing notions, and bring in several *conditions* that any set of IOs should meet before becoming an interorganizational network.

There must be (a) vertical and horizontal links together, not bottom/up or left/right ties only, or a sound division of labour, each unit having a unique comparative advantage; (b) a minimum level of permanent dense and frequent interactions; (c) a great number of nodes, cores and focuses of all sizes, plus a huge portion of the grid in which they are interwoven (unlike with dyads); (d) heterogeneous components, which are far from being “like-units”.¹⁷⁸

Networks are characterised by several *specificities*. Unlike meta-organizations they have no definite borders. They cross the boundaries between an organization and what the literature calls its “environment”—“joint” ventures address “trans” issues. Lastly, networks do not rely on a central administration (at least, they can function without one) while meta-organizations are “organized” by nature. It should now be evident to the reader that there is a perceptible difference between an IAEA/FAO partnership on seed selection and the WTO/WIPO cooperation on intellectual property. While the first two operate in quite distinct realms (nuclear and food issues) the latter work in the same field (trade and IP).

To design networks of international organizations and predict the behaviour of their stakeholders we are confronted by more formidable theoretical obstacles than in previous steps in our theory. So far, we have shown that every individual IO is a resilient “complex hybrid” even if it may not fully or consistently perform. To theorize their networking we must go up a step.

Firstly, the fragmentation of scholarship according to the topics addressed, and the variety of the disciplines practiced is not particularly helpful. Networks have different perimeters, structures and meanings when viewed

178 This is also true of “international regimes” but this last notion applies only to a particular sector, whereas networks are trans-sectoral.

from the perspective of brain or computer science, sociology and political science or organization studies.

Secondly, the trend towards “*social network*” analysis may be counter-productive for us, precisely because these are not *organizational* networks but a different type of collective arrangement. A social network is (a) a set of social interactions implying some reciprocity (as when participating in a banquet increases a guest’s social capital and prepares him or her to become a host); or (b) the Facebook/Instagram/WhatsApp clusters of customers and their very particular way to address each other; and even (c) informal face-to-face groups with no leader, in which strong and weak ties matter equally; if not (d) what the literature calls “communities”, e.g., “epistemic communities” and “communities of practice”. Some of these aggregates are formal and others are not. Some are physical and others immaterial. Some are tangible and others intangible; some are ephemeral and others enduring, and so on and so forth.

Thirdly, whatever the benefits of a far-fetched analogy between social and organizational networks it is less beneficial when the time comes to address non-domestic processes. This is why IR specialists often wonder if there is anything like a network theory in international studies.

Some are assertive and others not. Networks as metaphors or simple heuristics are used in order to reflect the heterogeneity of unlike-units within which sub-units are even ignored. They are used as “geodesic” measurements of respective positions and permutations: distances and proximity from the “core” or the “centre” (Schulze & Ries 2017: 126). This is an unfinished quest for “a set of units... and a rule that defines whether, how, in what way, and to what extent any two units are linked with each other”. Such analysis of the real world is not a theory, although it has “a tremendous potential to elevate the study of international relations to new levels” (Maoz 2012: 248, 252-3).

Supporters of the social networks analogy in IR turn to network analysis to better combine agency and structure (Maoz 2012); they view networks as “sets of relations that form structures, which in turn constrain and enable agents”. Unfortunately, this remains vague. Any type of transnational structure and agent can be so arranged within networks.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore any type of question can be addressed about the propensity of agents to make any decision within any structural design. Drawing on social networks studies does not alter this vision since in this recent field of analysis “networks are defined as any sets of ties between any sets of nodes [i.e. elementary units]” (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009: 560-1). “Any” oft repeated makes for too many flaws.

179 The unit level matters since networks can be investigated as comprising “individuals, governments, or other units [IOs?]; national networks; or international networks or coalitions of networks” (Hafner-Burton, Kahler & Montgomery, 2009: 586, 575).

11.3.1 International/Interorganizational

We owe it to a group of international studies specialists to make a solid attempt at theorizing the concept of network in IR. They warn us that “partial or faulty incorporation of network analysis... risks trivial conclusions, unproven assertions, and measures without meaning”. Testing hypotheses would matter less than describing or mapping empirical ties, or simply picking out instruments in the social network “toolkit” (Schulze et al. 2009: 560, 577, 582, 574).

To avoid such caveats, scholars propose focusing on specific kinds of networks, which are made of *hierarchical* and heterogeneous arrangements and display “persistent patterns” with *structuring* effects on their agents. This is due to substantial ties that vary according to the nature of networks (“hubs, cliques, or brokers”) and the nature of their ties (close, central, conflictual, etc.). Such networks are plastic structures grounded in passive belonging that work under the threat of coercion, rather than active voluntary membership of decentralized organizations. The latter could only lead to the homogenization of agents’ behaviour and relies on spontaneous isomorphism. The issue of *power* is central here, be it the relative power of nodes, or the distribution of power between nodes and core (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009: 570-573).

A true network analysis would differ from such views. It would substitute unobserved latent influence with observed actual power. Approaches distinguishing between sources and targets note that one IO has control over another, which is in turn influenced by the former. We should prefer more egalitarian types of organizational arrangements, which would display neither “inertia” nor “retrenchment”, and would not fear “absorption” (Costa 2017: 392-395).¹⁸⁰ Although the sources/target model explains interorganizational relationships (Gehring & Oberthür 2009), it blurs the distinction between the respective influence of insiders within member states of IGOs, NGOs activists, and other non-state actors on the one hand, and the aggregated capacity of persuasion achieved by one of these organizations among its peers, on the other.

Contrasting with these proposals, other scholars infer conformity of conduct from mimetic behaviour and issue adoption by the rank and file rather than through top-down enforcement of rules. They continue addressing connections and links while focusing on the causes of similarity and “the forces driving homogeneity” instead of just recording the effects of variability.

Behind such trends there is a concept called “*organizational fields*”, a structural equivalent for aggregates or communities of organizations loosely

180 According to Costa, “the problem of causality, for example in establishing whether or not the influence received by an IO originates in another IO” leads scholars to “face potentially serious circularity problems” (2017: 393).

connected but nonetheless distinct from their environment. An organizational field is one step above ordinary clusters on a scale leading towards networks.

In an organizational field understood as a structured set of organizations, units are linked by their common access to the same resources and “a shared understanding... of the reason to work together”. People are tied to each other by myriads of interactions. Some of these ties are strongly committing members to the fate of their peers, as well as to the future of the whole system of transactions. Others are loosely tying them. Hence, in any organization strong ties and weak ties link people and units equally.

In other words, organizational fields have the same “cultural cognitive template” (or “globally accessible templates of behaviour”), a property of the field that facilitates mimetic behaviour and reciprocity. Entering into the field (or recruiting new partners) depends on the newcomers’ capacity to enrich it, endorsing its core values or amending them. IOs become “carriers of templates of appropriate behaviour” (Wooten & Sacco 2017: 291-298).¹⁸¹

As coalitions of rebels in civil wars, they rely on “ideological homophily”, a sense of “affiliation”, and a sense of “belonging” to the same set. Members are socialized to shared rules of behaviour within the group, which prevail “because of the presumption of mutual trust and complementarity of interests among actors with uniform attributes... and because joining similar others reinforces the cognitive bias toward belief confirmation in polarized political contexts” (Gade et al. 2019: 6; Maoz 2012: 254).¹⁸²

Applying such analyses to international relations underlines the congruence between *social* aspects and *organizational* outcomes. Sharing the same negotiation stages compels diplomats to get along with people from different backgrounds. When staffs know each other well enough to become partners they must either opt for superficial relationships with many others (an option known as “bridging”: caveats are filled and ties are extended horizontally) or give such ties a new boost within a core group of peers (“bonding”: in-depth relationships are dug in, vertically). Note that in “bridging patterns... actors interact with diverse sources of information”, which enriches their knowledge. By contrast, “bonding patterns... [make] actors rely on sources from similar backgrounds”, which may bring the same collective errors (Wukich et al. 2019: 1-2).

According to a seminal paper resilient relationships depend on the relative lack of strength of social ties (Granovetter 1973). When bridging prevails, ties are weak; what is required from partners is basic, one-shot, and confined

181 The two authors contrast organizational fields with the less institutionalized and far less studied “action-sets” (temporary alliances or partnerships that we shall examine in chapter 12 when addressing the issue of various levels of collaboration).

182 “A fundamental principle of social network analysis, homophily states that similarity breeds connection and social networks tend to be largely homogenous because ties between dissimilar individuals dissolve more quickly” (Gade et al. 2019: 6).

to one social activity (sport, religion, theatre, dinner, politics, war, etc.). The resulting set of such loose interpersonal relationships is an inclusive network. As the word itself makes perfectly plain, “*bridging*” means building causeways between distant points and allowing two-way communication between them. “*Bonding*” is more demanding. Instead of relationships that will last no longer than a meeting, it aims to establish in-depth and long-term relationships. Whereas bridging stems from a calculated routine to avoid conflict, bonding involves positive emotions, which matter as much as reason. Moreover, multiplication of such bonds is conducive to stronger ties, within “multiplex networks” (combining professional and social elements, or instrumental and goodwill ties) in which people who often know each other personally have a full set of dense, iterative, and reciprocal relationship that overlap in various types of activity rather than just one. Hence, multiplex networks are “socially focused networks” while uniplex networks are only “work-focused” (Parikh Shah et al. 2017).¹⁸³

My hunch is that when IOs move from the cluster-type of arrangement to actual networks of collaboration they also depart uniplex relationships to achieve a multiplex system of interactions in which performance and resilience are both enhanced (ibid: 29).

Therefore, they will rely more heavily on *social* logic than *economic* rationale since “the effect of social ties is much stronger than that of economic ties” in bringing about multiplex networks (Ferriani et al. 2012: 9-10). This is because social ties say something about the reliability of a partner over time and rounds of negotiation. Loyal partners have no hidden agenda. To build and maintain social ties one must invest in sociability, which entails transaction costs although they diminish between trustful partners whose monitoring costs go down to zero. I shall come back to this important issue in chapter 12.

11.3.2 *The Mobility and Intellectual Property Networks*

Before going further, two case studies might help to understand the specificities of networks compared to other sorts of collaborative schemes in the realms of mobility and intellectual property, respectively.

Mobility can be voluntary (in search of leisure, pleasure, etc.) or involuntary (fleeing zones of conflict, starvation, disease, etc.). Distinct meta-organizations are competent to address each kind of movement. However, these meta-organizations are each brought into a network around the same core IOs.

183 “Multiplex relationships are also distinct from uniplex work focused relationships, which include those ties in which people discuss task/job-related knowledge and ideas” (Parikh Shah, Parker & Waldström 2017: 6).

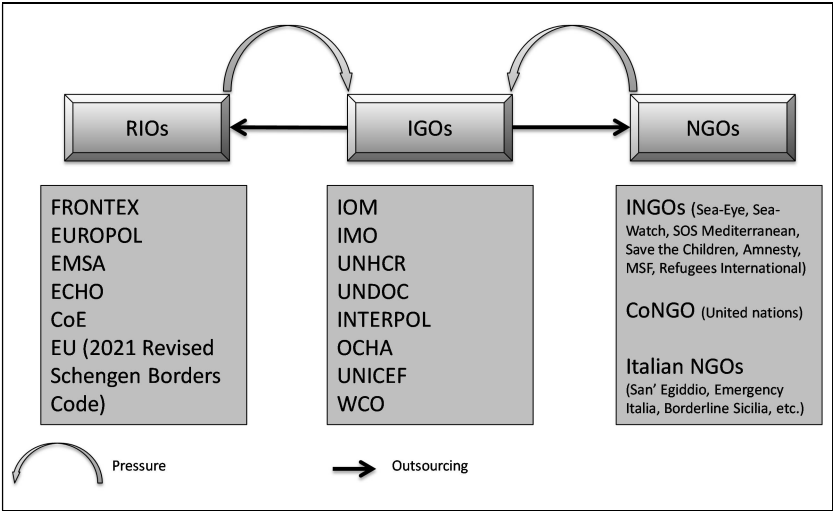


Figure 3. The migration network in the Mediterranean

In a field enhanced to encompass any sort of mobility (hence including family travel and business trips alongside economic migration and asylum seeking), many IOs are involved. Some deal with refugees and others with tourists. Some work on imports while others target exports. Some seek potential victims and other focus on traffickers. This network is centred on transportation, tourism, and hospitality; regular or irregular migration by ship, airplane, and train; refugee centres, commercial hotels, and family homes.

The 2015 refugee crisis and the 2019 coronavirus pandemic are two complex cases through which it is possible to observe the birth of a network and check its comparative advantage over other sorts of groupings.

Let us start with the *refugee crisis*, which stimulated the creation of a cooperative network in the Mediterranean. Composed of the IOM, IMO, UNHCR, OCHA, and ECHO plus NGOs this network has emerged after two tragedies. We can therefore ask how collaboration evolves during crises.

The initial trauma is well known: there was a sudden and massive influx of refugees with spectacular wrecks and deaths, which soon raised a shared concern among leaders of IOs to minimize the social cost.

As shown in figure 3 this network is characterized by the variety and inequality of the IOs involved. Each head has to think about how to retain a minimum amount of autonomy while collaborating with all the others. Despite diverging mandates these leaders share the same goal: they want to assist refugees and victims of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean.

Among the various units comprising this network, some are peculiar and technical like the European Maritime Safety Agency.¹⁸⁴ Others are non-state actors. As defined in Article 1(2) of the constitution of the IOM it “shall cooperate closely with international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, concerned with migration, refugees and human resources in order, inter alia, to facilitate the co-ordination of international activities in these fields. Such cooperation shall be carried out in the mutual respect of the competencies of the organizations concerned”.¹⁸⁵

A cluster called the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CoNGO) is already pooling all NGOs having a Consultative status at the UN. It is particularly active in a specific “NGO Committee on Migration” to which three goals are assigned: protection at Sea; migrant Children’s issues; unaccompanied Youth at Borders (topics of great interest to UNICEF). To the IGOs and accredited NGOs one must add local groups like Borderline Sicilia¹⁸⁶.

Travel and transportation also depend on several organizations that are less well-known than the UNHCR and IOM, like the IMO (International Maritime Organization), ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), IATA (International Air Transport Association) and the WCO (World Customs Organization). The Madrid World Tourism Organization of the UN (UNWTO) is at the bottom of this list.

The International Maritime Organization has a lengthy history but only very recent visibility. Created within its current framework in 1948, it had long ago emerged with treaties signed during the Great Discoveries. It became operational in 1958 and was fully effective in the seventies and eighties.

This race to the top on the list of IOs was pockmarked by traumatic events, like the 1967 Torrey Canyon disaster during which 120,000 tons of oil was spilled. The institutional apparatus on which the IMO relies has since then grown in size and scope. The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships was drafted in 1973 and revised in 1978,

184 EMSA “provides vessel detection and target activity detection information derived from very high-resolution radar and optical satellite images. The following Integrated Maritime Services use Earth Observation data: Maritime border control support to FRONTEX—monitoring of maritime borders particularly to support Member States response to illegal trafficking of migrants. Support for EUNAVFOR’s anti-piracy activities—detection of non-correlated vessel targets in the area of interest” (EMSA website).

185 “[A]t Headquarters level, IOM convenes regular annual consultations and briefings for a wider NGO audience. Most of the programmatic cooperation between NGOs and IOM, however, takes place at field level” (IOM website).

186 This NGO has three objectives: investigation through its section called “Mafia Capital”, to reveal the big business of reception centres for migrants and asylum seekers; giving voice to their own rights—migrants’ protests in Piana degli Albanesi and Catania; fighting Racism and Xenophobia via its specialized Observatory, which had to tackle “aggression and devastation in Avola and Messina”.

while the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System was inaugurated in 1998. Moreover, the IMO gained momentum as an active part of a larger effective network against piracy, trafficking, and polluting. Its expanding mandate now includes a number of issues that are relevant to tourism (cruises, harbours, and beaches). It protects seafarers and cargo, passengers and tourists, coasts and endangered maritime areas (as shown by its “Polar program”). It has authored a number of norms touching on issues far beyond the oceans, such as migration and climate change.

The IMO is of far more importance in refugee issues than would be expected. Its collaboration with other bodies during the 2015 refugee crisis has legitimized it as the only organization that could prevent wrecks. Consequently, in 2015 it hosted a “High-Level Meeting to Address Unsafe Mixed Migration by Sea”.¹⁸⁷

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is another specialized UN agency established by States as early as 1944 to manage the administration and governance of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (known as the Chicago Convention). It tries to reach consensus on international civil aviation Standards and Recommended Practices (acronym: SARPs [currently totalling some 12,000 practices]) and promotes Procedures for Air Navigation (PANS). To achieve these ends, ICAO makes its own norms and audits the oversight capabilities of its member states in the areas of safety and security. It has a “Vision” (to achieve the sustainable growth of the global civil aviation system), an objective (“harmonized global aviation safety and efficiency in the air and on the ground”) and a priority (to “further improve aviation’s successful safety performance”).

As for the UNWTO it promotes both “sustainable tourism” (minimal environmental impact and preservation of the cultural heritage of a region or nation) and “ethical tourism” (respect for the hosts). As it is a recent creation, it is still peripheral and endowed with a limited budget (some \$25 millions in 2019). It has limited capacity to enforce its decisions and strong intercultural constraints. Hence it would be too weak to matter at all if it were not part of a network. As a peripheral organization, though, it makes room for countries that have not played a prominent role in core IOs like Morocco and Spain. Belonging to a network helped it and its lead players to come to the fore during the Covid-19 crisis. It took this opportunity to establish itself among

187 Here is the justification of its unexpected involvement: “The international maritime search and rescue system created through IMO instruments was not designed to handle the huge flows of migrants that are currently being seen in the Mediterranean. In being compelled to embark these unsafe vessels, migrants are effectively being put into extreme danger as soon as they leave shore. The fact that migrants are drowning within sight of their would-be rescuers is testament to the dangers they face and every effort should be taken to find safer, managed routes for migrants”. [http://www.imo.org/fr/About/Events/Pages/High-Level-Meeting-to-Address-Unsafe-Mixed-Migration-by-Sea-\(March-2015\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/fr/About/Events/Pages/High-Level-Meeting-to-Address-Unsafe-Mixed-Migration-by-Sea-(March-2015).aspx); See also a video about this meeting at: <https://youtu.be/KM77QXdvwpw>.

bigger and more endowed IOs working on obvious priorities over an above leisure.¹⁸⁸

Hospitality, another facet of tourism, is led by several Business organizations (BINGOs) like IHA (International Hotels Alliance), established in 1947 and then accredited by the UN in 1953 as the Consultative Representation of Hoteliers worldwide; ILHA/IH&RA, launched in 1997 as the major International Hotel and Restaurants Association, also accredited by the UN, moving its headquarters to Lausanne in 2008. HOTREC (Hospitality in Europe) is a replica of the preceding two groups at a regional level.

All this shows that public and private organizations frame hospitality standards, committing themselves to substantial improvements in sustainability, better energy efficiency, reduction of food waste and low trans-fat food, simpler and faster issuance of visas. Promoting equal opportunity, decent work, and fair business practices improve their social acceptability.

Let us now see how these second-tier organizations apparently working on side-lined issues differ from clusters in deep crises. Cooperation between components of networks increased during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The network expanded to include additional members no longer considered occasional partners, including the WHO (to validate treatments), the WCO (to stop cross-border contagion); and UNESCO (visits to World Heritage landmarks make them sustainable).¹⁸⁹

Among the IOs involved, a minimal contribution came from the ICAO, which convened “stocktaking webinars series” and, on 14 May 2020, published a “Handbook for CAAs on the Management of Aviation Safety Risks related to COVID-19”. According to the organization itself, “ICAO considered it essential to provide new guidance in this area as quickly as possible so that the countries we support can continue to effectively *coordinate, collaborate, and communicate* to uphold the highest possible levels of aviation safety while they maintain the continuity of critical operations” (ICAO website, my emphasis). In particular, ICAO has facilitated the movement of goods while sticking more meticulously than usual to the principles of risk management and thus “prevent and fight the spread of Covid-19, safeguard supply chain continuity, change the classification reference for Covid-19 medical supplies to facilitate the import-export of protective garments, tests kits, medical tools, and drugs”, etc. (ICAO Website).

188 “[T]ourism must be recognized as a key pillar for building a better future in all world regions. Past recoveries prove that the importance of our sector cannot be overstated” (#TravelTomorrow).

189 It also includes national variants of the latter like the National Treasures Office in Japan; the Heritage sites administration in the UK; and CITES (endangered species like bats and pangolins were at the time suspected of spreading the virus).

To sum up, quite a number of specialized organizations are indirectly involved in safety issues. Others directly address topics some of which are traumatizing (rescuing refugee from wreckages) while others are comforting (letting tourists enjoying leisure trips). Given tragic or hedonistic movements always impact transportation and accommodation of all sorts of organizations that would normally operate in isolated bubbles, they quickly form connections among each other. The mobility network therefore comprises concentric circles with major nodes like the IOM and the IMO and more peripheral clusters attached by weaker ties, e.g., ICAO and the UNWTO.

In which aspect does this arrangement differ from other types of collaboration examined in this chapter? Are we sure that stronger cooperation is linked to emergency contexts like a pandemic, and do these networks survive such events when the situation returns to normal? Such problems must be solved in dynamics, and not as the final endgame of occasional collaboration and temporary overlap.

Liaison officers and specialized offices constantly work to create, maintain and expand ties once a crisis is overcome before the likely outbreak of the next one. Since their jobs imply additional costs for IOs, they can survive only if the benefits expected from belonging to a permanent network prevail over expenses accepted as being part of it. One option for scholars to calculate this ratio would be to list them as precisely as possible—a long and burdensome task. A simpler alternative is to review bilateral agreements that may be attributed to such staff using the 2015 IMO/IOM covenant on unsafe migration by sea as a model.¹⁹⁰ Their intention was obviously to refer to the existence and implementation only “from time to time” of a 1974 agreement in order to establish permanent cooperation. The justification given by the two heads is telling: because this mobility crisis had now become a humanitarian one (due to “loss of life, injury, trauma and serious human rights’ violations”), both organizations must go beyond exchange of information on demand, and establish an “inter-agency platform for information sharing” as well as “remain engaged by setting up technical or advisory bodies, as appropriate, on terms and conditions to be mutually agreed upon in each case” (note that for the time being, it is a case by case process). As they also “urge the international community to take robust measures against people smugglers who operate without fear or remorse and who deliberately and knowingly endanger the lives of thousands of migrants at sea”, their bilateral agreement implies the involvement of other IOs not mentioned explicitly: UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, concerned with traffickers) and the WCO (which monitors border crossings).

Another bilateral agreement of the same kind has had its moment: one signed by UNICEF and IOM (UNICEF bringing to the partnership its

190 Known as the “Joint statement from IMO SG Koji Sekimizu and IOM DG William L. Swing on enhanced cooperation and collaboration between the two Organizations”.

expertise on socio-demographic data).¹⁹¹ Hence they set up an International Partnership Division.¹⁹² Ideally, a multiplication of dyads could expand the boundaries of the network.

Our second case is *The Intellectual Property Network*. One coalition occupies its centre of gravity. It comprises the WTO, UNCTAD, and WIPO. Numerous units are at its periphery like the UNSC, UNDP, the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment, UNEP, OECD, and ICANN. The nodes of the network are the TRIPS on the one hand and WIPO Arbitrage & Mediation Centre (which settles conflicts on domain names) on the other.

Let us start with the “WTO’s Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (to) monitor how countries are applying the TRIPS Agreement and to discuss issues that arise from that”.¹⁹³ Debates within the WTO gave governments enough confidence to use the *flexibilities* available in this Agreement (like compulsory licensing) to address emerging problems. Therefore, intellectual property protection and public health objectives should not contradict each other. As noted on the website: “We agree that the TRIPS Agreement does not and should not prevent members from taking measures to protect public health” (www.wto.org/tripshealth).

Stimulated and constrained by such interpretations of their respective mandates, the WHO, WIPO, and WTO centred their cooperation on two goals: access to medicines; and incentives for research and development so that new medical technologies become available. Such self-restraint has obscured the fact that IP is only part of the picture. Guaranteeing poorer patients access to medicines and other health products involves proper (“rational”) use of goods and services, affordable prices, properly designed health systems, suitable financing, and carefully selected strategies to procure what is needed where it is needed.

Another joint unit within the WTO deals with a further chapter of its chart: the Trade & Environment Committee. Its mandate is to identify links between trade rules and environmental measures in order to promote sustainable development. Its task is “to make appropriate recommendations on whether any modifications of the provisions of the multilateral trading

191 “New data brief produced by IOM’s Global Migration Data Analysis Centre and UNICEF Geneva Coordination Cell, Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe, shows that children make up at least one in five of the 870,000 refugees and migrants who have crossed the Mediterranean Sea so far this year [2015]... UNICEF and IOM call on states and humanitarian actors to safeguard children and families making dangerous journeys to Europe, and to ensure adequate support is available in destination countries.”

192 “The Division supports and promotes partnerships with and among governments with a view to improving policy coherence and cooperative approaches to migration management... The Division develops and disseminates IOM’s contributions to... the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the Global Migration Group. The Division also supports IOM’s participation in the regional consultative processes as a member, partner, observer or service provider at the request of participating governments”.

193 https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/trips_e.htm

system are required, compatible with the open, equitable and non-discriminatory nature of the system”. Among its terms of reference, this committee must examine “the relationship between the provisions of the multilateral trading system and: (a) charges and taxes for environmental purposes; (b) requirements for environmental purposes relating to products, including standards and technical regulations, packaging, labelling and recycling”.¹⁹⁴

11.3.3 *From Networks to Networking*

Here lies a major source of distinction between networks and international arrangements such as clusters, fields, complexes, and meta-organizations. IOs from among which partnerships emerge are “connectors” or “brokers” who do both bridging and bonding. Networks are more able than others to “empower inward group work (i.e., bonding) while also facilitating communication... across diverse groups (i.e., bridging)”. The difference between the two kinds of links is clear: “Bonding strategies [allow] communities to pool internal resources and labour, whereas bridging strategies [enable] access to resources outside of the community” (Wukich et al. 2019: 2-4).

In social network analysis such units are “nodes”. Their main function is to affiliate groups that tend to ignore each other and unite them in the same interorganizational and cross-national network. In the world of IOs there are many such connectors that converge towards certain pivotal organizations. They are in charge of creating, maintaining and expanding a network because their members must be permanently stimulated through renewed social interactions to remain coalesced. Nodes are assigned a specific role by those they connect. They are “matchmakers”, able to make potential collaborators meet efficiently.

Creating a network makes it multifunctional because “the effect of social ties is much stronger than that of economic ties, indicating the predominance of the social interaction over the economic exchange logic in driving multiplexity”. Indeed, “commercial transactions take place through social relations that use exchange protocols associated with social (i.e., non-commercial) attachments to govern business dealings”. A network comprising multiplex ties is more enduring than any another arrangement. We must therefore study the content of each tie (like the level of mutual trust and the sharing of a

194 It must also review “the provisions of the multilateral trading system with respect to the transparency of trade measures used for environmental purposes and environmental measures and requirements which have significant trade effects”; survey “the relationship between the dispute settlement mechanisms in the multilateral trading system and those found in multilateral environmental agreements; the effect of environmental measures on market access, especially in relation to developing countries, in particular to the least developed among them, and environmental benefits of removing trade restrictions and distortions; (and) the issue of exports of domestically prohibited goods”.

common language), not merely their structural arrangement (Ferriani et al. 2012: 9).

Herein lies a crucial component of networking. The more urgently a decision is required, the more necessary it is to *communicate without delay beyond the community* to which an IO belongs.¹⁹⁵ Routine may limit connections to bridging whereas emergency calls for more involved bonding. Coordinating units with which an IO usually works is insufficient because “coordinators facilitate information flow between actors from the same group. Coordination, therefore, enables bonding strategies between similar actors” (Wukich et al. 2019: 3-4), reinforcing what was said about the limits of coordination in chapter 9.

11.4 To Sum Up

Networking goes beyond the concept of a network. It identifies efforts that eventually result in agents being brought together and maintains their proximity in the long run. Creating, maintaining and developing a network is an endless endeavour in dynamics and not in statics.

However stabilized and consolidated it may be (and most are far from satisfying the condition of a stable equilibrium), any network requires attention and involvement. Each component must invest in its own resilience, which inevitably transforms its nature, finally increasing its scope. Eventually, every member should benefit from its constitution, because it is a public sector knowledge network—a sort of common good that drastically increases the speed with which information and expertise are disseminated.

Governmental organizations display more “homophily” than non-state agents in emergency crises. “Overall, 51.0% of all interactions occurred between actors from the same social sector, a score driven by the bonding behaviour of government agencies. Government agencies were more apt to communicate with other government agencies (65.6%)” (Wukich et al. 2019: 7). If confirmed by further research such a trend would imply that “inter-governmental” units are less prone than NGOs to “bridging” stakeholders, and more able to bond them.

195 Per Wukich, Hu, and Siciliano (2019: 2): “as the degree of uncertainty among decision makers increases, their need for external information sources will also increase; therefore, a key skill is the ability to quickly create and maintain communication links in stressful and uncertain conditions.”

12 The Nature of Organizational Networks

We have so far argued that international organizations and multilateral negotiation systems are ever-expanding and increasingly overlapping, which in the end makes them difficult to disentangle when governments decide to restore power over their creatures. This is especially true when they mutate and become complex hybrids or forms of agency that no existing structure can control (Schemeil 2013) in a world that is increasingly dominated by internationalized organizational networks (Schemeil & Eberwein 2014).

If, as I have assumed, *networking* is the inevitable outcome of the increasing proliferation and relevance of international organizations, be they intergovernmental or non-governmental, then combining it with increasing *publicness* (i.e. the ratio of public over private among international stakeholders), before eventually introducing *hybridism* as a supplementary factor or complexity should consolidate the snowballing dynamic which fuels the institutionalization of the world.

Admittedly, there is a possible caveat in such a judgment. More publicness in world affairs may imply more leverage for national rulers. Nonetheless, it works the other way around. When *publicness* is combined with *hybridism* and *networking*, even those states that seem to play better than firms and IOs are condemned to watch the process without exercising much influence over it. In the end, then, my hunch is that virtuous loops may triumph over vicious circles. The negative side effects of diminishing state sovereignty combined with uncontrolled multinational corporations would in this case be replaced by the positive provision and delivery of global public goods, including peace, via international institutions (Brousseau et al. 2010).

Before addressing this issue in part 5 we must know how networking increases the degree of publicness and hybridism, while decreasing the level of traditional homogeneous stakeholder control over global issues.

To this end we must better understand why simple networks are in the hands of private agents, nationally, and how public and complex international networks differ from them. To do this we must stack three concepts (publicness, networking, and hybridism), which is far from simple.

The literature on hybridity or hybridism has little focus on international agencies because it is centred on national organizations, mostly private firms or third sector associations (public purposes, business-like management, charity funds and volunteer work). To deal with sets of several organizations active across borders among which some are public, some private, and some mixed, inspiration must nonetheless be drawn from this stream of research.

Moreover, it is difficult to address the issues of hybridism and publicness separately, because the latter is already included within the former, i.e.,

publicness is an essential source of hybridity. That said, I shall discuss them one after the other to show that neglecting or even skipping this debate in IR stems from several causes. Firstly, political scientists have not paid enough attention to organizational processes. Secondly, realists and neo-realists have displayed little interest in organizational autonomy, which is assumed as minimal either in rational choice studies or principal/agent paradigms. Thirdly, liberal and institutionalist schools focus on IOs as mere counterparts to states, just better equipped than governments to provision public goods internationally; thus, they neglect the network issue. Fourthly, constructivist and critical paradigms do not differentiate between bodies considered as social constructs rather than institutional objects with a tangible reality.

If we want to better explain how the world might be governed on a planet-wide planet scale without adding confusion to the debate, we must combine four factors: the degree of hybridity, level of publicness, extent of internationalization and exposure, and progress in networking to which IOs belong. In the end, as we shall see, IOs are complex hybrids and the networks created from them are *squared complex hybrids*.

12.1 How Much “Publicness” in International Organizations?

Legally, ownership of an organization can be anything from fully private (a firm) to fully public (a ministry) and anything in between (like Chinese state-owned enterprises operating in a capitalist market home and abroad). Financially, funds can accrue from shareholders and bankers or, alternatively, from taxpayers and IGOs. Additionally, centralized controls can arise through inspections and evaluations or delegation to private consultants, external accountants, and regulators. They can also be a mix when an external audit is preceded by internal reviews.

12.1.1 *Publicness as a Ratio of Public over Private*

The proportion of publicness in matters of ownership, assets, control, and values evolves along two diagonals. One is graduated in terms of economic ownership and the other varies according to the level of political authority. The former recapitulates organizations with market-oriented strategies and efficiency (like private schools or clinics). The latter depends on the “public value” of an organization (like academic institutions), which makes it

recognized as socially useful and pursuing the public interest, i.e. as “normative” and not merely “empirical” or factual (Bozeman & Moulton 2011).¹⁹⁶

Publicness is also a matter of norms and legitimacy. It increases when entrepreneurs spend money making the effort to convince others that their egoistic profitability is conditioned to their altruistic usefulness or when they endorse behavioural norms that rely on universal values such as fairness, transparency, or solidarity, and improve the Human Development Index (if not the Freedom House Index) everywhere (Demortain 2004).

This “integrative” conception of publicness underlines an implicit hybridism going beyond the simple mix of private and public criteria. It incites scholars to map the context exhaustively (for instance, in the health or education fields) in order to position each organization and institution in relation with every other.¹⁹⁷ Within this conceptual framework, every organization embeds public and private standards together, though in varying proportions: there are different ratios of publicness over privateness in any unit (Bozeman 1987). However, a third dimension has so far been neglected, opposing effectiveness to fairness or “equity” (Andrews et al. 2011). Indeed, organizations that are mostly characterized by privateness can be more efficient but less equitable than those grounded on a higher level of publicness (possibly endowed with greater worker motivation and satisfaction).

Created to depict organizations entrenched behind national borders, this explanatory model can be applied across borders since national firms and public organizations are either more capital-intensive or more labour-intensive. However, given the need to build the heavy structures that allow intermingled operations and unlike single corporations operating transnationally, IR modifies Bozeman’s concept and its prospects.

196 Compared to “empirical” publicness—like the status of the owner of the organization, where funds come from, etc.—“normative” publicness consists of an “infusion of public values” in the private sector (Bozeman & Moulton 2011: 1367). Ratios of public funds vary as in some Swiss and Norwegian NGOs to which the implementation of state policies is assigned or the aerospace industry, which could not innovate without governmental support (Bozeman 1984).

197 What Bozeman and Moulton call “the institutional configuration of firms and other innovation relevant actors”.

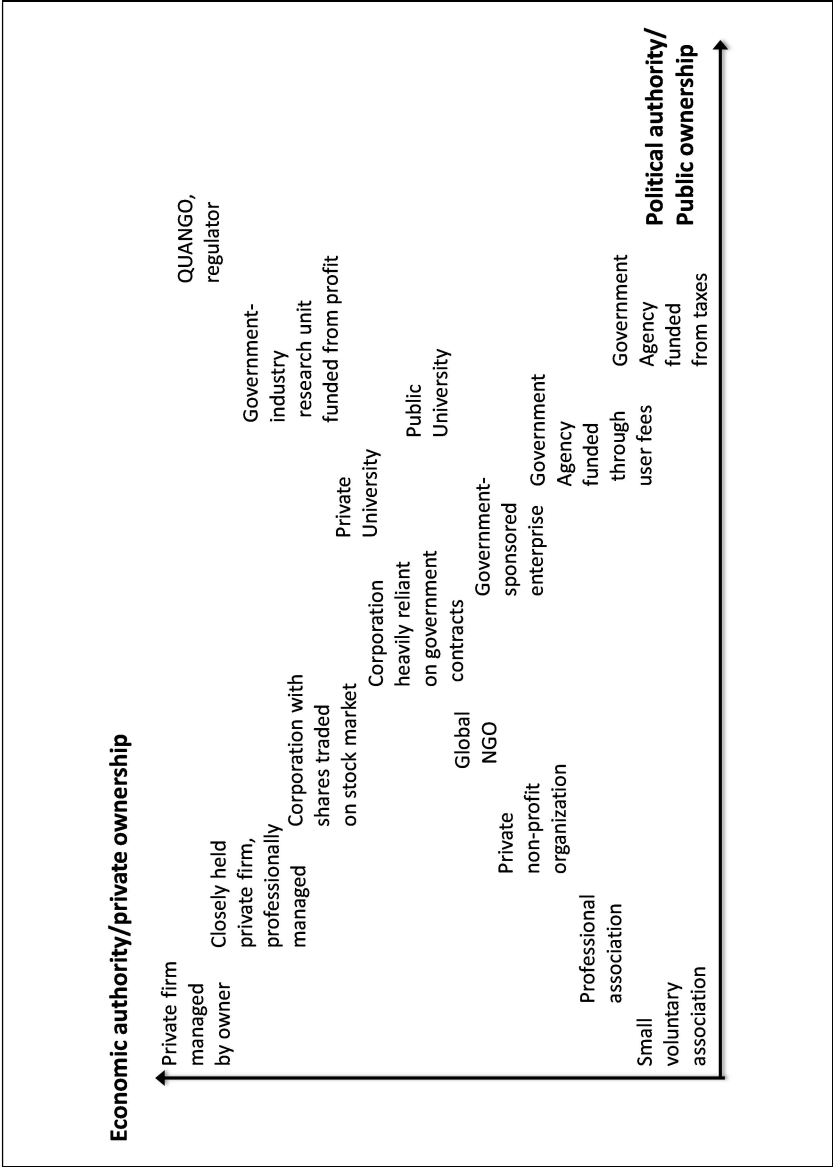


Figure 4. Publicness in various types of agencies (slightly adapted and completed from B. Bozeman)

12.2 Going Hybrid

The concept of hybridism initially contemplated a simple mix of public and private statuses like an administration and a firm, or a Public-Private Partnership.¹⁹⁸ Scholars feel we should view this “shared concept of hybridity as an inter-sectorial phenomenon” (Evers 2021: 297). Hybridism means that the comparative advantages of each sector are deliberately combined to maximize the resources of the whole, exactly as with hybrid flowers in botany. The problems solved in one realm help another to face its own challenges.

Another assumption is that complementarities, even hidden, exist across sectors.¹⁹⁹ When this is not the case “antagonist” recipes can be found via the mobilization of resources that are unexpected in the sector that imports them, which succeeds in turning old liabilities into new opportunities (Hockerts 2015).

Lately, the concept has been applied to a mix of public and private concerns such as in social and humanitarian organizations or health research joint ventures.²⁰⁰ However, it has quickly evolved to a more complex status because a hybrid organization “combines different institutional logics in unprecedented ways”.²⁰¹ It does so because “hybridization arises from a plurality of rationalities” and identities; thus, organizations of that kind are not only “blended”, they are a squared mix of different sectors, domains, and purposes, as well as “normative frames” over simple managerial forms (Battilana & Dorado 2010: 1149; Evers 2021: 298; Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015: 434).

What matters here are “logics” (public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit, etc.) because how they are combined generates the dominant attribute of a network (state or market, altruistic or egoistic, parochial or inclusive,

198 According to the Elgar Handbook of Hybrid Organizations, they are “organisations that combine significant features from market, public and third sector organisations”. In the chapter on the third sector, the definition is enlarged and becomes: “Here hybrids appear as organisational forms that combine *distinct purposes*, such as service provision and advocacy, value change and mutual help” (Evers, 2021: 214, my emphasis). As we shall see, complex hybrids go several steps beyond.

199 Per Kai Hockerts, “[C]ombining complementary assets produces an effect greater than the sum of the individual effects of each resource” (2015: 85).

200 “We use the term hybrid organization (or hybrid) to refer to enterprises that mix aspects of for-profit and nonprofit realms to solve specific social or environmental issues while striving to remain economically sustainable” (Haigh et al., 2015: 60).

201 To be more precise, “institutional logics are taken-for-granted social prescriptions that represent shared understandings of what constitutes legitimate goals and how they may be pursued” (idem).

etc.).²⁰² From this assumption a first hypothesis unfolds: different combinations of logics generate different forms of hybridity.

However, a second possibility is that the dominant logic governs the functioning of an organization that gives agents their identity. Both trends converge in making “the process of identification a cultural mechanism through which actors gain an allegiance to the particular symbols of a logic” in the organization. This makes hybridity “more than just an amalgam of sectorial characteristics”. It “challenges this conventional view by demonstrating that a hybrid organization arises from the existence of plural normative frames (logics) and their associated multiple actor identities” Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015).

Scholars working on hybridity recognize that many public and non-profit organizations do play more than one game (Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015: 439, 444).²⁰³ According to them, there is room for various levels of hybridization from “shallow” to “entrenched”, and from “organic” (built by a first mover that was initially a pure public or private sector) to “enacted” (designed as a hybrid from the start) (Billis 2010: 48, 59). In every case, though, strategy and personal ambitions (or vision) are the true drivers of a turn towards hybridity, be it at the onset or at a later stage of organizational development. This underscores the fact that even firms can find advantages in becoming not-for profit hybrids because they exist in various guises—in fitness, gaming, earnings, employment, etc. (Haigh et al. 2015: 65-6). All these nuances underline scholars’ desire to give a proper account of a notion that did not become a concept so easily in order to recommend it or not to specific industries and associations (at least in Management Studies).

Of course, such interplay between identities rooted in different logics is even more visible in international relations since IOs staffs are dedicated to the provision of global public goods and the ownership of a difficult to retain mandate, where contrasting logics and identities cohabit. In such a case, some

202 “Rather than conceptualizing hybrids descriptively as entities that somehow combine different sectorial characteristics or organizational forms, a theoretically richer approach is to propose that they are carriers of multiple institutional logics” (Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015: 439).

203 Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015: 439-442, “propose five types of hybrids based a priori on particular combinations of institutional logics: *segmented*, *segregated*, *assimilated*, and *blended* hybrids are structural ways of accommodating institutional pluralism within the organization; the *blocked* hybrid represents a situation where the organization is unable to resolve the contradictions between different logics... The *segmented* hybrid is characterized by compartmentalization within a single organization... In contrast, the logics in the *segregated* hybrid have a greater degree of insulation from each other by virtue of being located within distinct but interconnected organizations... In the *assimilated* hybrid, the core or original logic remains but the organization adopts some of the practices and symbols of a new logic. Rather than compartmentalizing the logics, a selective incorporation of elements of each occurs... The *blended* hybrid is one in which the logics evolve into a novel and contextually specific form”.

have more “normative strength” than others because agents are more committed to the values they convey than to other values. “Multilateral negotiations as environmental turbulences” are the loci of such confrontation. They compel top managers to search for a blended culture, hence reinforcing the hybridity of their organization (Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015: 445).

In recent years the concept of “hybridism” has been fine-tuned to become much more sophisticated. It has been shown that hybridism will not suffice to oppose state, market, and the third sector because “[w]hile market and hierarchy are mutually exclusive, the hybrid does not form a discrete third category. Instead, it manifests itself along a continuum of which market and hierarchy are the discrete end points” (Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015: 435).

Even within the private sector cases illustrate other combination of factors able to bring hybridity. Take a bakery in New York which is “a hybrid organization: Its employees, mostly low-income immigrant women, bake bread inspired by their countries of origin, while learning job skills that can lead them to management positions in the food industry” (Battilana et al. 2012: 51). In this case, the workforce is multinational (first factor of hybridism). It comprises unqualified jobs and jobs at the outset of a professional career (second factor), which themselves combine a business model and social ambition (third factor). On top of that, the company is hybrid because it has opted for an *integrated* strategy (commercial and social: profits and welfare are jointly produced),²⁰⁴ which qualifies it as a “social innovator”. It is also an *integrative* organization, since “the multiple identities generated by institutional pluralism are resolved through the incorporation of their synergistic elements into a new singular identity” (Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015: 442).

Such analyses show that hybridism is key to both innovation and resilience on one condition: hybrid organizations that succeed must create a “balanced organizational culture”. This is exactly the realm in which IOs are strong, as a result of diplomatic constraints like having regional representation, multidisciplinary staff, and making top managers circulate—which explains why they can combine the comparative advantage of non-profit organizations or charities with performance-oriented firms or financial institutions.

It is clear that hybridism entails a contradiction in terms. Hybrids are both a source of tensions and a tool to smooth them. The more so with networks that could not exist without hybridism. In “hybrid networks... the stake-

204 “Rather than take a nonprofit model and add a commercial revenue stream—or take a for-profit model and add a charity or service program—Hot Bread Kitchen’s integrated hybrid model produces both social value and commercial revenue through a single, unified strategy” (Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith 2015). Likewise, “development” and “banking” goals can be combined in microfinance, for example (Battilana & Dorado 2010). Organizations can either help those who need aid and assistance or generate money and loans. However, they are chimeras, half social/public and half capitalist/private.

holders are influenced by different institutional logics”, which must be combined to contribute to organizational effectiveness through the creation of innovation: as the predicament that plagues imbalanced structures has been surpassed, thanks to the greater variety of resources available in a network compared to a single organization, then risky diversity leads to mutually beneficial co-creation (Touati & Maillet 2018: 2).

Learning about the causes of unsuccessful collaboration is enlightening. By default, we can easily imagine how networks could help IOs staff to work together and create a new reality:

“[First] it is far from easy to enrol actors involved in complex problems for co-creation processes. This is due to the lack of perception of interdependencies... Second, the implementation of these co-creation processes in the context of hybrid networks requires the mobilization of actors who play the role of translators (facilitator adviser) and tools (intermediaries)... Third... bottom-up type co-creation processes, even if they lead to innovative ideas, do not necessarily lead to changes in practices [because] controversies raised by the innovation... are particularly present in hybrid networks. It thus appears that the support of the management sphere is essential... Fourth, the resolution of controversies induced by innovation processes in the context of hybrid networks is far from easy... because the actors did not agree on the probative nature of each other’s knowledge... Fifth, the outcome of innovation processes in the context of hybrid networks relies heavily on a constellation of leaders who act as spokespersons and translators” (Touati & Maillet 2018: 15).

Several statements within this excerpt deserve a comment before we apply them to the IO world. A common perception of the context and its challenges is a prerequisite for co-creation within a hybrid network. Collaboration starts when coordinators share the same sense of urgency. Then, “facilitators and “intermediaries” are participants in coordination cells, while “spokespersons” and “translators” are permanent representatives who must convey common decisions back to their own IO. Lastly, controversies unfold from insufficient confidence in the value of knowledge acquired in another IO. When experts agree on predictions about the scope and rhythm of climate change and assign it to human activity, then coordination between network components intensifies (as with IPCC, WMO, UNEP, UNIDO and a number of NGOs).

One risk associated with hybrids is what authors call “mission drift”—the model is skewed towards one of its two poles (public good or private profit). If there is an excessive imbalance between the two, then resilience is threatened and subgroups fight against each other (Battilana & Dorado 2010: 1435).²⁰⁵ We are back to ambidexterity, already addressed in chapters 5 and 6.

205 “Our results first suggest that, to be sustainable, a novel hybrid organization needs to develop a common organizational identity that strikes a balance between the logics the organization combines. Such a common identity will prevent the emergence of subgroups whose different identities emphasize the tensions between the logics combined”.

Start-ups are good candidates to become hybrids, NGOs too. Eventually IGOs can themselves benefit from the “tabula rasa effect”. When they are established and for people first recruited to start operating there is no previous model imposed on them. They can create their own mix of extant patterns.

This, then, brings us to the world of IOs, where networks can better accommodate diversity if not incompatibility of operating principles—if only because the bricks used to build the network can compensate for the imbalance between social and financial goals that could affect the system.

12.3 Interorganizational Networks

Networks of IOs can be defined as sustainable and polycentric connections among three or more partners linked across heterogeneous social spheres, which may spiral up and spill over easily but at their own pace, and with no need to intervene.

This definition deserves to be examined. Firstly, it insists on continuity. Sustainability and spiralling up suggest two associated processes (enlargement and deepening). Secondly, horizontality prevails over verticality: there is no need to intervene (automaticity; autonomy—an agency that no existing structure can control). Thirdly, there is no source, and no target organization (no principle and no agent). Fourthly, networks have no definite borders, unlike meta-organizations (they spill over easily). Fifthly, there is hybridism (three or more partners are linked across heterogeneous social spheres, each evolving at its own rhythm).

Of course, there is a great variety of interorganizational networks, in terms of “connectivity, formalization and member homogeneity” (Huybrechts & Haugh 2018: 1088), as revealed by the genealogy of the concept. The sources of network theory come from neurocognitive knowledge, which insists on connections, signals, and fluxes and sociological theory, focused on the sociometrics of interpersonal relationships. A second inspiration is drawn from the study of interactions at a distance (web 2.0, online posts, i.e. “likes” or claims to be “friends”). A third vision targets organizational networks (the various sorts of partnerships existing between organizations).

As for the first stream, the core concept is “activation” (synapses, neurons). Other important notions are “geodesic” measurements of respective positions and permutations, which pertain to distance and proximity from the “core” or the “centre”, etc. (Schulze & Ries 2017).

What are the specificities of social networks as networks? They consist of hubs rather than a defined perimeter within boundaries. They combine internal empowerment and external enlightenment, pooling internal resources

and labour, and enabling access to resources outside of the community (Wukich et al. 2019). Compared to less integrated kinds of clustering, interorganizational networks have structural specificity. Their influence on the behaviour of components is direct and immediate. There is a minimum level of permanent dense and frequent interactions, and a great number of nodes, cores and focuses of all sizes, plus a huge dimension of the grid in which they are interwoven (unlike dyads). Their “persistent patterns” have structuring effects on actors belonging to them. They also have role-specificity. The main function of their connectors is to affiliate groups tending to ignore each other and have them belong to the same interorganizational cross-national network.

12.3.1 The Specificity of International Networks

Every international network has a degree of publicness without which it could not exist. To use another analogy its “flesh” may be a hundred per cent private but both “bones” and “skin” are a hundred per cent public. Without public rules and paramount institutions no network could cross national borders.

States or their conglomerates (like regional economic units and functional or universal world organizations) can legitimize clusters as juridical entities operating within the perimeter and according to the principles defined by treaties and other intergovernmental agreements. Fully public networks invent the rules of the game, then legislate and enact their own laws. In their absence there is no identity for a firm, no patent for its products, no protection for its investments and market positions. The outward appearance of a “private” unit (its “trademark”, its “face”, its “skin”) is therefore contained within the limits of international public law. It can be contested in courts, as are its statements in public or towards the public—whether commercial advertisements or press releases.

Conflicts arise over the consistency of the symbolic image of a network member with its actual activities. This becomes increasingly manifest in the pharmaceutical and phytosanitary sectors or in the field of energy, where the promises made are rarely vindicated by the products sold. Therefore, there is a growing dissonance between the public image advertised by the firm and public opinion about its products. Corporate efforts to protect the identity of a company inevitably result in more publicness being injected because they depend on a reaffirmation of the firm’s commitment to the general interest, its behavioural norms as a “good citizen” company, which sponsors health, humanitarian, patrimonial or art operations. If firms go to court or decide to launch a corporate action when their whole sector of activity is threatened,

counteractions that were contemplated to reassign missions consistent with their initial identity as private units make them more public than ever.

As for the “bones” of such networks, their publicness is more debatable, since it may be hidden to the ordinary citizens as is the case with powerful lobbies whose governing bodies comprising a handful of people. This in itself is a source of repeated conjectures about pseudo plots against the general interest.

All this notwithstanding, these links are themselves publicly defined since before going abroad any type of contractual activity must first be drafted according to international covenants and its implementation can be contested in tribunals. Secondly, firms and their central node—their headquarters—must have a legal address, pay tax in the state where they are registered as trading operators, and treat their employees according to national or regional regulations.

Institutional members of a global network receive their funds from state and interstate bodies, which is particularly true with non-governmental organizations and think tanks. Charities, meanwhile, depend on intergovernmental regulations. As there is public money, there are public frames, constraints, and audits that condition the renewal of financial support if not authorizations to operate. When expatriates risk being arbitrarily jailed, abducted, or killed, the most private networks are subject to the iron law of travel interdiction and compulsory repatriation, which both give the state and any interstate network enough leverage to steer “private” activities from positions within national and international public institutions. Political turmoil in a country in which NGOs that are registered abroad operate may lead the authorities to shut them down, under the pretext that they are helping the interest of a rival state (as in Egypt, China and Russia with American and European sponsored NGOs).

My hypothesis is that international networks are more public intensive than private intensive. The more international they are, the more public networks go.

12.3.2 A World Made of Complex Hybrids

IOs are complex, multifaceted, and multileveled neo-classical hybrids. While simple hybrids are a mix of public, private and third sectors, complex hybrids are multi-layered, and inter-sectorial. Due to an increasing symbiosis between public IGOs and third sector NGOs, they became hybrids in the usual sense of the word very early in life. However, IOs do not just address economic, social, and cultural issues as ministers, firms, and associations mainly do. They also deal constantly with world politics, international power, sovereignty, and the delivery of global public goods that cannot be privately or nationally apportioned.

Accordingly, they are not neutral bureaucracies designed to implement with full loyalty the resolutions of national governments or executive councils. Being political and international they indulge equally in high and low politics. Therefore, IOs mix types of units that organization studies usually oppose, since they are altogether inward-directed and outside-oriented, bottom-up and top-down, and are ruled by a formal and an informal hierarchy (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011: 1526–31). Above all IOs accommodate the permanent representatives of national governments and transnational civil servants who combine experts' knowhow and top managers' skills. Although the list is not exhaustive it shows that the concept of hybridism is certainly enriched by the discussion of IOs as complex rather than "post-modern" hybrids.

Lastly, IOs are hybrids in another way. They balance contradictory constructs such as mechanical and organic organization, exploration and exploitation, reform and innovation, "initiation and implementation" (Duncan 1976, quoted in Datta 2011: 4). To explore new missions while exploiting existing assets an IO must face temporary de-institutionalization, accept a certain amount of slack, and renegotiate the initial contract with its principals while creating new norms, new structures, new technologies, and new processes.

IOs that succeed in doing this are close to a new type of individual hybrids that evolve internally over the years alongside the external evolution of their global environment. When the velocity of external turbulence is high, "new organizational forms can mutate and emerge from the existing population of organizations". This could well be the reputational legacy of a suitable and legitimate balance between exploration and exploitation, which would distinguish a particularly successful organizational design and target it as a model to copy by isomorphism (Lewin et al. 1999: 535, 538). Such "co-evolving self-renewing organizations", identified by their "holistic renewal" and "collective sense-making", and able to "synchronize internal and external rates of change", can "optimize self-organization" (Volberda & Lewin 2003). They would obviously display escalating amounts of hybridism.

Causes of hybridization may also lie in knowledge building. University research institutions, pharmaceutical laboratories, national health administrations and contagious disease centres, plus health IOs (WHO, OIE, UN Fund, UNAIDS, Gates Foundation, Gavi, etc.), all contribute to producing indisputable judgment about the origins of a pandemic. They say how to tackle it, elaborate prevention-friendly processes, tracing, vaccination, and medical protocol in hospitals, quarantine and lockdowns. Politicians and citizens have no means and genuinely little incentive to contradict such conventional wisdom. When this occurs every component takes a step forward, quickly reaching the stage where all belong to a hybrid network-heterogeneous, for sure, but no longer contradictory.

Now, the next issue to address is network vulnerability. We might ask “how networks may successfully support the institutionalization process despite the legitimacy challenges inherent in organizational hybridity”, and “how the work to institutionalize a new hybrid organizational form is undertaken when the network is itself also under construction” (Huybrechts & Haugh 2016: 1086). We need to solve these puzzles to consolidate the value of the NGM.

There is at least one example of a hybrid network that has been successful: the network of renewable energy cooperatives because “at the informal stage, the network acted as a forum to raise the members’ collective reflexivity and integrate multiple discourses into a collective voice; the formalized network coordinated conciliation between members’ rules and practices; and as the network acquired federative capacity it amalgamated the members’ connections with plural field-level actors” (Huybrechts & Haugh 2016: 1087).

As this quote shows, what explains the improbable success of marginal and heterogeneous stakeholders in a new field of action are, firstly, superior power of advocacy (either pragmatic or ethical); secondly, a greater outreach capacity across sectors and across borders. Their respective influence also depends on the mediating and formalizing functions that make components prone to act together. In short, networks solve the dilemma of collective action that single organizations cannot overcome on their own.

We all know how collective action can prevent free riding, selfish behaviour, and exit options. However, what may be true nationally is unlikely across borders. International organizations have few incentives to work together because additional investments and transaction costs could be higher than the marginal benefit to be shared by stakeholders. The logical solution to the dilemma is to operate within a network. Some are more or less enthusiastically “constructed by adopters of the new hybrid organizational form” through a bottom-up process. Other “well-established and central networks” are built from the top. Given the former are a product of deliberate decisions, they illustrate the Olson/Hirschman models with corporate agents rather than isolated actors. As for the top-down networks, they remain an enigma. They may be a third level of the Olson/Hirschman models, which neither of them has addressed.

Heads of IOs are convinced or compelled to join a network led by another IO because going it alone in a multilateral world is dangerous when others coalesce. Consequently, as networks are less focused on decisions than centred on deliberation, “they foster reflexivity among their members”. It is not the gaining of specific rewards that matters (what Olson called “selective incentives”) but the capacity to find allies and win over major decision-makers (through a “selective coupling strategy”). Beyond this, the fear of being left behind and deprived of the joint benefits of collective action is a

powerful driver of coalitions. Remaining isolated raises the risks of being side-lined and becoming obsolete instead of learning from experienced first-movers. Even when there is no selective benefit to expect from acting together, survival offers access to all reward.

When collective trans-organizational action becomes real a hybrid network emerges and “gain[s] federative capacity”. It is “mandated to act on behalf of its members” with more pluralism but less antagonism or less “opposition to radical institutional change” (Huybrechts & Haugh 2016: 1100-2). Then, a series of successive steps pave the way for a hybrid network. Contradictory goals among members of the network are harmonized; alternative narratives about what must be done in common are proposed; the level of collective reflexivity is increased; a hybrid organization form in which all stakeholders are represented on an equal footing is designed; norms are reconciled and formalized as rules; advocacy (moral and pragmatic) of the new network begins; members’ connections with their own audience are now pooled into a single amalgam of contacts, which makes joint lobbying possible.

Once the priority concerns of members of the network are publicly known, institutionalization becomes an accepted process internally (Huybrechts & Haugh 2016: 1089; figure 1, 1091; 1097). The last hurdle to be jumped is the receptivity of external partners to the emergence of a newcomer. A network exists when it can rely on long-lasting recognition by other global actors. It can then invert divisions. Success stories circulate, because “[i]n contrast to what could be achieved by organizations acting alone, the network [draws] on the diverse views and collective skills of network members to carve out symbolic space... in which the new hybrid organizational form [can] flourish” (Huybrechts & Haugh 2016: 1103).

Hybrid networks grow as quickly as black holes. This is because “institutionalization efforts target a growing array of audiences, from field gatekeepers in the early phase to potential adopters in the second phase and ultimately also new form supporters and competitors in the last phase”. The message conveyed is that “hybrid organizational form institutionalization... successively involves building field-level receptivity to institutional pluralism, collectively codifying the new hybrid organizational form and consolidating legitimation towards plural audiences” (Huybrechts & Haugh 2016: 1104).

We can conclude from this discussion that complex hybrids have three characteristics: (1) they accommodate several heterogeneous “field” organizations of all sizes, scope, and status, and pool their assets; (2) they are mandated to act on behalf of their members, between which potential conflicts have been settled or converted into positive energy; (3) they achieve external recognition so far denied to each component on its own due to a lack of visibility.

12.4 To Sum Up

The internationalization of states, firms and NGOs and their belonging to complex and hybrid networks increases the level of publicness and the intensity of networking of the most successful cross-border activities.

As assumed at the very beginning of this book, no single unit can control this process. Regression to the preceding stage is possible but rare. Decisions made to reverse the trend reinforce it mechanically because they nurture the very publicness and networking aspects of globalization that they are meant to combat.

In the end, institutionalization of the world is inevitable, whatever its endgame may be (for alternative theoretical possibilities, see Sgard, Brousseau, & Schemel 2012), which, in turn, raises doubts about the sustainability of the basic components of the international system, e.g., national sovereignty, free competition, and popular control over rulers. This is because complex and hybrid networks are endowed with specific properties that we must now examine in detail.

13 The Properties of Organizational Networks

Within networks, the level of “publicness” increases, and with it concerns for the “public interest”. The more transnational the networks are, the more public they are. Hybridity grows as well, because networks convert the challenges faced by each of their components into a common opportunity. Lastly, networks also make the best of the specific liabilities that plague each of their members in isolation. They turn impairing challenges into comparative advantages. For instance, they can mobilize temporarily unemployed people and reassign them to innovative tasks at higher levels of responsibility.

Organizational networks have much originality. They also have specific properties like diminishing transaction costs (or mundane costs) and increasing coordination costs (or boundary costs). A better understanding of such handicaps is a prerequisite to a sound analysis of network building. This is not easy though: there is no agreement on what these costs really are. One of the major criticisms of rationalist theories is their reliance on the assumption that elementary units build networks to significantly alleviate their mutual transaction costs. Reducing them would balance the loss of property rights, legal competences, and actual control over their agents by an alien structure. This assumption has been widely debated, though “sociological institutionalists... have argued that powers are delegated to political agents not (or not primarily) to reduce transaction costs for principals, but rather because such delegation is widely accepted as legitimate or appropriate by the principals or by their constituents” due to normative pressure (i.e. moral authority), or mimetic isomorphism (Pollack 2007: 15-16).

In this chapter I shall go one step further: whatever their roles in cementing IOs transaction costs are no longer significant once the network exist. It brings economies of scale, a “policy portfolio” comprising several tasks (Hooghe & Marks 2014), a well-defined division of labour, and growing experience in the mutual benefits that can be reasonably expected from collaboration.

Before trying to probe this thesis we must agree upon what “transaction costs” are. The classical definition comes from afar (Coase, Arrow, Hicks) but Oliver Williamson’s reformulation is the most widely accepted. He differentiates them from fixed production costs and sees such variable costs as “the economic equivalent of friction in physical systems”, which makes

the gross value of a good diminish during the exchange (Williamson 1985: 18-19).²⁰⁶

Attaining or keeping a stakeholder's reputation might entail a certain amount of this cost. You have to spend time and money to build a positive image of goodwill and reliability since diplomacy is time consuming. You need to assess "mundane costs" as able to affect "encapsulation boundaries" among units, i.e., the delimitations between units behind which it is possible to keep information private according to some "hidden design parameters" that remain unknown to the outside world (Langlois 2006).

Within organizations one transaction cost matters more than any other: the cost of "asset partitioning", which guarantees the respective property rights of the organizations that are party to a collaborative arrangement. If this was not done properly, components could disagree about continuing to share costs based on an initially accepted cue grounded in equality, fairness, and positive discrimination towards LDCs. Not all transaction costs are liabilities, however. Some are "dynamic": they help to organize interactions, build "transaction-supporting institutions" and constitutionalize routines in order to make collaborative arrangements self-sustaining (Langlois 2006: 1401).

What happens when we shift from firms and markets to look at IOs? Is "politicking" a transaction cost or not? Research shows that framing hot issues into a technological idiom spares a costly ideological confrontation (Petiteville 2017: 12). It is now clear that politicization implies hedging against domestic electoral risks rather than fighting uncertainty in the international environment (Hooghe & Marks 2014: 8). Introducing such costs in a discussion about interorganizational relations put the stress on *negotiation* and *bargaining*, whereas in a perfectly rational and free market there should not be any additional cost attributable to the nature of the institutional design.

Negotiating has two functions: it reveals the hidden preferences of the negotiators and makes coalitions possible. Therefore it is not a waste of time or a source of risk. Rather, it facilitates a sound division of labour without any vertical integration (Langlois 2006: 1401).

In short, when IOs get along they experience joint transaction costs of all sorts; then, positive, dynamic, and consensus-making costs rise; finally, boundaries simply vanish because information circulates unrestrictedly.

Is this the end of "mundane costs", i.e., costs that are not directly linked to the provision of the public good in which each IO is specialized? Networks

206 "As the term was originally used in monetary theory, a transaction cost occurred when, in effect, some amount of the good was used up in the transaction. In Paul Samuelson's (1954) famous iceberg model of transportation costs, a certain amount of the iceberg melts away as it is transported—or, we might add, as it waits around while being exchanged. This sounds very much like friction" (Langlois 2006: 1390).

spare transaction costs, which shrink or evaporate: there is less politicking. They require less social effort, even though negotiation skills need to be mobilized. Mutual control replaces discretionary power.

13.1 From Transaction Costs to Coordination Costs

Transaction costs still matter at one step below networks, e.g., in clusters and meta-organizations, because property rights remain “pillarized” instead of being transferred to a new entity. Property rights, in this context, are *symbolic* (intellectual property rights for having invented a norm or a process; brand names associated with a well-known IO) as well as *material* (like headquarters, financial assets, regional and local contacts). They can involve selective competence to address specific issues alone rather than entrusting others to handle them as doctors do in the health sector, military people in the security field, meteorologists in weather reporting, engineers in the realm of telecommunications, etc. While upgrading the level of decision-making may be painful, it can be accepted if it does not entail any loss of property rights.

Although clustering is helpful to pool resources, it makes transaction costs climb when consent is lacking. It is more difficult to convince reluctant staffs of the sincerity behind integrating everyone on an equal footing, without frustration or any sense of relative deprivation. We can then make the assumption that consent is the main driver towards the final stage of cooperation. Once the new format is accepted, agents can reap the benefits of an upgraded collaboration. The perimeter on which discretion is kept has shrunk drastically. Property rights have not fully disappeared but they are now conditioned to teamwork among former competitors.

There is another reason why *transaction costs* are spared or at least reduced in a network compared with less efficient clustering formats. The units composing a network can access a bigger “policy portfolio” comprising a variety of tasks (Hooghe & Marks 2014). They benefit from a well-defined division of labour. They exchange information about their growing experience of the mutual benefits that can be reasonably expected from collaboration. They have fewer “encapsulation boundaries” and private information is banned.

As for *coordination costs* these are reduced when autonomous units voluntarily engage in joint activities. This requires mutual trust, solidly anchored within a group of peers. At that point the painful effort of testing each partner’s sincerity is spared. Members of the network have achieved what Erving Goffman called “the felicity condition”: clarification is no

longer needed because the context is shared and the text itself is not biased by possible misunderstandings about meaning (Goffman 1983).²⁰⁷

The opposite situation occurs when a particular type of cost still weighs on interacting agents before the network stage. What I call “*position costs*” are paid whenever: (a) arguments and counter-arguments must be endlessly exchanged by all participants in the network without exception; (b) no other contributor has publicly expressed one stakeholder’s preferred argument before their time to speak comes (they must boldly defend their position rather than stay silent); and (c) statements are not only meant to be understood by a happy few prime-movers and field experts, they must reach members of the set that are not yet accepted within its inner circles. To this end, avoiding talking or talking after everyone else is finished are the best strategies to avoid criticism and retain a capital of sympathy. The stronger networks are, the less likely it is that members will pay position costs.

For the sake of precision, let us add a few comments about this unusual type of cost, unheard of in the literature on OS or IR. We know what a “position paper” is but we rarely think that its authors or those who inspired its content could be exposed to any specific risks just by making a commitment public. Such risks exist, though, and each entails a specific cost.²⁰⁸

Position costs in this book are *undesirable joint products of public statements made all along the decision-making process*. Some of these claims are timely and efficacious; others are not. Dramatic illustration of the existence of such costs come to the fore when an agent triggers disapproval by taking sides too early before another debater eventually makes the same point viewed as essential by the party keeping silent. However, when the stakes are high and the issue is divisive, negotiators often tend to take their chance before it is too late. The more premature their statement, the higher the position cost, and the more negotiating parties will be confused, dissatisfied or frustrated by the content and extent of the commitment.

Periodical press releases assessing advances made during a round of bilateral negotiations between two states are usual. Going a step further towards a successful endgame we find joint statements given by more than two governments to show their mutual sense of proximity compared to other countries. Such speeches are often made prior to a meeting; they give each party an opportunity to post its negotiation goals much ahead of the round. Publicity closes certain negotiation paths while raising other stakes to a

207 Per Brugger et al., 2017, 417, “From the perspective of transaction-cost economics, trust presents an efficient instrument for the governance and coordination of cooperative relations between principal and agent, but also between equal partners... by alleviating decision-making under subjectively reduced complexity, trusting actors have to mobilize fewer resources”.

208 In a public IO, this type of cost has nothing whatsoever to do with the cost of exposed positions in a shareholders’ market, and their distribution among companies to hedge the risk, sometimes called in the management literature “cost position”.

maximum. Reaching for tactical assets that could justify risk-taking behaviour and potential retaliation is tempting, as evidenced in the history of diplomacy full of spectacular pledges to bind oneself, bluff adversaries, or bully weaker partners (Schelling 1960, on “tying hands”).

By contrast, between IOs such statements are conclusive in the two meanings of the word, i.e., they come at the end of the round and they are positive. For instance, partners commit themselves to mutual support, promising to boost the guarantees that global public goods are really accessible to everyone. A joint statement from the UNWTO (on tourism) and the WHO (on health) sounds like a promise of safe trips and happy visits. It is even more widely praised from partners who generally pursue distinct goals. One such instance is UNIDO (on industrial development) and UNEP (on the protection of the environment) both involved in the 2008 “Cleaner Production Programme” and the 2009 “Joint Programme on Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production”.

Governmental and intergovernmental statements are meant to remind outsiders that there are red lines (for states) or limits to goodwill (for IOs). Within a global institution the positions adopted by member states can block organizational initiatives. To be proactive organizational agents must blame mavericks, deter powerful stakeholders from blocking discussions, and avoid blackmail by pivotal states. Whoever they are, the staff must endlessly reaffirm their convictions and protect their identity.

Such efforts are no longer necessary within networks. When additional gain is not proportionate to a loss of collaborative reputation, members no longer have to pay position costs. Within a network, it is no longer necessary to guess when is the right time to express one’s views and not miss the opportunity. Assuming that network goals are collective and public, precautions not to weaken one’s private and hypothetically concealed goals are no longer necessary. It is now more advantageous to assume convergence of private and public goals than to search in vain for unlikely dissonance. The risk of being misunderstood is obviously less when the only statements released are those on which other decision-makers than the authors of the draft can make no mistake. Misperceptions are therefore unlikely.

During networks but not interstate or interorganizational meetings, no agent must take sides, rally the majority, or express dissenting opinions: “sides”, “majority”, and “dissent” are useless. Statements are made but they are neither meant to warn nor to harm anyone. Since every partner understands the legitimacy of concessions to reach consensus, compromises are less painful. As the longevity of the network is greater than any temporary cluster of IOs, iteration is guaranteed—any loss will be compensated.

Another advantage of networks in terms of position costs is their capacity to eliminate *performative* speech. Phatic language, cheap talk, and lip service to a cause are all meant to bring to fruition a hope framed in a rhetorical

form. They have no motive other than to remind partners of the supreme ontological oppositions dividing them. Any form of understatement would be taken as artificial, unnecessary, and even provocative (if only because it would slow the pace of the decision). Blunt declarations would be strange, inappropriate, and even more provocative without any reasonable justification.

The diplomatic sphere is not void of examples of such inadequate and dysfunctional moves. When negotiation is a matter of words (Risse 2000), switching from *talking* to *arguing* is great progress. Talking generates high position costs whereas arguing means less likelihood of losing partners' empathy.

13.1.1 Cost-killing Drivers of Networking

We must assume that networks will be established and maintained if and only if transaction costs plus position costs are greater than coordination costs. Thus, it is of the essence to assess the latter despite the fact that they are much less documented and analysed than the former.

When autonomous units engage in joint activities and mutual adjustment is automatic, coordination costs are next to nil. This happened when Eurostat has first sent satellite views of "shipwrecked people" in the Mediterranean to the IMO and to the Italian Navy. When Eurostat next warned ECHO, OCHA, the IOM or the UNHCR about the possible implications of images showing what it now called "refugees", potentially drowned people became an actual threat to European countries, variously impacted by this sudden "wave". Calling the UN or the EU later on triggered a state of alert requiring immediate action, strategic planning and sound division of tasks—hence, new coordination costs to adequately interpret the same images.

Another telling example is the dissemination of classified information among the chiefs of staff of a military coalition in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria, which is automatic and instantaneous between close allies but delayed to be scrutinized before it reaches other local actors. In that context, only a UN special representative is free to communicate information to local heads of governments or powerful militias. By that stage, coordinated action with the UN DPKO and possibly NATO is required.

In comparison with previous discussions of "coordination" in chapters 7 and 11, I am now moving towards a more refined conception of what this word means. In the rest of this book *coordination* is conceived as *the best way to avoid suboptimality in collective action*. There is a time when an arrangement of assets and tools as well as processes and routines cannot be improved without risking the overall balance becoming unstable. This is a proxy for a Pareto-optimum. I am not pursuing an ideal of mere optimality in the abstract: rather I prefer the empirical observation of accepted suboptimality.

13.1.2 Transaction Costs Versus Coordination Costs: An Inverse Ratio

On their way to join or create a network IOs progressively shed most if not all transaction costs but they now face coordination issues. When vertical ties no longer facilitate the decision-making process some sort of regulation must be invented to make the network operate horizontally.

Theoretically, coordination is the best way to avoid sub-optimality in collective action. Optimality depends on the availability of exit options like *forum shopping* (picking out the venue which is most advantageous to defend a specific interest); or *forum shifting* (withdrawing negotiations from one venue to continue elsewhere) (Biedenkopf 2017: 652).

Once mutual trust is solidly anchored within a group of peers it is the best prevention against these two woes. Without trust, coordination costs start to increase. They may later stagnate with considered investment in more efficient functioning of the network, expected to bear profits in the long run.

Therefore diminishing transaction costs between unequal and heterogeneous units may eventually bring more coordination costs between like-minded members. Rising coordination costs stem in part from the existence of bargaining reflexes with veto rights and negative sanctions, log-rolling, and tit-for-tat strategies. In the language of game theory, agents play a zero-sum game (or a distributive game) rather than a cooperative (or integrative) game.

To go further, mutual adjustment mechanisms must operate without any human intervention. Each member of the network must be committed to consensus-building mechanisms instead of looking for majority rule.

13.2 The Threshold Effect and the End of Politics

It would be naïve to think that once transaction costs are no longer paid then the road to the end of coordination costs is clear of potholes. Logically, it cannot be linear. Until a tipping point is reached in the process of inventing settlement mechanisms, regression to power games is possible at any time: the network can simply be downgraded into a cluster. It may well break out into its component parts, each reacquiring its full sovereignty.

It is crucial to locate the threshold beyond which withdrawal or blockage suddenly become unimaginable if not fully impossible—history is full of surprises. With this point reached, the networking process propels itself ever-onwards.

13.2.1 A Mechanical Amplification Process

Belonging to a network makes a member organization leave the zone of permanent struggle and operate a delicate alchemy, managing to remain politically significant while being technically neutral. Once included in the networking process, staffs need make no further effort to communicate with constituents and collaborate with partners.

The relaxation of each network member's protective barriers makes room for *spill over* and *spiralling up* mechanisms, which are unruly and exponential. Once a breach has been opened in the defensive walls against encroachment, interpenetration of staff and norms cannot stop at will. As agents have decided at the outset to trust partners and avoid transaction costs, they discard any possibility of retrieving their autonomy and pay "*boundary costs*". It actually becomes less demanding to let people and ideas circulate and to share assets and legitimacy than to indulge in: (a) reinforcing ownership of values; (b) independent operating structures.

To better understand this last statement, consider agents in charge of protecting international borders when they are confronted by a massive influx of asylum seekers. Whatever the outlay accepted to recruit additional staff, establish barriers, demand new documents, and increase the length of procedures (all mistaken for the best ways to deter foreigners), the balance of arrivals over people denied entry or expelled remains positive. At some point it may even be that being admitted into another country will be considered a basic right protected by international courts. Hence paying high boundary-keeping costs does not bring a return on investment, except when there is an enduring and intractable confrontation about principles and ethics, frequent among states but not among IOs.²⁰⁹ In the absence of high stakes, stepping out of the network is not an option. The costs to pay will be higher for first-movers confronted by deeds compared to pledges, while newcomers will prefer to discretely reap the profit of free riding.

Given philosophical visions percolate, too, from major IOs endowed with a performative power down to operative IOs (in other words, from political to technical IOs or global to sectorial ones), it is unlikely that occasional divergences of views will convince chief executives to break the network. It is more probable that further relinquishing of sovereignty will be accepted, whether done reluctantly or otherwise. For instance, it is now assumed that environmental sustainability and social responsibility are incontestable norms to be respected by all, which are embodied in every program of activity in every IO. Suppose that the network ignores one of these compelling prin-

209 Possible conflicts among states may stem from a lack of concern for conflicts of interest (so crucial in the Global North), a divergence about which prioritising which victims to help (should the weakest be sacrificed to save the strongest) or military targets (with or without consenting to collateral damage). None of these apply to IOs.

ciples and one or several of its components react negatively. Note that this is very unlikely: in the real world, with the passing of time contesting decisions made at network level becomes increasingly difficult. Of course, we cannot discard the possibility that calling into question consistency with the founding principles of a member IO may trigger criticism. However, those who steer the network have enough assets to tame contending parties. In IOs that were in at the beginning of the network, agents sway between two stances. Either they steer the network themselves due to their seniority or they face difficulties convincing protesting latecomers of the illegitimacy of a rebellion.

From engagement to renouncement, the amplification process goes on unobstructed. This is the victory of the cautious and silent majority over brave transgressors who play against their own team. The more they renounce being mavericks, the less politicized the network will be.

In a way, there is another reverse ratio, this time between *politicking* and *networking*. The more networking present, the less politicized the sets of IOs.

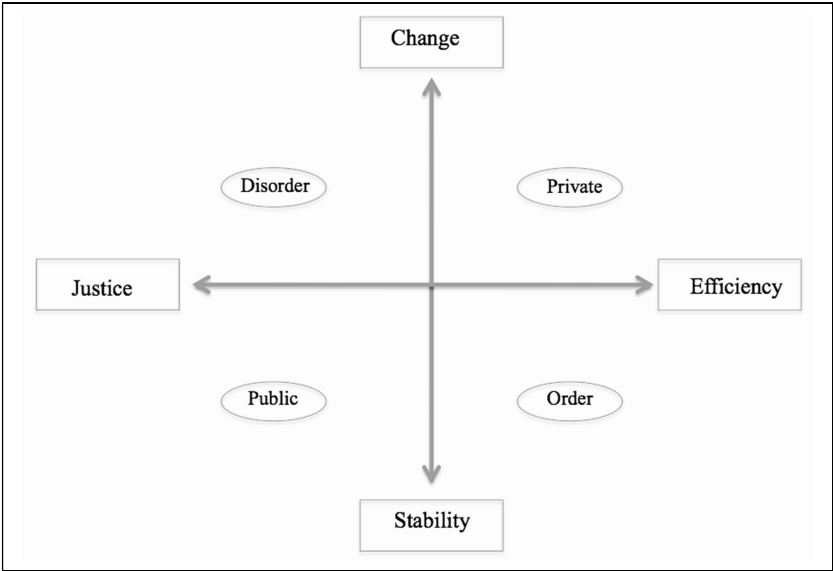
13.2.2 When Politicking Gives Way to Norm Making

Can we contain the politicization of technical debates when the principles according to which decisions are made entail an arbitrage between contradictory norms on the one hand, and between groups of countries on the other?

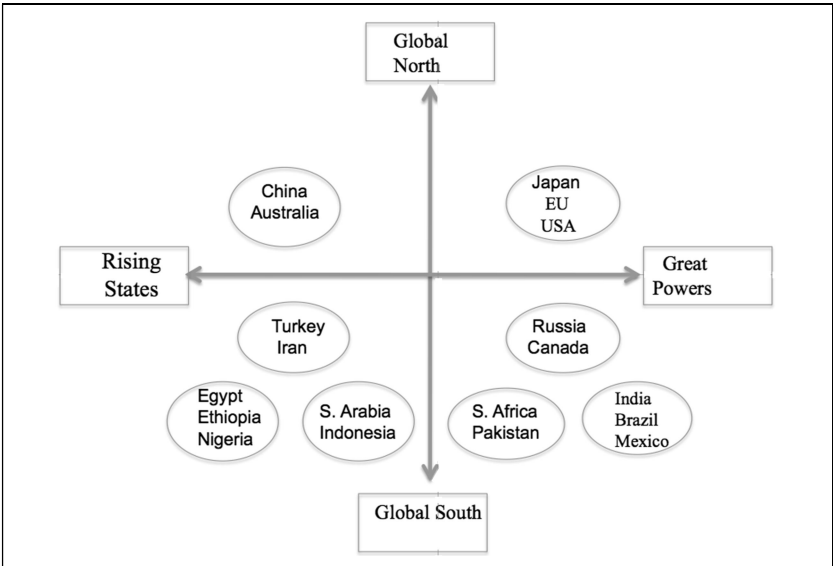
Norms can favour justice over efficiency or innovation over stability, public over private, and vice-versa (graph 11). Groups of countries may see states of the Global North confronting states of the Global South; or post-industrial societies where environmental and climate pollution is diminishing against industrializing economies which pollute more than in past decades to increase per capita income (graph 12).

Norms can be even more fine-grained. Agents can trade off immediate and specific efficiency for long-term and more global effectiveness. There are so many possibilities that causes of disagreement and attempts to bend the final decision towards one's own objectives abound. In graph 12, the two cardinal opposites are, firstly, location within the Global North or the Global South (as well as within the Western world or among the non-western powers); secondly, a status of long-established power and industry, or the quality of a rising state and an emerging economy.

This applies to substantial issues. There are also formal problems. Norms of bargaining include: twisting the negotiation rules (as learned in diplomatic schools), such as hiding goals; using understatement: vague, content-free, or imprecise speech; buying and selling votes or veto rights; manipulating



Graph 11. Decision-making norms (Source: Y. Schemeil, Introduction à la science politique, Dalloz, 2015)



Graph 12. Typical types of power-play in multilateral negotiations

partners and bullying adversaries; avoiding sanctions at any cost and delaying discussion rounds as much and as long as possible, etc.

In graph 12 there is an approximate mapping of positions occupied by major players in a number of forums. Whatever the sector, here are the countries which are typically at the forefront of rounds of negotiations. They can be found in telecommunications, humanitarian affairs, climate change, health, migration, commerce, defence, etc. Citizens of these nations are the most likely to be assigned to top decision-making roles—the Secretariat General and his or her aides, political cabinets around them, heads of committees, working groups, panels, and dispute settlement mechanisms. They are the people who make the most blunt statements and demand revisions to previous drafts. In short, influential states endowed with power²¹⁰ are represented in most if not all bodies out of which norms arise.

Now, compared to clusters or single organizations what difference do complex and hybrid networks make to the four dimensions that I have separated using the two arrows?

13.2.3 The Specific Impact of Networks

Networks bring together potential adversaries, economic competitors, or cultural rivals. This cocktail is less likely with disarmament than with nuclear energy for civilian use (a network mainly comprising the IAEA, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the UNSC, the FAO, and the WHO). Networks are less easy to build for humanitarian issues (R2P, migrants' rescue and welcome, civil wars, disasters) than environmental ones (ozone layer, plastic pollution, climate change, through the CoPs, the IPCC; the WMO, IMO, MoPs of the Montreal and Kyoto Protocols and the UNFCCC).

This means that states located in different quadrants of graph 12 are able to work together without bringing justifications to the negotiating table. They do not have to explain why their representatives adopt a collaborative spirit in one forum while opposing a collective solution in other. This attitude is particularly present with atoms. The yearly “statements” made by each member of the Board of Governors are enlightening: governments that are the most likely to transgress the rules do their best to convince others of their goodwill. During the 2020 General Conference, the Iranian representative began his speech with a vibrant homage to the multilateral system and the

210 Power is a combination of assets: advanced technology (nuclear and spatial capability); permanent or frequent participation in the UNSC and intractable negotiations (India/Pakistan, Israel/Arabs, the two Koreas); size of markets and total amount of exports plus contribution to global trade as a percentage; projection of military forces and drones, missiles and satellites; large information networks and capacity to influence the media.

organization itself,²¹¹ although the nuclear facilities of his country are under threat of IAEA inspections.²¹²

Basically, the Iranian RP opposes two interorganizational networks: the hegemonic group of the P-5 nuclear powers on the one hand (the UNSC, the UNSG, the NPT, the Nuclear Suppliers group, the JCPOA and within it the E3²¹³); and the nuclear safety network on the other. Therefore, Iran is active in the IAEA but not in the NPT from which it has already threatened to withdraw several times (notably in 2020). It also tries hard to advocate a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, designed as a replica of other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treatises, to no avail.²¹⁴ Furthermore, Iran is not part of the 48 country Nuclear Suppliers Group dominated by the P-5, and it does not separate technical issues (like safety) from those that are more political (Israel's bomb or Saudi Arabia's lack of transparency on atoms).²¹⁵

- 211 “At this critical point in time for multilateralism, on the one hand, the *raison d'être* of the United Nations System has come under serious question; and on the other hand, the International Atomic Energy Agency is facing a very serious challenge of its kind since its inception... Thus, within the framework of the safeguards obligations of States under Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) and Additional Protocol (AP), the Agency should show its determination that it will not compromise its impartiality, independence and professionalism for the sake of short-sighted comforts... Iran, alone, receives 22 per cent of the total inspections of the IAEA at the global level, 432 inspections and 33 complementary accesses have also been conducted in Iran in 2019. Furthermore, the Agency has also been able to carry out its verification activities in Iran even during the difficult situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. With this transparent and extensive cooperation, Iran and the Agency agreed to work in good faith to resolve three safeguards related questions with an understanding that based on the analysis of information available to the Agency, there will be no other questions or requests for access”
- 212 In the following text, the RP of Iran adds: “Nuclear safety is among Iran's highest priorities. In doing so, progress has been made in establishing an advance Nuclear Safety Center (NSC). While *the responsibility for nuclear safety and security rests entirely with Member States*, Iran strongly believes that *these areas need to be strengthened and enhanced through cooperation between States*” (IAEA website, consulted on March 18, 2021, my emphasis).
- 213 “The JCPOA should be preserved as the real turning point in the history of multilateralism and as an important achievement of diplomacy” (*idem*).
- 214 The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok), and the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Semipalatinsk). There are also regional regulators, such as the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory organs; and even smaller collaborative institutions like ABACC, the Argentine Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (statement by Brazil, 55th General Conference of the IAEA).
- 215 “The professional, impartial and independent nature of the work of the Agency would only be guaranteed if the Agency also consider unequivocally and impartially the available information on the nuclear activities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. If Saudi Arabia is seeking for a peaceful nuclear program, it should act in a very transparent manner and allow the Agency's inspectors to verify its activities. In this context, the regime of Israel as

Accordingly, Iranian diplomats ritually mix great power politics and regional issues, ideology and engineering. Overall, Iran is a counter example of what a network should be: its government raises transaction costs on the tiniest issue, insisting on the necessity to permanently negotiate. It wants to check that each state is on an equal footing with the nuclear powers. Since coordination between the inspectors sent by the IAEA and Iranian engineers is tough²¹⁶ transaction and coordination costs are high for limited results.

High transactions costs, high coordination costs: nuclear disarmament is certainly one of the most difficult fields in which to reach any enduring agreement and then keep negotiation on track without having to constantly repeat commitments, pledges, promises and threats. This is a non-hybrid and noncomplex interorganizational network, which is fully public and fully intergovernmental. I call it “NUKE”.

We can imagine how the government of a “rogue” country perceives this network, despite its protestations in defence of multilateralism. In figure 5 the Iranian government criticizes post-1945 institutions, pushes to revise the UN, splits the permanent members of the Security Council, and supports the three European countries that are more flexible than the US when it comes to implementing the JCPOA. It also threatens to withdraw from the NPT, which it had joined in 1970 (among the first of the 62 signatories), and deliberately ignores producers of uranium, machinery, and energy. Lastly, it attempts to duplicate the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with its own national inspection body, and threatens to abandon the Additional Protocol.

Could we find a more suitable example of the type of network that would match the standards listed in this chapter, with decreasing transaction costs and contained coordination costs? Tentatively, trade and intellectual property, climate change and the environment, plus humanitarian and migration affairs (altogether if not separately) have given birth to three networks that we can consider complex hybrids. In addition, there is also a fourth nascent nexus around cooking, travel, tourism, recreation, entertainment and welfare. The latter is much less studied than the former three. This is a good reason to focus on it rather than on pollution, which nonetheless mobilizes dozens of organizations, albeit unequal and vying for influence, to protect glaciers, forests, the temperature of the oceans, waste at sea (hydrocarbons, plastic, toxic substances), outer space, the abyss, the ozone layer, etc.

a non-party to the NPT, which has continually and adamantly refused to adhere to the IAEA safeguards, requires unbiased and professional approach by the Agency” (idem).

216 This is underlined in the quoted statement by a trade-off between compliance with previous commitments and demands to contain new requests.

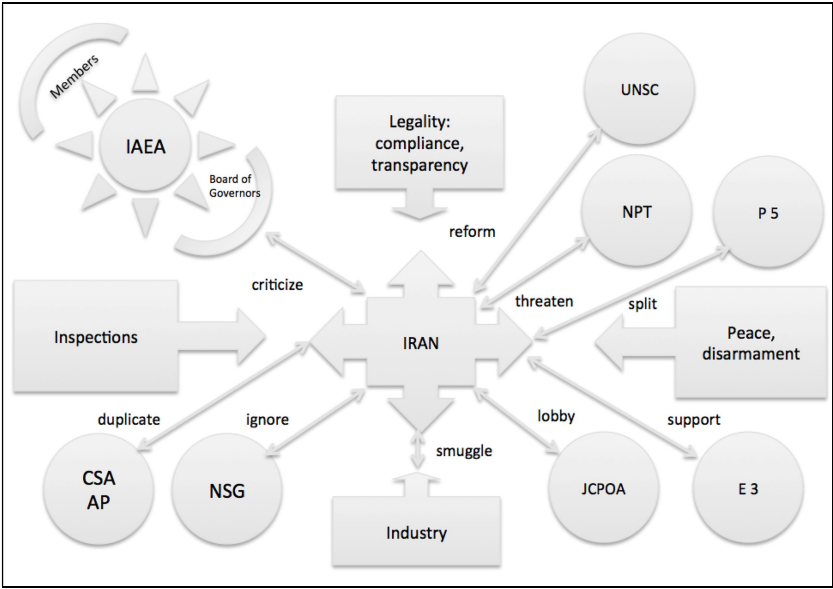


Figure 5. NUKE–A non-hybrid/noncomplex interorganizational network

“HOSPITALITY” is the name I have given to the network considered here as the ideal of a smoothly operating interorganizational hybrid. It comprises many agencies among which the IMO and CLIA or Cruise Lines International Association (sea), ICAO, IATA, and ACI, i.e. Airport Council International (air), UNWTO and World Travel and Tourism Council, WTTC (visits), UNESCO (heritage), WCO (customs), ILHA/IH&RA plus HOTREC²¹⁷ (accommodation), and several trans-organizational clusters (like the March 11 2020 agreement between the UNWTO and the WHO on SARS regulations, and the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee). Their fate is so intimately linked that they have little choice but to collaborate across time and issues, and not only during a pandemic when their cooperation is most visible.

As a section of the UN specializing in tourism, the UNWTO must protect natural and *cultural* heritage, as well as *ethical* travel. Consequently, it encounters UNEP, the UNFCCC and CITES (all protectors of safe resources, animal life, endangered species) as well as the 22 March 2019 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous

²¹⁷ These acronyms are for International Luxury Hotels Association, International Hotel Alliance, International Hotels and Restaurants Association, and Hotels, Restaurants and Cafés in Europe, respectively.

Wastes and their Disposal, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Global Plastic Action Partnership, and the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. Alone, it would be underfunded, understaffed, and unknown; lacking visibility and plagued with intercultural conflicts. The organization advocates and advertises the usefulness of an agency allegedly dedicated to leisure, which is not a prominent concern for most people.²¹⁸

As offering food is a sign of hospitality, food IOs are integrated into this super network, among them the FAO (agriculture), WFP (hunger), Codex Alimentarius (edibility) and HACCP (hygiene). Together, they commit to shared and uncontested norms (sustainability, waste reduction, healthy food and “environmentally sound management”; equal opportunities, decent working conditions; fair taxation and business practices). They also obey superior norms like solidarity and responsibility, equality and inclusivity.²¹⁹

Note that HOSPITALITY does to a slight extent depend on outside organizations and other networks with which to negotiate. It pays transaction costs and sometimes coordination costs to collaborate with IOs like UNICEF (against child labour and sex offences); UNODC (against trafficking in humans, prostitution, child-sex tourism); IOM (addressing migrants, refugees and tourists and other people who buy one-way tickets to prosperous labour markets and who often end up living in UNHCR camps).

This complex, public and hybrid interorganizational network can be schematized (see figure 9). The four sectors from which the network participants come are located at the four cardinal points. Four zones across two sectors each are therefore delineated. IGOs are boxed in rectangles. PPP and Business associations are in the bubbles (except World Heritage, a UNESCO committee; and Small Food International, a grassroots organization). Combined, they underline the publicness and hybridity of the network. The closer an IO is to the centre or the cardinal point, the more involved in the network it is.

NGOs are not represented here, because they are too many, and also because most try hard to remain at the doorway to the network to remain independent from bigger organizations that are controlled by major world powers.

Contrasting with NUKE, HOSPITALITY is characterized by the absence of manoeuvring, bullying, and predation. Members are not “carnivorous”, they do not combine brutality, coarse language, propaganda, egoism and distrust (Smolar 2020). Conflicts are no longer intractable (as with the Iranian

218 “[T]ourism must be recognized as a key pillar for building a better future”, #Travel Tomorrow.

219 “Governments have an opportunity to recognize tourism’s unique ability to not only provide employment but to drive equality and inclusivity” (statement from UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, May 2020, UNWTO website).

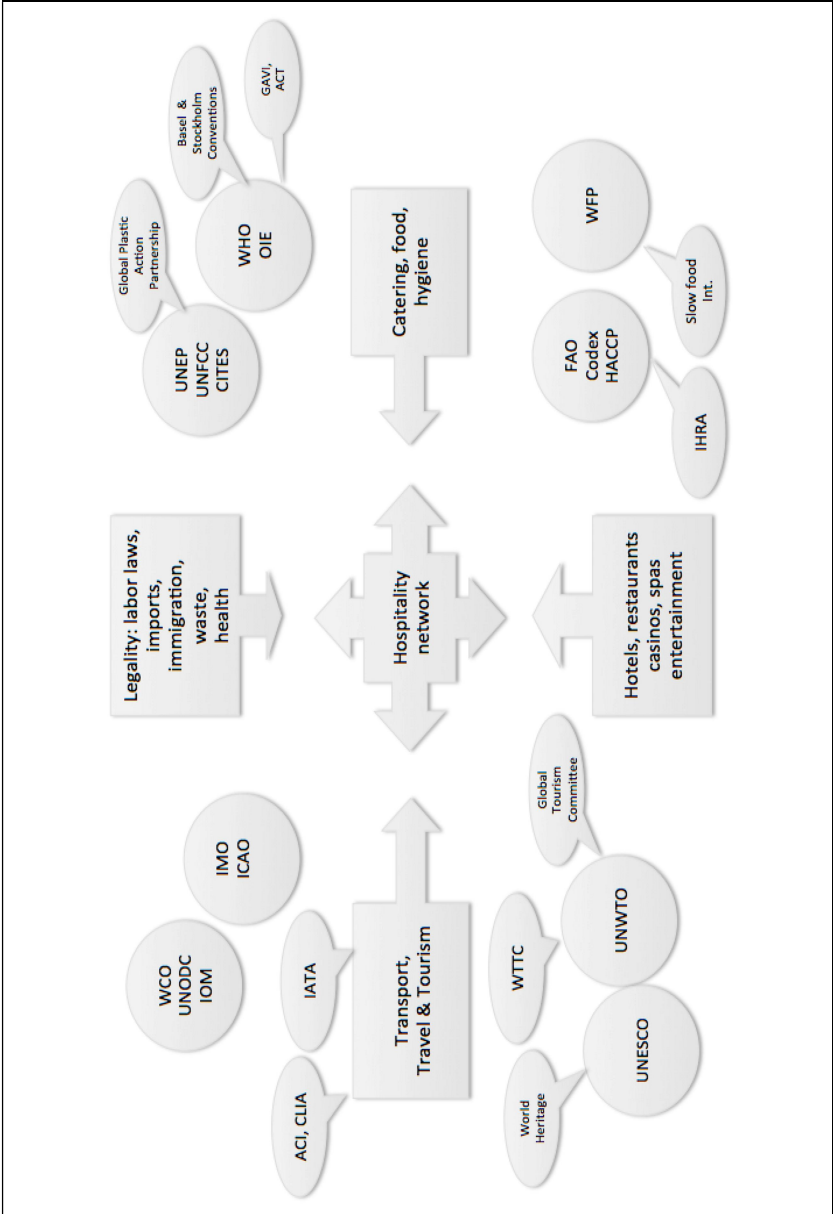


Figure 6. HOSPITALITY–A complex hybrid network

nuclear industry). On the contrary, they are “doing as they would be done by”, which greatly serves the cause of reciprocity, sparing bargaining (tit-for-tat) or *reparation costs* (when harm is done to a negotiating party).

HOSPITALITY teaches us important lessons. Predictability should be improved; contingency plans must be thought out; protocols to face risks must be periodically tested. Otherwise, at the end of each crisis learning costs would accrue alongside transaction, coordination, and operative costs.

Concretely, in this sector, disaster preparedness is the rediscovered prerequisite for resilience. For firms as well as for IOs, this implies designing “business continuity plans”, mitigating the impact of a crisis and accelerating recovery from it.²²⁰ This in turn supposes some overcapacity, which leaves room for mobilization of additional resources in case of emergency.

Predictability and overcapacity are more likely to be found in complex hybrid networks than in any other comparable unit, if only because staff members can more easily and quickly reach a common understanding of a challenging situation. Conversely, HOSPITALITY is characterized by a lack of *learning costs*—whatever has been learned is embodied and automatic—plus strong reliance on RETEX (feedback from experience processes).

This is welcome because learning is rarely linear and sincere. Accurate knowledge is hard to acquire; sharing it with competitors is even harder; hence, evidence-based collaboration is not easy. Bad faith and a lack of appetite for lesson-drawing hamper knowledge building. Members of less involving networks just pay lip service to an alleged common vision. They show minimum goodwill to accept new benchmarks. They sometimes sabotage information, disseminating fake news and irresponsible information.

13.3 To Sum Up

Interorganizational networks are endowed with resources of which other forms of clustering are deprived. Although the boundary between the most organized network and a nascent network is thin and somewhat fluctuant, once it is accepted within the latter each participant behaves according to the new rules.

This chapter has signalled a number of costs that must be paid at each stage of interorganizational collaboration: transaction costs (or mundane costs), coordination costs (or boundary costs), position costs, learning costs (plus socialization costs), and reparation costs.

220 HLB international, a global network of independent advisory and accounting firms: <https://www.hlb.global/covid-19-implications-on-the-hospitality-industry/>

As networks evolve towards a complex hybrid format, transaction costs decrease. This trend is (or is not) accompanied by a possible increase in coordination costs, which should nevertheless be limited and at any rate, a ceiling is imposed.

If boundary costs are likely to remain lower than mundane costs it is because most boundary costs have been already paid by boundary spanners to access the paramount organization. They just reap the benefits of being prime movers and having bet on the right horse.

For mundane costs, it works the other way around. Outside military forces and security agencies, where the bluntness of rarely discussed orders does not need to be softened by selective rewards, you never stop paying them.

The problem, then, is how to pay the lowest transaction costs possible: network structures and ways of functioning greatly help contain such costs to a minimum.

Networks that are not (or not yet) composed of complex hybrids with a high level of publicness must face greater transactions costs. From time to time they rebuild credibility, legitimacy, reciprocity, and solidarity. They are also confronted with additional costs, such as learning and socialization costs. Such costs are endlessly faced to reset insufficiently consolidated structures. At each stage of the “start and restart” process, components of the tentative or, alternatively, the recently established network must learn everything encoded in the collective memory of their predecessors.

Conversely, publicness, hybridity, and complexity—the characteristics of true networks of IOs once consolidated—make them particularly attractive for international agents, including IO staffs. The multilateral world and international negotiations rely on intercultural and interdisciplinary encounters. They mix selfish and altruistic goals. Their juridical statuses, type of organizational structures, scopes, and sizes—to which one can add the unstable balance between advocacy and operative functions—are largely heterogeneous.

In a nutshell, IOs networks convert liabilities into resources, dissent into legitimacy, and competition into collaboration. They mitigate politics with expertise since they foster a decrease if not complete disappearance of all sorts of political and ideological cleavages. To be more precise, neutralizing them at an early stage of the decision-making process allows them to be entrusted nearly equally by the rulers of countries belonging to distinct and sometimes opposed power groups within IOs. Eventually, these trends make IOs networks both more effective and more resilient than the simpler clusters, let alone isolated units.

Due to this capacity to enduringly convert difference into diversity and dissent into consent, IOs networks are the building blocks of which the world of tomorrow is made.

Part 5.
How Likely is any
Institutionalization of the World?

14 A Changing Structure

Equilibriums endlessly evolve. Since the earliest times, there have been periods when global centres moved from one country or region to another. Starting with the Near East, poles of power fluctuated from Elam (now Iran) to Mesopotamia (now Iraq and Syria), the Eastern Mediterranean Coast (i.e. Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Lebanon), Egypt (from the Pharaohs on) and the Arabic Peninsula. In the Far East warrior states cut the “pen-insular” regional system into proto-nations. Then imperial power traversed Korea to China, Vietnam and Japan and back again.

Using “Near”, “Far”, and even “Middle” (as in the Middle East) is no longer correct, either politically or strategically. Using these words favours the “West”, from Eurasian Russia to the European colonies in the New World, because such linguistic tradition relies on one basic assumption: that a geographical strip linking Washington to Moscow via London and Berlin (with extensions down into the Latin countries) is the global epicentre.

Globalization has been accompanied by a reshuffle of power, which has “pivoted” from Europe to China, returning to a time when this country had established itself in the midst of a continent as a source of civilization enlightening the rest of Asia, whether separated from or connected to Europe. Depending on the historical context India and the Islamic world also played their role in facilitating or stopping these two-way exchanges.

By now the lessons to draw from the Global or World History so popular in courses and textbooks are clear. The world has been “Western” for a very short period of time in human history and this temporary predominance is coming to an end. The combination of monotheisms, constitutional regimes, technological superiority, libertarian philosophy, and an adventurous appetite for new discoveries is no longer conducive to hegemony. Democracy, pluralism, and tolerance have lost their appeal.

This is a problem for the very objects of this book. If IOs are the products of the democratic and liberal coalition of like-minded nations used to steer the planet for two millennia, will the demise of such country alliances, ideological predominance, and comparative advantages limit the expansion of organizational networks?

When a pandemic is seen an opportunity to politicize sanitary aid and reshuffle the relationships between the various centres of scientific excellence and organizational efficiency, it becomes clear that IOs are to be the locus of a new confrontation between systems of thought and institutional designs.

The way organizations like the WHO and the WTO negotiate this turn and manage to overcome obstructions from non-Western states will determine the future of the current wave of globalization. Should these organiza-

tions and their most sophisticated networks recover from the crisis and take this opportunity to readjust their role, then no authoritarian state will be able to rein them in.

Solutions for Western-designed IOs to stay in the race towards a better world are, firstly, pivoting towards the “East”, and sharing assets more fairly with the “South”; secondly, being inspired by those indigenous norms that have a universalistic impact; thirdly, reshaping security doctrines, instead of legitimizing foreign intervention and non-interference—two contradictory principles; fourthly, changing the goals and means of securitization and replacing war by trade.

14.1 A Pivot Towards the Global South

Few international institutions were created before 1944. Most Southern nations became independent after that date, save the Latin American states and some Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia) recognized as international actors before World War II. The dissolution of cosmopolitan federations like the USSR and Yugoslavia was still to come decades after the creation of the UN. More than 60% of the current list of members of intergovernmental organizations did not exist at the end of World War II. The Popular Republic of China and India joined the world governance system between 1947 and 1948. The GATT, a simple system of negotiation and trade barriers, had only 44 members when it was launched in 1949.

There were also few NGOs at the time. They were mainly philanthropic and European. All were led by enlightened amateurs, heirs of the famous Anti-Slavery Society or the International Committee of the Red Cross (Reinalda 2009). Their charismatic leaders brought in fellow intellectuals who endlessly wrote briefs and reports, far from the proactive volunteers and professional experts on the ground on whom most not-for profits rely nowadays.

Before 1945, then, the world was wholly steered from the Northern Hemisphere. Even Australia and New Zealand (close allies of Western countries, but located in the Southern Hemisphere) did not matter internationally. Thus, the situation was easily readable by everyone, wherever they lived.

As a Northern caucus of governments—with some outliers in the South (like Brazil and Uruguay)—made decisions for the rest of the planet, recently independent countries tended to behave as clients in a global patronage system. Through this channel, Northern visions of technical and scientific progress and obsession for economic growth were disseminated everywhere.

A bifurcation occurred with the great divide between liberal and socialist countries. The former celebrated the value of each human life and classic

liberties like political opinion and religious creed. The latter submitted and sacrificed individual liberty to the utopian project of social rights for all (the right to housing, work, salary, and care). Social-democratic Welfare states remained middle of the road.

14.1.1 The Original Formula: West against East

A big split occurred soon after the creation of the UN and World Bank systems imagined by US leaders and implemented in concert with the heads of the victorious nations of World War II. The time when the UN Plan for Palestine, creation of Israel, and launch of the Korean intervention could be decided without internal opposition was up.

From then on two blocks were systematically opposed on nearly every issue. There was little room for “non-alignment” despite Third World leaders’ efforts to self-organize and their refusal to side with one of the two champions: the USA or the USSR with their respective cohorts of supporters. The Bandung Conference of 1955 was their historical landmark but the movement did not survive the big wave of independence in Africa and Asia during the sixties.

A majority of IOs (if military alliances are included) were pure Western coalitions, banned from entering the communist world. When the Berlin Wall was torn down and the Soviet empire collapsed, there was a moment of enthusiasm for the triumph of democracy, market economy, and individual freedoms, mistakenly believed as the inauguration of a perpetual peace barely impacted by the emergence of religious cleavages (the Fukuyama/Huntington debate). These events seemed to portend the beginning of an era in which Western values would become hegemonic.

On any issue debated at the UNSC or elsewhere the two blocks were frontally opposed to each other. While they rarely agreed on a joint solution, their confrontation made most conflict intractable. The only sphere in which the parties could agree was aid to LDCs.

Although this period is well documented and we all know what happened, we should not underestimate the impact of such a geopolitical and geo-economical context on the future progress of a world that is no longer steered by states but by IOs. During the sixties, before the first oil crisis, most organizations were considered unfair. They were allegedly biased against the new states, the poor, and the non-aligned, as well as lacking empathy towards their religious communities, lifestyles, political regimes, and moral beliefs.

Then came a time when this suspicion became generalized and permanent to such an extent that to be accepted by its beneficiaries any policy had to be justified in terms of its contribution to a balance of power and wealth

between North and South. To become effective any measure contemplated in an IO had to be endorsed by Southern governments.

Although these newly independent partners had no veto rights within the major IOs of the post-1945 system (the UNSC, the IMF, the WB) or were not yet accepted in new-born IOs (the WTO), they found advocates among pro-Western states and former Eastern champions of the Cold War. Left-wing NGOs, in particular, became their closest allies. They presented themselves as sources of checks and balances to the power and outreach of global IGOs.

Typically, prominent NGOs were led by Anglophones from the West and their headquarters were inevitably located in international cities of the Global North. Moreover, they long remained suspected of interference into the indigenous affairs of Southern governments. Activists for the causes of female emancipation and empowerment, electoral and civic participation, or the protection of political opponents were unwelcome and sometimes jailed or expelled from Global South countries.

As a legacy of this period the South is a priority on the agenda of every IO. The legitimacy of policy measures depends on credible dedication to the concerns expressed by political leaders and renowned intellectuals who have publicly estranged themselves from the West and the East altogether.

The spectacular transformation of China also contributed to such prioritization since the PRC has succeeded in maintaining its status as a “developing country” generously helping less fortunate peers. China once belonged to the East and now claims to be both part of the South (although it is located in the Northern Hemisphere) and a special partner for the Global North (although it is not Western). These are signs of a growing confusion as to which country China should prioritize in terms of assistance, except in cases of disasters when everyone is involved, rescuing victims without distinction.

The constitution of the BRICS eventually tore down the constructions of the preceding century. It is actually impossible to assign Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa to any geographical or philosophical block. Their only rationale is to openly displace the world’s centre of gravity.

14.1.2 A New Mantra: North with South

The blurring of lines between East and West as well as North and South by rising states has also raised a new debate (Hurrell 2016; Alexandroff & Cooper 2010). Wherever norms were conceived (North, South, East or West) have they become universal? Or will they remain forever regional?

Leaders of the Western world have long claimed that their rules, norms and values were valid for all (as the great Max Weber once said, facts—to which we can add, beliefs—should be understandable everywhere on the globe

wherever they occur: hence, European knowledge should be accessible to a “Chinese” as well as an “African”). They now face leaders of the Global South and the not fully departed East (Russia and China) who contest the universality of Western norms.

The rise of Asia is a challenge for an international system so far maintained by IOs in which rules and creed, protocols and routines, are entirely Western. Thus, it is important to know with scientific certitude if their mores and rules of proceedings are shared by all, or if they are only valid for those who promoted if not invented them centuries ago.

Fortunately, the answer is positive: IOs convey ways of doing and thinking that can be taken for granted anywhere because they are not considered as merely “Western”. Indeed, not all of them were designed *in* the West, though: most have been disseminated *via* the West. Consequently, they embody a great number of overarching principles, values and meanings born outside Europe and its extensions. Their assumed domiciliation in the West is only due to its long-lasting monopoly over communication ever since the Romans through vectors like Law, or ways to proceed; language, once Latin, then French, Spanish, and now English; and institutions (courts; audits; inspections; dispute settlement mechanisms; representative assemblies, etc.).

That said, IOs are not yet exonerated from their alleged sins: Occidentalism for some, Orientalism for others. They must keep struggling to be recognized by the world’s newest and poorest countries as neutral and unbiased. This is why they have consented to long-lasting exemptions of duties, and financial contributions; why they have conceded the principles of temporarily waived commitments, equal opportunities for all; why they have established specific assistance mechanisms for the benefit of the less endowed, and brought them the necessary assets to negotiate on an equal footing with the representatives of well-established powers.

On the one hand, norms enacted by IOs are written in a more acceptable idiom for everyone in the rare realms that matter for all, like pollution of the environment and climate change. On the other hand, before being implemented each policy measure must pass an acceptability test from the leading countries of the Global South. Consequently, the vocabulary used to justify a new mission is adapted in order to prove to rulers of the Global South that they will be the main beneficiaries of the new measure.

One can see the progressive addition in the presentation of IOs on their portals (the “home”, “about us”, “who are we?” or “history” sections) of Southern tags and labels to norms usually understood as being “Western”, i.e. electoral democracy or free-access markets. There are many examples of this compulsive attitude and compulsory trend. NATO, a military organization, is focused on the progress of democracy since it “promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and prevent conflict”.

The North-South ratio is obviously less imbalanced in organizations committed to healthcare. The new motto of the WHO is “working for better health for everyone, *everywhere*”. This is illustrated by special attention to hearing impairment—another proof of the iron law of mandate expansion—which is a perfect example of such evidence of love for the South, obvious not only from the motto but also the image chosen (meant to show that vulnerability must be faced not only by those who can afford it).

As for the IMO, we are told that its “main role is to create a regulatory framework for the shipping industry that is *fair* and effective, *universally* adopted and universally implemented” (my emphasis). The WIPO “lead[s] the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity *for the benefit of all*”. The IOM “is guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including *upholding human rights for all*. Respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of every migrant remains paramount”.

Even the profit-oriented WTO publicizes its main goal as “to open trade *for the benefit of all*”, as does the OECD, which pledge to “foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and *well-being for all*”. The IAEA has added “development” to its initial motto (“atoms for peace”). The ITU “is committed to *connecting all the world's people*—wherever they live and whatever their means” while the World Customs Organization is committed to “[b]ringing Customs together for a safer and more prosperous world. Borders divide, Customs connects.”

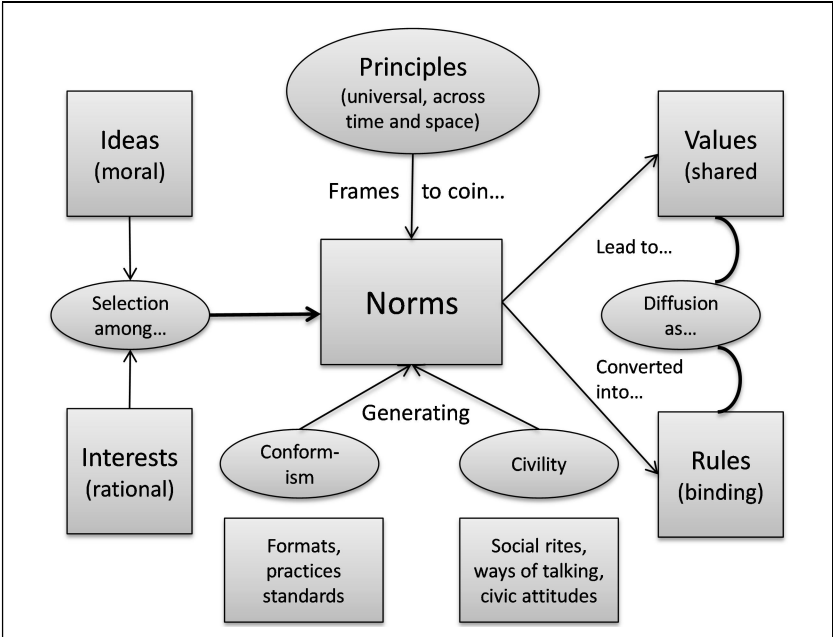
In the self-definition of some IGOs the basic contradiction at the root of the North-South divide is made plain. UNIDO, for instance, is committed to “*inclusive globalization* and environmental sustainability”—the first part of the sentence points to the South, the second part is dedicated to a Northern ambition. Organizations devoted to people who mainly live in or come from the South, like the UNHCR (“a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people”) are less conciliatory. NGOs targeting the poor no longer mention reciprocity. OXFAM favours “the power of people against poverty”. CARE aims to “devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men—a replica of the tripartite ILO, which tries “to devise programmes promoting decent work *for all women and men*”.

Will such pledges suffice? Probably not, since solid facts and figures alone cannot dissipate the feeling that inequalities persist despite IOs’ interposition between the rich Western world and the deprived Global South. Observed trends remain gloomy as shown by figures gathered from the flow of statements made on the Internet: “the percentage of the population in Europe who received the Covid-19 vaccine reached 7.8% of the total population until the end of February 2021, while the percentage in Africa was less than 1%”.

IOs have not yet won the fight against poverty, hunger, and disease. They still have to dislodge a reputation of complacency towards patriarchy, neo-colonialism, and global capitalism, plus some contempt for “communitarian democracy” putting communities and their obligations first rather than individuals and their freedoms (Santos & Mendes 2021).²²¹

14.2 The Coining of Fair Norms

Nowadays “fairness” is central to IOs policy-making. The notion includes justice, rectitude, equity, full recognition of difference, and a sincere will to benefit for all. Norms are fair in this sense each time they unfold from ethical principles and embody social practice as well as apply the usual templates. When these conditions are met, norms are disseminated as rules (legal, compulsory) and may even, become values (fully embodied, unconscious).



Graph 13. From norms to rules

221 In this highly representative book, IOs are absent, except the UN with only one mention in 235 pages.

14.2.1 Birth of a New Norm: American NGOs at Play

In the early sixties the civil rights movement in the US had reached the sacrosanct summer camps so much praised by the middle class. Combating an unjust system became the model on which other forms of protests were modelled, e.g., environmental and gender activisms. This was the beginning of a long history of advocacy building, first within the country, and then across borders (Tarrow 1998). Women fought for full equality with men, blacks with whites, conservationists with growth addicts, hippies against patriots, peace and love fans against war and hate advocates, etc.

Financial institutions like the World Bank and the IMF were asked to “green” their loans (Nielson & Tierney 2003). Pressure was put on military alliances to stop interventions abroad and multinational corporate capitalism was invited to fight poverty and increase aid to Third World countries (the early seventies).

The classic books on NGOs (Keck & Sikkink 1998; Barnett & Finnemore 1999) describe the influence of American associations on their peers around the world. Later on, American citizen-led NGOs marched against foreign intervention, the suppression of liberties, and above all gender inequality.

14.2.2 Endorsement of a New Standard: A Universal IGO Monopoly?

Once they have emerged from the growing protest of civil society organizational norms must be endorsed and then converted into enacted rules by top-level authorities. Then and only then is dissemination facilitated.

IGOs are not the only institutions in which chief executives make pledges to global ethics but they may be the only ones able to make credible commitments. Multinational and global enterprises are pledging to be “civic” via the sponsorship of events and patronage of art exhibitions, charities and donations, environmentally and socially sensitive management teams, promoters of moral entrepreneurship and happy employment. However, none can provision the Commons or fairly apportion global public goods alone. being non-profit, cosmopolitan, and acting in the very long term, IGOs have full freedom to enact altruistic principles and they can rely on International Funds (like UNAIDS) to finance their activities.

Such commitments do not imply that their staffs behave ethically, or that they benefit from an uncontested civil and moral code. However, managers make a great effort to avoid conflicts of interests and morally incorrect statements; rather, they opt for socially acceptable ambitions. Some member states even condition their aid to the achievement of equitable programs—

mostly humanitarian and sometimes privileging gender issues. In that matter IGOs do not start from crash.

In recent years, big companies have developed the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): as a reminder, CSR is “a company’s responsibilities to multiple stakeholders, such as employees and the community at large, in addition to its traditional responsibilities to economic shareholders” (Zhang et al. 2018).

Listing the advantages of CSR for profit-making enterprises helps in the study of IGOs: if a firm’s behaviour is not fully determined by financial considerations, this must be truer for non-profit institutions.

Scholars underline several benefits of CSR in private corporations. A CSR-prone firm “is likely to have a better relationship or connection with its customers”. It can “(quicken) the introduction and promotion of new products and services”. It may “generate greater long-term returns”. It should “enhance employees’ identification with firms and improve employee performance”. It will also trigger improved ratings of the company by external evaluators, and enhance its public reputation, which, in turn, promises better public relationships and increased legitimacy. Moreover, heads of IGOs are more likely to solve the dilemma that top managers are facing: “whether corporate leaders have the vision and courage to make the type of long-term strategic choices, which will not bear fruit for many years” (Jones & Millar 2010:1-8).

While ordinary firms anticipate most of these benefits domestically, such rewards are even more likely for international firms or Multinational Corporations: they face distinct external environments in different host countries displaying different cultural or institutional contexts. IGOs add a benchmarking activity to such paraphernalia as a further step. Periodical reviews check the consistency of behaviour with commitments made by PR, which leads to rankings according to standards of excellence.

CSR indicators in IGOs abound, but one in particular is enlightening, their propensity to design new mottos with a smart wording that may be understood as depicting a socially-oriented strategic program. Examples can be found on the websites of UNESCO (“Building peace in the minds of men and women”); World Bank (“end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity”); WHO (for “all people [to attain] the highest possible level of health”); UNEP (“encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations”).

This propensity to make global pledges entails a shared tendency to combine old and new goals as does UNIDO Lebanon: “creating sustainable livelihoods for communities affected by influx of Syrian refugees” is its new goal there, often translated into the sponsorship of small family firms run by refugees. ILO appropriates the UNHCR mandate while turning humanitarian.

It now wants to promote full “inclusion of refugees and displaced persons in the labour market with a humanitarian development focus” (ILO website).

The ITU/UN World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) held in Tunis adopted a “2006 Agenda”, which goes a step further. It claims that: “the same rights that people have offline must be protected online”. If we could have a Global Bill of Rights instead of sectorial one, one Fundamental Law would nevertheless be missing. We owe the premises of what such a Chart could be to the UN and its “moral compass”. The UN had previously adopted global ethical objectives like the “United Nations Millennium Development Goals”, which might be implemented through a “Global Compact”.

The UNSG now focuses on the “Sustainable Development Goals Compass”, since “business cannot succeed in societies that fail”. A “Global Compact” alone cannot guarantee that a national private sector will implement the norms enacted by intergovernmental public organizations. This is clear enough in texts such as the “Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework”, which stresses “gender equality, decent work, sustainable cities, peace, justice and strong institutions” (Global Compact UN).

Therefore, the visions and processes required to achieve such goals need clarification, which comes from national NGOs like Global Compact France. This organization aims to promote “openness, cooperation and co-creation between the developed and developing worlds”; fighting against climate change, as well as “vastly unbalanced distribution of life chances due to chronic inequality”; plus “the rise of global slums in the mega-cities of the South” to avoid a “plausible scenario”, which “would depict a predatory global minority of ‘elders’ being serviced by masses of much younger and less healthy (due to eroding public health infrastructure)” (Global Compact France).

Pursuing the ambition to build and respect global ethics implies giving priority to specific skills and virtues. Among those enumerated there is “competence or effectiveness” plus “values such as integrity, honesty, trustworthiness” and a “commitment to virtue as well as to service to the organization”. The “free rider” leader who commits evil acts, even when the evil is tiny, is no longer affordable in a world where globalisation is the basis of much of the world’s economy” (Global Compact France). In other words, staff members who display most if not all spiritual anchors like “perfection, compassion, passion, inspiration, investigation, dedication, appreciation, determination and cooperation” (Karakas, 2010) are ethical because they are inspired by “oriental spirituality” and not just Western values.

Such a program will be less easy to implement for security issues than welfare, or natural conservation, however.

14.3 The End of Securitization

The painful process of sending nuclear engineers to inspect defence sites in rogue countries or establishing an International Criminal Court illustrates the huge problems to solve when considering the role of ethics in defence issues. Nuclear matters are very specific. They are nonetheless part of a broader field: disarmament. Success in managing the former is obscured by a contest not to achieve the latter. This is due to the fact that pacifistic militants access to such a sensitive organization as the IAEA remains limited. Therefore, the potential benefits expected from the Agency's spectacular results in matters of health or hunger take a back seat to its limited success in disarmament despite its efficiency in handling atomic challenges.

The nuclear trade-off relies on an agreement. The P5 keep their atomic arsenal but they transfer their nuclear expertise and civil technologies to other countries. Non-governmental critics of this deal have little leverage in Vienna and they are banned from on-site inspection teams.²²² Therefore, they pursue their own interest within national states because governments are more accessible than multilateral institutions while IGOs cannot easily gain access to NGOs. For IGOs, the only official source of capacity, legality, and legitimacy comes from their member states. Chief executives are not accountable to supranational organizations like the UN or the EU, let alone non-state actors or civil society organizations. Conversely, states may block planned operations if the opening up to NGOs seems too generous.

As an example of a lack of confidence for non-governmental bodies, Germany has refused to let the IAEA use satellite imagery. Other states have criticized it for having long ignored nuclear military activities in rogue nations, despite repeated on-site inspections. There is also the late discovery of classified papers attesting that the so-called A.Q Khan Pakistani network had successfully exported technology and nuclear materials to Iraq, which irritated the nuclear powers to such an extent that doubts about their support of the organization and its future were voiced for the first time (interview, director, division of information management, 14 February 2008).

222 There is but one counter example: the International Crisis Group has been the only NGO accepted within the "High-Level Panel of Experts to Recommend Future Course for IAEA" (IAEA Press Release, 25 February 2008).

14.3.1 *Securitization: A Priority for Interventionist Powers*

Apart from the nuclear oligopoly and breaches of it (Pakistan, Israel, Northern Korea, and possibly Iran), making the world more secure implies reaching an agreement between North and South on the conditions required to interfere in domestic crises.

If a government does not comply with the democratic and humanitarian norms of the Global North, the dilemma is simple. Is it possible to isolate societies where these norms are respected from the possible contagion of crises from those in which they are not respected? It is not so easy: how does one keep silent and passive while genocide or mass repression kills people, and deports tens or even hundreds of thousands of people onto our doorstep? Therefore, the responsibility to protect compels states to forget the sacrosanct rule of non-interference. The next step is to launch a military raid and invade a country, notwithstanding the fact that it is a member of the UN or a regional organization. This has been done in recent years, after the 2001 vote on the R2P resolution. While the December 1989 US intervention in Panama was condemned by the UNGA and the OAS, the UNSC and the Arab League endorsed the 1991 invasion of Iraq and the 2011 bombing of Libya.

Short of fighting in another country's territory, obtaining commitments to refrain from aggressive, offensive, and hostile activities is increasingly popular as a means of conflict resolution. Agreements have been reached this way by numbers. They are often named after the venue of a successful negotiation ("Arusha", "Dayton", "Normandy", "Minsk", "Fontainebleau"). In this case, the government of a country agrees to cede part of its sovereignty, which is then transferred to a group of powers (often the P5 + Germany, sometimes a "coalition") or a quasi-supranational entity like the UN or the EU. Although the latter two make efforts to place their operations under the umbrella of the former they actually have enough room for manoeuvre to act on their own, which is a breach of their founding principles.

Securitization of "rogue" countries can be less spectacular since it relies on economic and technological sanctions and needs time to have an impact. This works like a war of attrition, with selected targets (prohibited imports, freezing of bank accounts or real estate, and a refusal to deliver visas).²²³

These three levels of disrespect for national sovereignty could not be instrumentalized without the endorsement of an IGO. It then converts what could be taken as aggression into a necessary step to rescue endangered people. As Russia and China do not enjoy such benevolence for their potentially or actually aggressive deeds, R2P adds a stratum to the pile of grievances from Southern countries.

223 Even though milder than air raids, such punishments nonetheless weigh on the daily life of whole populations, which raises a whole new question: how legitimate is it to punish a nation for the sins of its rulers?

What is now at stake is less crude imperialism as a way to secure commodities and open markets (the famous pre-war “gunboat policy”) and more universalism as the new means to influence the minds of Southern people. Although their elites may believe in the superiority of a global norm when it protects the weak, they are nonetheless harmed by the automaticity of the use of force against their own country, even when they have called for it in an earlier episode (Shiite Iraqis, Myanmar’s democrats, etc.).

That is why they are ready to accept a different action: trade instead of war.

14.3.2 *Trade for Peace*

Globalization brings a number of changes, but they all share the same characteristics. Growth is preferred to economic stagnation, even in communist and long or still isolated remnants like North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. Since it is conditioned to political stability at home and abroad and because increasing national wealth depends on international trade, most states are either members of the WTO or awaiting accession. Their rulers disregard criticism of world capitalism and economic predation.

This attitude towards commerce has a long history. Thucydides analysed it in depth; Kant theorized it; Kindleberger reformulated it, calculating the role of economic adaptability in deriving benefits from trade.²²⁴ Since the creation of the WTO this linkage has been repeatedly measured with precision. Every equation yields the same results: the more you trade, the more you grow.

Growth matters to governments because it conditions their admission into the circles where the future of the world is discussed. It is the ticket to take part in global forums, which explains why de-growth, although it can be sometimes justified in practice, is not on the agenda of the ruling elites.

Within such a theory, peace is not admired for its human benefits but for the personal recognition and individual profits it makes possible. There is little or no consideration for the undesirable side effects of growth, because national power prevails over collective welfare.

However, as in Mandeville’s fable of the bees, some common good can come from the pursuit of selfish goals. Whether or not peace is loved for itself it becomes a necessary ingredient of self-aggrandizement. Indeed, the armament industry and a war economy can also bring growth and profits, albeit at the risk of being banned from decision-making circles that matter at world level, e.g., Russia suspended from the G7. It is also true that the liberal equation of “power = (growth + trade) + (peace + democracy)” is not valid

224 In his *Foreign Trade and the National Economy* (C. P. Kindleberger, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962).

for autocracies, but the first two terms of the *explicans* (growth and trade) cannot be easily avoided by those aspiring to international legitimacy.

Clearly, the whole debate about “democratic peace” is not of the essence here. What matters is peace *with or without democracy* as a prerequisite to trade, which remains itself a necessary driver of influence and legitimacy in world spheres. IOs do put peace ahead of their mandate, even when their activities seem quite remote from zones of conflicts. The WTO has it as the main goal of free trade as does the IAEA (“atoms for peace”). Peace is the 16th goal of the ITU.²²⁵ The WHO considers “Health as a Bridge for Peace”. The FAO supports “Peace through Food Security and Resilience”.²²⁶

Such examples underline the priority given to peace by IOs, which makes sense in their field but is not obvious in trade. Why should commerce be considered a prerequisite for peace?

Since achieving influential positions within the governing clubs of the planet or remaining influential within them is the top priority of national leaders, they must accept sacrifices for that purpose. When deregulating trade implies impoverishing a handful of national producers, the balance between such potential losses of domestic support versus the relative increase in power gained internationally remains positive.

Globalization cannot be disconnected from trade deregulation. IOs have recently integrated this constraint and translated it into self-justification each time “universal peace” is included in the program of a technical IO. The radical novelty of the time and consequently the true nature of a change of context that leads to adaptation through networking is a triumph of the link between trade and peace over the peace and democracy duology.

Unlike in past decades and contrary to popular theories in political science and international studies, democratization and the rationalization of

225 The motives that support this statement are worth quoting in full: “ICTs can play an important role in crisis management, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding, and have proved to be a powerful aid in areas such as electoral monitoring. The growing use of open data by governments increases transparency, empowers citizens, and helps to drive economic growth. ICTs are also essential in terms of record-keeping and tracking government data and local demographics. When natural or man-made disasters occur, ICTs are crucial in obtaining, communicating and transmitting accurate and timely crisis information, allowing appropriate responses to be made. In the future, big data analysis and data mining should allow better use to be made of the vast amount of data that is already openly accessible online” (<https://www.itu.int/en/sustainable-world/Pages/goal16.aspx>).

226 Again, the FAO’s motives are worth noting: “Sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, including by addressing root causes and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development. Opportunities therefore exist for interventions in support of food security, nutrition and agricultural livelihoods to contribute to conflict prevention and sustaining peace, in order to address not only the symptoms but also the root causes of conflict. Major investments in rural development and agriculture should therefore be an integral part of peacebuilding efforts. Through its work, FAO fosters social cohesion, generates peace dividends, reduces conflict drivers and builds the legitimacy and capacity of governments”.

national public policy are no longer the engines of globalization, having been superseded by trade deregulation and the optimization of supply chains. This change has an important effect. Given “commerce” implies goods, services, and people (with their cultural and ideological specificities) as in the initial philosophical meaning of the word (all sorts of “intercourse” between strangers except hostile encounters), then no IO can collaborate with others in some operations but not others and not permanently, or even claim to lead a team of peers on the basis of specialization, seniority, or structural ties with the greatest powers.

IOs must pool their assets. They have to build networks around ways to facilitate all sorts of communication between their members to prevent looting of ideas and transfer of resources.

14.4 To Sum Up

The geopolitical reorientation of connections between governments has impacted the circulation of cultural influence. However, it has not weakened the global power of the most advanced industrial state, the USA, due to the resilience of its cultural industry. Norms are still emanating from this country more than from any other. When Washington loses leverage and sees its soft power weakened, the overall weight of America remains high for two reasons: firstly, NGOs registered in the USA relay the policies of their federal administration across borders and launch new advocacy campaigns worldwide; secondly, IGOs have gained a recognized capability to endorse global norms, hence “certifying them”, as the WHO does with drugs and vaccines.

Such processes promote ethical systems of values more than capitalistic value chains do, but the latter also resist unanticipated tests such as environmental externalities (generating disasters), contagion during a pandemic (provoking the collapse of health and welfare systems), or terrorism and internationalized civil wars allegedly stopped by foreign intervention (which leaves dozens of thousands of victims). So, in rising states, governments resist temptations to demand more protection for their productions, be they material or cultural.

At most, *fair* trade succeeds or complements *free* trade while multilateral institutions disseminate principles of justice to be shared worldwide. However, these very institutions are themselves plagued by politicking. Power relations are not fully balanced by a supreme international Law of which supreme judges would be the custodians.

Against the universality of principles, norms, values, rules, and Law, some states return to a nationalistic stance. Global politics is then character-

rized by moments of chaos. The interorganizational architecture itself is weakened and even threatened by fragmentation in various guises like plurilateralism and multistakeholderism, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

15 Is Institutionalized Globalization Inevitable?

Modern and contemporary history is full of organizational endeavours. The many organizations created since 1815 and after 1944 have eventually imposed their template for global and regional negotiations: “multilateralism”. Multilateralism is manifest during negotiations conducted by every government whose country is a member of the same IGO or all parties contributing to a final solution on an equal footing, without exception. It differs from bilateral arrangements (between neighbours only, often asymmetric) and military alliances (potential victims of defection, limited to security issues).

A plurilateral approach, on the other hand, involves a limited number of governments, particularly those that commit themselves to enhanced cooperation in “shared initiative groups”, including the heavy weights alongside their less powerful allies. Plurilateralism starts when protagonists are determined to move forward together without waiting for peers to be ready, like the Eurogroup on currency, and the Schengen border agreements.

The truth is that multilateralism is in danger. It has been unexpectedly jeopardized by transgressors of the rules of the game who do not feel committed by their own diplomatic pledges—“strong men” like Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Vladimir Putin, Jair Bolsonaro, Kim Jong-un, Xi Jinping, Narendra Modi, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan—with consequences for the WTO, NATO, UNESCO, the WHO, the COPs, and the UNSC. Their provocations make diplomatic success less and less likely.

Multilateralism has been volatile from 1945 onwards. It tends to evaporate into clouds of “minilateralism” (a minority decides) and “polylateralism” (everyone can contribute to the final decision) but we cannot predict its end. Firstly, it never existed as such. Quads, quartets, JCPOA, E3 and other exclusive clubs always shaped negotiation rounds, notwithstanding the number of parties in the room. A spectacular instance of this is the 2021 mutual commitment to negotiating an international Treaty for preparedness and response to pandemics.²²⁷ Secondly, one of the two causes of the current demise could disappear as quickly as it appeared. Either the powers that have the most leverage can agree again on basic principles or major issues, or the others can come back to the negotiating table with enough goodwill and confidence in international institutions to resume their participation.

Lack of agreement among prominent leaders and lack of support from minor peers have weakened multilateralism. Have they done so to such an

227 As presented by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and 24 heads of states and governments, international media, 31 March 2021.

extent that we may witness the end of an egalitarian albeit timid multilateralism inherited from the end of World War II?²²⁸ What could actually emerge from this mess, on the contrary, is either upgraded multilateralism (“big, back, better”, or “the 3 Bs” is a popular motto within diplomatic circles); a return to bilateralism; or a race to the bottom with the very recently coined “multistakeholderism” (everyone decides, the solution comes from all parties).

For the time being, plurilateralism as a mini-lateral substitute to multilateralism remains more popular than multistakeholderism. This predominance has deep consequences on the institutionalization and, therefore, the constitutionalization of the world.

15.1 A Likely Future: Plurilateralism Rules the World

Plurilateralism emerges here and there as the solution, to the dismay of multilateral principles. It may take various forms, and has historically deviated from its ideal-type on several occasions, but it diverges from multilateralism by scope only and not so much in its philosophy.

As with multilateralism, plurilateralism gives a voice to the weakest members of the group. It ensures negotiation and goodwill prevail over the blunt use of force. It creates conditions leading towards an optimum, one step above anarchy. Additionally, contrary to any kind of recognized if not accepted hegemony, it is multipolar and not mono- or bipolar.²²⁹ In short, it is informal, “mini-lateral” and ad hoc rather than institutional, inclusive and permanent.

15.1.1 *Minilateralism*

In Trade issues, first, even during the GATT era (1948 to 1994) when unanimity was required to reach an agreement, not all signatories of Trade agreements had the same clout. As early as 1960 a mere four players determined the agenda and timetable of negotiations: the United States,

228 This analysis was suggested to me during a webinar with Manuel Lafont-Rapnouil, a French diplomat, on 18 February 2021.

229 The term “multi” (as in “multilateralism”) covers several very distinct concepts. It is used in “multiple”, “multipolar”, or “multinational”—almost the opposite of what multilateralism means. The term “multipolar” is more precise and selective: the word means that several hegemonic powers, rather than just the one, take major international decisions together. These states may act on their own behalf or on behalf of all the others, which ultimately have little influence on the policies adopted.

Canada, Japan and the Europe of Six, known as the “Quad”. With the advent of China, a “Quartet” comprising the USA, the EU, China and India now carries more weight than all other countries combined.

In the meantime, depending on the subject up for negotiation, various groups have formed on the basis of common interests: “Friends of the Chair”, the “Shared Initiative Group” or the “like-minded coalitions”; but also every G N... (G stands for “Group”, followed by N... i.e. the number of countries belonging to it, up to G77); and, additionally, geographically-based groups (Cairn Group, African Group, etc.). All underline the role of *coalition building* rather than *consensus making* in shaping international agreements.

Established in 2018, “Joint Statements Initiatives” are meant to bypass the usual “hostage-taking” and “bullying” manoeuvres (interviews, Geneva, 12 February 2018). Despite some dissent about the lack of constitutionality of such arrangements they have begun to have success following the WTO 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Ayres from 10 to 13 December 2017, during which 71 members (including the 28 from the EU) agreed on continuing explanatory discussions. They collected proposals, even those coming from outside their group, since China’s representatives attended all informal meetings without exception (interview, Director of Council, WTO, 12 February 2018).

Such “Joint Statements Initiatives” are now recognized as legitimate. The countries that propose them argue that they are merely “explanatory”, i.e. not even “preparatory” to the next plenary—usually considered the actual “negotiating” phase. No WTO member should prevent volunteers from debating in small committees just because addressing the topics generates non-compulsory “think pieces”, which are not yet on the negotiating table even as non-tabled papers (one step short of tabled papers whose content and comments are distributed, recorded and translated into the three official languages of the Organization by the WTO staff).

Recently, an ad hoc agreement between 17 members of the WTO²³⁰ volunteered to preserve the WTO’s two-step dispute system until its own Appellate Body becomes operational again (it was blocked by the US government for having “stretch(ed) decisions beyond merely resolving a particular dispute”). Under the leadership of the head of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism, they have

“identified subjects of contention, and articulated broadly-stated principles to which many, but not all, could subscribe... These ‘draft convergence principles’ may one day be a useful starting point for real negotiations. But what they, and the discussions to arrive at them, really showed, was that there are no quick fixes; that the disagreements over what the appellate entity is supposed to be were too deep to be

230 Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, European Union, Guatemala, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Singapore, Switzerland, and Uruguay (as of 24 January 2020).

bridged quickly by generalities. And so, at the end of 2019 the US forced a restriction of the Appellate Body's budget for 2020 in such a way that the AB will be out of funds—and, thus, out of business—at the end of March, when we are scheduled to finish writing the decision in an appeal involving Australia's law requiring tobacco products to be sold in plain packages” (departing AB member T. R. Graham’s farewell speech to Georgetown Law School, 5 March 2020).

Thus, these most determined members of the WTO just say that they took “contingency measures that would allow for appeals of WTO panel reports in disputes among ourselves, in the form of a multi-party interim appeal arrangement based on Article 25 of the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding”, and set up a “*multi-party interim appeal arrangement*”. The lesson taught by this particular case is clear: even when state sovereignty is at stake and status prescribes decisions by consensus it is still possible for a small group of governments to continue to work among themselves, as if one of the most powerful countries had not neutered one of the organization’s major bodies.

In the security field, the JCPOA (*Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action*), dealing with Iran's nuclear programme was clearly plurilateral. This agreement brought together Iran, the EU and the so-called P5+1 countries (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Another example is the “quartet” behind the 2003 Middle East roadmap (composed of the UN, the EU, the US and Russia). At the OESC there is a *Minsk Group* to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (co-chaired by Russia, France and the US). Even NATO, assumed to be homogenous and led by a major power has experienced such practices.²³¹

Consequently, as such instances show, plurilateralism can be a problem when it is but a temporary second best that could last forever. Unlike multilateralism, it would then impose agreements among just a handful of the majority of the concerned stakeholders. It can however be a solution to the demise of multilateralism when it triumphs over timid bilateralism to trigger a series of further enlargements and alignments. Bilateralism has indeed become popular today with states whose leaders are tired of multilateralism, which gives the impression we have gone back in time to the unequal treaties of the 19th century. This is an illusion, though, since in the meantime “multistakeholderism” invited itself into the conceptual debate.

231 As reported in an interview of its then SG, Javier Solana: “I picked the team after talking with the most powerful countries’ intelligence services. The first fight was due to not all of them being present, rather, just a few—the more powerful ones in terms of intelligence did not want to share what they knew with the least powerful ones—and I chose those few” (Saz-Carranza 2015: 284).

15.1.2 *Multistakeholderism*

“Multistakeholder” is close in meaning to “multiple” because of the heterogeneity of the actors involved—all having a stake in a global solution. However, it suggests a world in which individuals have not fully delegated their sovereignty to those in power. Here, “multi” is added to “stakeholders” or parties involved in a network of organisations. It makes its members similar to “shareholders” expressing their views on the board of a private firm.

Thus, multistakeholderism is actually the very opposite of multipolarity because all parties allegedly have equal leverage, non-state actors and individuals alike. They come from everywhere (i.e., from every side or corner of national and international societies and not only from their top governmental layers) regardless of their social or legal status. They feel concerned by the issue at stake and even tend to hold or own it, hence the mention of a “stakeholder” in the designation.

Multistakeholderism also departs from the logic behind both multi- and plurilateralism. It is based on three principles designed for this type of stakeholder: multiple, dispersed, and powerless. It includes all actors (“openness”), on an “equal footing”. It guarantees that heterogeneous interests will counterbalance each other and egos be put aside.²³²

Obviously, this model is not without drawbacks for each state in particular and for the international community as a whole. As the example of the Internet shows, this form of governance weakens politically accountable rulers to the benefit of their unaccountable citizens. Of course, it could be argued that “multistakeholder initiatives respond to governance deficits” because “old-style multilateralism has failed to keep pace with demands for increasing global regulation to meet today’s more global world, and multistakeholderism has stepped in to fill the gap”, and “yet this general observation does not explain why the response to contemporary governance shortfalls has so often taken a multistakeholder form (in various guises) rather than some other type of governance innovation” (Scholte 2020: 15-16).

One possible explanation of this success is the growing demand among citizens for ethics. They expect intergovernmental bureaucracies as well as global firms to do more ethical business and be more responsive to the general public’s expectations and hopes. Another factor is the increasing concern for mitigating inequality and triggering the emancipation of end users despite uncertainty about what is fairer and more egalitarian. Is it a multilateral or a multistakeholder world? The latter seems at first glance more

232 The term also suffers from an equivocal use in the literature and in administrative drafts (Scholte 2020: 14).

accountable, hence more just; but “how exactly does (or should) accountability operate in (such an) alternative design”? (Scholte 2020: 23).

Instead of enlarging and consolidating global governance by rescuing the national states, their creatures (IGOs), and their negotiations (multilateral), it is quite possible that multistakeholderism is but a second best, or worse, “a (relatively non-intrusive) regulation that sustains the on-going globalization of liberal capitalism”, as well as a process “intrinsically riven with asymmetric power and special-interest capture”, which could well delegitimize it (Scholte 2020: 19, 22, 25).

A famous illustration of this contradictory benefit of multistakeholderism compared to multilateralism is the case of crypto currency and decentralized banking. As for the currency, there are now dozens of “Bitcoins” or equivalents, defined as a standard of exchange whose value cannot be manipulated by governments or investors since an automated and encrypted Blockchain process guarantees it. This technology is not designed to eliminate interest rates and exchange gains, quite the contrary: its inventor, “Satoshi Nakamoto” (a pseudonym?) built it to secure him or her (or them) \$1 million, reinvested in Ethereum (a Swiss platform operating in CHF).²³³

This decentralization undermines the monopoly on minting currency that states have enjoyed since the Middle Ages and thus neutralizes their control over currency exchanges. It also bypasses traditional banks, which have now switched part of their activity to P2P networks. The process is simple. Both parties sign a transaction, then another and so forth until a total of 1 megabit is reached, which is stored in a “block”. Then, the existence of this block is publicized and its value posted on the net. Lastly, “mining” is open to all: expecting a commission, people try to determine where blocks are in cyberspace (so far, \$18,5 million out of the \$21 mathematically calculated as available to all by “Nakamoto” has been so “mined”).

As this process shows, everyone can play the role of the banker for a few minutes before the info that he or she has unlocked about a block is disseminated, checked, and certified as true by computers, although “reaching consensus among machines is nearly as hard as reaching consensus among humans”. Much time and energy are spent on solving the checking and certification problem of double spending (the same amount of money cannot be used by two end-users simultaneously). Finally, everyone can conclude the process if one person breaks the necessary consensus on its validity and legitimacy.²³⁴ Miners therefore do two things: (1) they verify that the transactions are valid, examining each transaction history; (2) they add a new

233 “Launched in 2015, Ethereum is an open-source, blockchain-based, decentralized software platform used for its own cryptocurrency, ether. It enables SmartContracts and Distributed Applications (DApps) to be built and run without any downtime, fraud, control, or interference from a third party” (Investopedia, consulted online on 25 March 2021).

234 According to Rachid Guerraoui (EPFL), during a keynote speech on 5 March 2021.

block of transactions to existing ones, hence writing directly on the chain. This provides other money fishers the guarantee that the transaction is real and legal: indeed, there is a tangible proof that it has happened, known in computer science as “*proof of work*”. An additional layer can be introduced into the process, controlling how what has been locked can be unlocked in the Blockchain, on the condition that the amount available will fulfil a pre-designed goal; for instance, “protecting the environment”. When agents respect this prerequisite, the literature concludes this process with a “*proof of behaviour*”, which itself ignites a reward.²³⁵ For instance, a cyclist buying a bicycle with a crypto currency can earn Bitcoins if integrated GPS data proves that he or she is actually committed to preserving the environment.

Gains in crypto currency are not easy to launder into the normal monetary circuit, however. Therefore, traders reinvest them in decentralized stock exchanges through decentralized financial institutions. As a consequence, stakeholders proliferate throughout the process, from the launching of a crypto currency to all types of crypto assets, now called “tokenization” by new trading and investment platforms. So conceived and implemented, a Blockchain is *public* and fully *decentralized*. Instead of a central authority guaranteeing the value of the money and the exchanges done in that currency, or the interest rates on loans, there are only miners, probers, and verifiers.

However, the alleged democratic control over the process must be questioned. Is it really “Mean Streets vs. Wall Street”, disinterested and neutral citizens or, better, “netizens”, against interest groups? This is far from obvious since “miners” also target windfall profits. Moreover, FinTech institutions must create incentives to participate in the system in order to grow.²³⁶

Going further, we must ask a more radical question: who controls and selects the Internet controllers who make Blockchain possible? Probably those geeks who feel really concerned and who are deeply involved in the process (the active minority of people who have designed and now manage the system).

In reality, the system is not fully linear from one human instruction to the next: it relies on automated regulators fed by big data, which transform dissonant but sometimes lesser information on a marginal market into a decision able to affect bigger markets and consequently ruin savers by the thousands—the so called “oracles”, acting as sensors. Compared to a context in which financial institutions are constantly overseen by official and human

235 According to Pascal Lafourcade, during the same webinar on 5 March 2021.

236 According to Emilie Raffo, decentralized finance relies on such incentives. For instance, Compound, a Swiss platform, distributes tokens to people who put their savings into a crypto currency account as a bonus on top of the promised interest rate. It also organizes “flash loans” as pure players do in goods markets. Hacking degrades multistakeholderism—instead of securing savings, Blockchain attracts hackers, without preventing them from damaging the design (Saffron Finance has lost \$ 55 million in 2020).

regulators this does not seem much of a progress towards empowering netizens.

Lastly, as the number of stakeholders is technically unlimited and they tend to be private rather than public (therefore subject to little or no state control) it is difficult for them to converge and reach agreement with each other. The heterogeneity of interests makes any common position unlikely and it is even probable that those most affected by collective decisions will lose control of them for good.

Problems arise from market-driven, contractual aspects of end users' decision-making system. As a mode of governance and contrary to its promise, "multistakeholderism" is neither legally binding nor fully inclusive. Instead of a "constitution", ordinary "laws", "appeals", and "recommendations", it is simply based on "bylaws", "quasi-law", "quasi-judicial mechanisms" and "advisory remarks". In Internet governance, platforms impose their "terms of service" as if they were constitutional in nature and as if such rules could be publicly contested rather than tested by private arbitration systems.

This raises the question of relations between (public) *law* and (private) *code* or administrations and the private sector. The latter has recently achieved immutability, bringing with it new guarantees of execution, at least in the eyes of the general public, who consider Internet architecture difficult to change (just like legal prescriptions and prohibitions). In reality a code that "protects privacy, or promotes monitoring" does what the Law alone is expected to do. Coding is therefore a privilege or a duty shared by states (generators of laws) and enterprises (code conceivers) (Lessig 2000: 3).

Moreover, technology offers new "opportunities of turning law into code", which brings undesirable effects like a loss of non-discrimination when "neutral algorithms systematically discriminate minority groups" isolated from the majority of end users (Hassan & De Filippi 2017: 1).

Despite its paralegal status, multistakeholderism has a great advantage over plurilateralism when anti-elitism rises everywhere. Governments are no longer the ultimate decision-makers and policy measures are no longer made top-down. The price to pay for democratization is the complexity of the system. It is a "Lego" game produced with a drastic expending of energy, organized and protected by oversized software because the "open access" mantra allows anyone to withdraw a brick and make the whole set collapse.

Ultimately, the fate of a fully decentralized and privatized system results in recentralized public control. Central bankers and banking institutions themselves reintegrate crypto products into their more secure and legal processes. This converts a crypto currency into an "electronic national currency", which can generate more confidence than Blockchain systems. Furthermore, this is a clue to this evolving balance between centres and peripheries: Blockchain was initially advertised for its capacity to create trust

among people who shared a Libertarian vision of technology and felt safer with the guarantee that such systems could only be looted if one possessed 51% of the capital invested, a much too high an ambition for any private actor.²³⁷

All this is of great importance. Developing multistakeholderism is ultimately motivated by two intentions: firstly, transferring power to rank and file citizens (provided they are able to become expert netizens: so, not everyone); secondly, suppressing intermediaries like bankers, insurance agents, and negotiators of all kinds. In the long run this may contribute to the replacement of centralized systems governed from the top by self-governing “Decentralized Autonomous Organizations” (or DAOs). Despite their generic names, DAOs are financial endeavours in the main. Their rationale is to allow owners of wallets (i.e. savings and investment schemes) comprising “tokens” (i.e. shares and assets) to participate in strategic decisions usually made by accredited agents and traders. In the process, they become part of investment choices and dispute settlement mechanisms, regardless of the amount of tokens invested (which is close to universal suffrage) instead of voting rights proportionate to each stakeholder’s wealth, as the risks taken by each wallet owner are unequal (cf. the IMF).

This, in turn, could lead either to plutocracy (power to the richest) or demagoguery (anonymous netizens are unequal in wealth). Note that full decentralization of strategic power to every stakeholder remains utopian because the voting system must be centralized and can be manipulated by “Oracles” (people or machines introducing information into the investment opportunity process). Furthermore, as in ancient Athens, daily voting may be tiresome and could eventually deter owners/voters or exhaust their cooperative will.²³⁸

Technological and ideological developments weigh on our common understanding of who the negotiators are. Unlike ambassadors, however, netizens do not settle cases among themselves behind closed doors; they do not make the case last too long for the sake of buying time and avoiding acts of despair; they do not keep their records confidential for a number of years; they are immediately accountable to their peers for whatever they do or do not say through a process of blaming anyone at any time. Public opinion is now a permanent tribunal able to prosecute bold speakers—a dream never realised for diplomats to whom historians digging into declassified archives have retrospectively attributed tragic historical errors.

237 Most information in these paragraphs comes from the presentation made by Emilie Raffo (PwC Smart Contract Assurance, Geneva), during the 5 March 2021 webinar organized by the University of Grenoble.

238 All details come from a 13 May 2021 webinar organized by ChainSecurity with, among others, Samuel Brack and Emilie Raffo.

Multistakeholderism suppresses interfaces and intermediation in appearance only. Once netizens and all sorts of geeks are deceived, it may be too late to repair the damage done. Multilateralism relies on diffuse reciprocity. When this imperative is waived, multilateralism is threatened.²³⁹ Thus, when multilateralism is derailed we are left with two unsatisfactory alternatives: too much power in the hands of too few or too many decision-makers with little individual leverage.

We are then sailing between the Devil of despotism and the deep blue sea of libertarianism.

15.2 Unlikely Alternatives: New Despotism and New Medievalism

Let us assume that some alternatives are less likely than others. The transnational organization of the planet makes full-fledged despotism unthinkable, even in a rejuvenated version. Although some components of neo-feudalism seem present in our modern world the complexity of the arrangements that could stem from a neo-medieval world exceeds our cognitive capabilities and seems quite out of sync with the current phase of globalization. They nonetheless deserve attention because they focus on two crucial matters: firstly, relations between elites and masses (or their equivalent), and between the most advanced countries and the least developed economies; secondly, the interaction between the great diversity of societies and the single territory of politics.

15.2.1 *New Despotism*

A world order depends on the adoption of a consensual cosmological view. It relies on a system of ideas and beliefs about this world and the netherworld. These convictions have been embedded into religious creeds from the earliest times. Religion provided every concept and belief needed to rule the globe with obedience rather than force. After Westphalia, religion was replaced by nationalism and during the Cold War, transnational ideologies with universalistic pretention coincided to justify the way the world was governed.

Bifurcation does remain possible. When a state championing a new narrative predominates, former hegemonic countries survive at its margins. Although they have limited control over their domestic (societal and cultural)

239 Comment made by Manuel Lafont-Rapnouil, GRAM (Sciences Po Paris), webinar on 18 February 2021.

issues they do not disappear from the world stage, offering a safe haven for principles and beliefs that had lost ground elsewhere.

This has been seen many times in history, from the Pharaohs and the cities of Lower Mesopotamia; then on to Mycenae, Sparta, Athens, Macedonia, Rome, the Islamic Caliphates, etc. Later on, Portugal, Spain, France, Great Britain and the Netherlands successively tried to rule the world of their time, waging a number of colonial wars. The US followed suit, despite decades of opposition from communist countries. In each case, no hegemonic power has been able to erase opposition from potential rivals.

Given despotic systems can never control the rest of the world and to the now taken-for-granted formidable imperative of political emancipation, no great power will ever again be able to dictate its will to other countries. Likewise, even the most universal organization (the UN) could not fully succeed in monitoring the global implementation of its resolutions. Perhaps the UN might achieve that end but over a period that can be counted in decades.

Therefore, despite the documented shortcomings of multilateralism as well as the defects and inconveniences of evolved forms of liberalism (making it shrink or expand), global despotism has no future. Feudalism revisited could have one but it would be a second best compared to the political formulas that will be examined in the next chapter.

“Despotism” is a crippling word. Translated into the language of realist and neo-realist scholars it is the condition of “invincible great powers’ hegemony”, asymmetric and aristocratic. This unequal order pushes the masses, domestically, and the weakest countries, internationally, to the periphery of their respective perimeter of influence. Despotic orders are deeply unequal. Access to organizations, markets, and public goods as well as sources of income and influence is not open to all equitably. This lack of equality is made manifest by two tacit delegations of power: firstly, by the masses to the elites; secondly, by the rulers of the weakest countries to those who govern the strongest. Members of the upper strata of national societies and international communities seize the largest part of the available resources, and redistribute it as they see fit.

However, absolute oppression is not necessary. True, individuals living under despotic rule are familiar with social orders that are often unfair and suppressive. However, they may opt out and emigrate or they may reorganize and renegotiate political orders. They can create new ones and structure competition among them. They can also rely on local orders, and resist any trend towards centralization within or across national borders.

Usually, the masses prefer to have most of their basic rights and common goods provided locally by casts, kin groups, family leagues, ethnic communities, guilds, and militias. Rights tend to be contingent upon allegiance, favouritism, and clientelism. Under despotic orders rights are both unequal vertically (between the core and periphery of society) and different hori-

zontally (across local orders or communities). The result is widespread unregulated legal pluralism; and considerable obstacles to free circulation, rapid emancipation, and fair competition.

Liberal orders, in contrast, are explicitly founded on the principle of equality of rights among citizens regardless of their social, geographical, professional, ethnic, or religious background, or wealth. Of course, the scope of these impersonal rights may vary widely across societies and over time. Still, the primary benefit of such rights is to emancipate individuals from their local communities or from their bosses, and allow them to associate, invest, and trade across a broader social space. Citizens may then aggregate into larger, more competitive public arenas and markets (North, Wallis & Weingast 2009).

This in turn leads to greater willingness among some people to delegate authority and resources, resulting in a wider common interest and, possibly, in a better supply of public goods. All things being equal, liberal orders are typically associated with a more integrated civil society, a larger state, and a more dynamic economy than is the case with despotic orders.

Specific rules, organizations, and social movements structure the global arena, but this latter is also populated by agents who are primarily defined by the delegation of rights negotiated domestically. Hence, negotiators who meet on the international scene transact on the basis of rights that are both unequal and different. Since despotic regimes overwhelm liberal ones what characterizes the global scene is therefore the strength of despotic patterns.

The neo-despotic character of today's world is first reflected in a fractured, incomplete normative framework, void of an effective international hierarchy of norms. Indeed, there are few institutional checks against rent-seeking monopoly positions or strong-arm politics. Then, many global public goods are provided inefficiently and illegitimately. Large segments of the world's population actually tend to coalesce in local and regional orders, some of which embody the most threatening aspects of despotism.

These neo-despotic patterns evoke the neo-medievalist regime described by scholars. However, contemporary states are more solidly established than the trading cities of the distant past, and most individuals are probably more emancipated economically and politically today. Hence, the dynamics of collective action is and will remain much different from what it may have been. Nonetheless, to predict how an international political reordering might play out it is necessary to look at how future economic elites can simultaneously negotiate with the governors of their nation and with those of the rest of the world. When they successfully corner despots to obtain concessions the global despotic condition is alleviated, and those who control national politics or the international stage become wiser. Under a scenario of enlightened despotism, the national governing elites effectively maintain their control over the regulatory architecture of the world. However, they have to

trade off this privilege against the satisfaction of other agents' demands through a fairly rationalized and stable set of IGOs and treaties.

This stage can be reached via increased reliance upon trustees chosen for their personal competence and professional authority, placed under specific rules of accountability, and expected to act independently on the basis of their personal judgment. Examples include central bankers, judges, and members of epistemic communities. To increase their credibility trustees will make their dissent plain to the politicians who nominated them. They will serve the interests of people who are at the beneficiary end of monetary policy or dispute resolution.

The staff members of international organizations are such trustees today. We owe them for an increasing capability to evolve, self-adjust, and resolve bilateral disputes, through the development of international administrative law, formal rules of review to monitor state compliance, peer pressure, and so forth. Mutual recognition and quoting of decisions rendered in different organizations typically help them opt for stable though informal rules of interaction. In such an environment the concepts of "tipping points", "coordination focus" and "generic expertise" accumulated in IOs are of great influence. They fill the gaps with universal norms and formal mandatory procedures.

Yet compliance is never fully guaranteed, and governments may always opt in and out of arrangements depending on the short-term cost-benefit trade-offs. This pattern is of critical importance on the frontier of international policymaking where rules and regulatory trade-offs are not settled and stalemate is a constant threat. The WTO is a straightforward example. Thanks to its dispute settlement mechanism, past settlements are generally enforced and adjustable at the margins. However, any extension of free trade to new domains immediately brings about the "realist" interaction of national interests (as happens when the liberalization of services or agricultural trade is proposed).

Lastly, public opinion and international civic organizations remain outside the doors of conference buildings. Intergovernmental organizations may hold press conferences, maintain documented websites, and meet with representatives of associations, but in no case do these outsiders actually participate in the formal decision-making. Hence the most competent and coordinated IGOs cannot help to establish an integrated "international public domain", or an international civil society.

This is the main political counterpart for accepting the broad participation of most states in multilateral meetings. The Chinese and Russian governments, for instance, ignore the demands of Western civic militants. They cannot accept that their own citizens have recourse to internationally agreed-upon rules and rights on the domestic scene. Although most despotic states are willing to abide by common regulatory norms in the international eco-

conomic field they are reluctant to align on democratic and civic norms. In so doing, they weigh on the pace of enlightenment in the neo-despotic international order.

This insulation policy adds to the many brakes that slow the journey towards a fully liberal world in which international institutions would protect the rights of every citizen both domestically and across borders.

Since we are far from reaching simultaneity in governmental acceptance of policy changes inside and outside, the race towards liberalism, which starts from despotism and then neo-despotism, could well result in neo-medievalism.

15.2.2 *New Medievalism*

The modern state system is moving in opposing directions: global integration and local fragmentation. Which of states' resilience (associated with liberalization) and "states' decomposition" (a product of enduring despotism) will predominate in the long run?

To answer this question we must compare three models: the first is medieval, and pre-Westphalian; the second is post-medieval and Westphalian; the third is post-modern and post-Westphalian.

Assuming that the neo-medieval analogy "is neither more nor less than a heuristic device" able to "provide an embryonic alternative to the hegemony of the 'globalization' discourse" (Friedrichs 2001), we can go as far back in history as necessary to draw lessons from the way world governance evolved over the centuries, if not millennia.

According to Hedley Bull, global governance in medieval times was "characterized by a system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalty". Both were "held together by a duality of competing universalistic systems", the Empire and Church ruling over heterogeneous and multiple polities. Therefore, this governance was both national and transnational, as it is again nowadays with sovereign states and sub-state entities, cosmopolitan economic elites competing in markets, opposed communities of identity, and violent trans-boundary groups (Friedrichs 2001: 482-4).

To estimate what neo-medievalism as a concept could bring to a theory of world order we must have a closer look at the "overlapping consensus" of institutions between the 11th and 14th centuries, when actors "had to struggle—in generally agreed upon ways—to determine who would be the authority in a given situation." The Ordering Principle of this Medieval International Society was either autarky (one centre, one top) or heterarchy (multiple ranked orders and several tops).

Neo-medievalism complicates this scheme because it is difficult to "make sense of a system which in actuality (empirically) has multiple tops, but

which argues that in fact it has only one top (the sources of legitimacy for that top)". For instance, "the Peace of Augsburg (1555) sought to reunify Christendom. The preface to the agreement called for a 'permanent' religious peace" but "the pope did not take the opportunity".²⁴⁰

What matters for us is the *Weltanschauung* of that time. At Augsburg priority was given to an ideational peace over a territorial settlement. A telling illustration of this assumption is the ubiquity of the state centre; it was difficult to locate the Holy Roman Empire, since "emperors kept moving from one place to another... Therefore, the centre of the empire is the person of the emperor and relationship between imperial units are relationships between rulers, not between states" (Bania-Dobyn 2008: 26).²⁴¹

Is this analogy helpful when predicting what global institutions will become tomorrow? Absolutely: it shows that world governance must rely on a dominant ideology whose promoters claim that it entails some sort of "universalism", whether religious, ideological, or secular.

Ruling the world requires a shared acceptance of two uncontested models: an institutional template (like national states and their administrative apparatuses today); plus an economic system like a "transnational market economy" dis-embedded from the social and the national (Friedrichs 2001: 488). Instead of the Emperor and the palatine administration, the Pope and the Church, as well as the princes and their armies, the cities and the universities, what we have now is a coalition of "bankers, businessmen, scientists, and media tycoons".²⁴² Hence, rather than the imperial Diet, the Pontifical Council, and the city assemblies, the world today comprises markets, stock exchanges, and arbitration courts.

The Christian clergy and the emperor's palatine administration no longer rule the globe, now governed by four organizational groups—the *bureaucratic* and the *managerial* elites, some *domestic* and other *cosmopolitan*—or perhaps eight (when internal oppositions between *orthodox* and *heterodox* visions

240 It "was therefore partially a response to the absence of a general council. Initially, Charles V did not want to call for the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire to convene regarding these matters, since such an action would undermine the pope's authority. Yet, he ultimately decided that some kind of response was required, and called for the Diet in order to reunify Christendom. Before proceeding, he gave the pope the opportunity to support his decision" (Bania-Dobyn 2008). "These growing divisions within international society were placing the pope under increasing pressure to call a general council to address the sources of controversy. However, the pope wanted to avoid discussion of religious divisions within Christendom, not least because calling a council would demonstrate that he was incapable of exercising his authority to solve the crisis" (Friedrichs 2001).

241 Quoting Van Creveld, Martin. 1999: *The Rise and Decline of the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 59.

242 "Managers in transnational corporations, decision-makers at the IMF and IBRD, administrators at the WTO and OECD are all involved in a universal project of regulating human relationships through the impersonal principle of the market" (Friedrichs 2001: 489).

within each group are included). We may then see staff members of IOs converted to critical economists joining top national administrators hostile to globalization and allying against the domination of global traders. Depending on context each of these corporate groups alternates between *cooperative* and *agonistic* behaviour. Thus, we have now 16 groups of actors operating in a “post-international world” where political standardization (on paper states are identical everywhere) is balanced by economic harmonization (business-driven norms are accepted all around the world) (Friedrichs 2001: 476, 487).

The lesson taught by the neo-medieval analogy is clear: domestic fragmentation can only be cured by cross-border fragmentation. The latter compensates for the frustrations felt within a loosely centralized national territory. This is not to say that feudalism is the ideal political formula of our time just because it would allegedly help balance the respective strengths of two associate rivals. At one end, we find religious people and local administrators (now heads of ministries and IOs). At the other end, there are top managers of industrial plants and banks (and now trading and financial institutions). On the contrary, one can perceive a world beyond neo-medievalism that will be both ruled as a whole and open to the lobbying of multiple actors associated with global governance. In such a system, networks of IOs are evidently more central than they are today, because their bureaucracy is at once national and international. It is simultaneously technical (economic) and political (ideological). It is both operative and epistemic at the crossroads of a society fighting for its liberties, and an economy that cannot fully rely on markets, plus politics that must preserve a “collective action capacity against the particularistic concerns of societal actors and the organized interests of the economy” (Friedrichs 2001: 493).

Hence, despite concerns about the irrelevance of bureaucratic culture IOs staff is located at the heart of the planet, from where rivalries between the sixteen groups I have outlined can be regulated. This is of the utmost importance since these organizations are of unequal strength and live at different levels of centralization. The only possibility for them to get along together is to do as the Holy Roman Empire did: cohabit under a paramount vision aiming to promote globalism, sustainability, inclusion, fairness and effectiveness: the new mantra of our century.

In short, the temporary triumph of neo-feudalism could bring *universalization without uniformization*. Would it suffice to put global governance on a new track?

15.3 Likable Options: Constitutional Adaptation

Some alternatives are more likely than those we have so far examined. They are also more likeable. All things being equal people would certainly prefer to live in a democratic world rather than a communitarian system.

When imagining a Constitution for the globe we are on an unmarked path. A burning question comes to our head: what is to be constitutionalized? Would it be one sector of social life, or the entire polity? Shall we organize society as a whole, including emerging sectors unknown from past constitutional texts?

As ever, the answer lies in history. Britain, France and the USA all established basic “universal” principles. What emerged from these chaotic moments during the 17th and 18th centuries is the constitution of a world in which fundamental laws “solve coordination problems; establish duties and obligations; delegate functions; create order from chaos; provide coherence, clarity, and legitimacy; and generate, separate, and constrain powers” (Prah Ruger 2013: 268).

During the 19th and 20th centuries the constitutional frames were deemed popular even beyond national borders. The Great Powers of the time opted for an arbitration system, peacekeeping mechanisms, a humanitarian stance and economic growth. They did it step-by-step, establishing new Courts and intergovernmental organizations, filling the gaps in an incomplete system when possible, and rejuvenating old institutions when necessary.

However, striking failures call for reflection on the quality of this design. We may now ask if there is a worldwide constitutional dynamic or not (Reus-Smith 1997). Should we have a single constitution for the whole world, encompassing all realms of social activity? Or would it be preferable to design several constitutions, some “national” and other “sectorial” (like a specific constitution for the Internet)? Who will climb the last steps towards crowning the institutionalization of the world by a global Constitution? Why should any stakeholder support this project in the long run when all are supposed to be dead—as Keynes allegedly said long ago?

15.3.1 *Benchmarking: Institutional Isomorphism, Best Practices*

The process of drafting constitutional texts lies upon replication. What was once considered effective here is now duplicated there. The principles, if not the exact wording of the first fundamental laws, are reproduced in later texts. Whatever works somewhere will be copy-pasted elsewhere.

We should assess the rationality of any assumption that takes for granted governments will let IOs networks proceed to reach full constitutionalization

of the world. Any move towards a world government should be automatic, rational, or “considerate”. Before opting for the last of the three alternatives, here are a few words about the first two.

Automaticity can be calculated through basic measurements like the exponential numbers of organizations, the acceleration of the pace of creation, and the causality chain that allows one to infer from the current stage the shape of the curve that will lead us to the next steps (as happens with epidemics). Above all, the engine at the root of this expansion must be identified. Is it recognition, as Alexander Wendt has claimed (Wendt 2003)? Is it post materialism as suggested by Ron Inglehart (Inglehart 1997)? Is it Democratic Peace as predicted by Kant (Kant 1795/2007)?

Such uncertainty about the dynamics of constitutionalization pushes one towards a second alternative. Can the strength of the best argument bring a rational solution to the problem of anarchy? This is doubtful: to reach that conclusion too many ingredients are lacking, starting with the lack of venues where Great Powers can freely converse instead of bullying each other.

The final alternative—considerate judgments—could help. Although not fully rational and certainly not mechanical they prove that IOs are led by humans and not by robots. When the pros and cons of a decision have been supposedly weighed the process of controlled globalization through suitable institutions and proportionate capabilities is easier to ignite. Goals that are not achievable are abandoned at the end of each trial and error cycle.

Let us spend more time on this third version of the iteration, because it is the most plausible of the three. What makes it unique is its capacity to solve Max Weber’s “iron cage” enigma—the most effective solution to social problems is nonetheless very constraining for those who adopt it: once in, there is no way out (DiMaggio & Powell 1983). Considerate judgments lead to negotiated settlements that open the door of the cage. Once an option is selected it is supported not only by those who designed it but also by people who had so far opted for other measures and now consent to this one.

At the heart of this accepted pluralism there is “isomorphism”²⁴³: people simply rally to the flag after due consideration and accurate observation of which direction others are heading. Actually, they join those who are the probable winners, provided there is a minimum rationale for a decision. This, in turn, boosts harmonization and synchronizes political regimes, organizational bureaucracies, markets, and civil societies, as if the strength of the best solution compelled everyone to align. This is because “[o]nce a field becomes well established... there is an inexorable push towards homogenization... in the long run, organizational actors making rational decisions construct around

243 According to the two authors, “isomorphism is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 149).

themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change further in later years” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 148).

Translate this statement into our language and apply it to our time: when IO leaders all go in the same direction (be it with all the enthusiasm of pure mimicry) and when the standards of the appropriate behaviour are established, it becomes even harder to depart from this general and powerful networking process shunted along by mechanisms of imitation.

Isomorphism is generated by three beliefs: a feeling that whatever works in one organization should boost the others’ adaptation to changes in their own environment; confidence in the capacity of efficient management style and authority to become benchmarks; conviction that this is the best option because the key solution has been constructed within a community of highly specialized and professionalized people.²⁴⁴ In the IO world, where goals are somewhat all-embracing and heterogeneous, this is no surprise because “[t]he more ambiguous the goals of an organization, the greater the extent to which the organization will model itself after organizations that it perceives to be successful” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 155).

Isomorphism helps to explain international trends as well, because “adolescent bureaucracies” (compared to national public administrations) tend to be determined more by the process of isomorphism than long established organizations. They badly need legitimacy, and it can only come from peer recognition (Balint et al. 2008).²⁴⁵

However, isomorphism may be less complete than predicted by theoretical models and their cascade of hypotheses. In Europe, for instance, “the Commission has moved between the two poles of Continental and Anglo-Scandinavian administrative systems over time. In other words, the Commission increased its legitimacy by adopting a balanced position between these poles rather than simply adopting one of the two dominant approaches”, which explains “whether and why the European Commission does change in accordance or in contrast to those member states administrations which taken together make up a European administrative space” (Balint et al. 2008: 67, 70). Thus, when turning cross-national, isomorphism may offer potential bifurcations instead of leading agents to sail towards a unique horizon.

It follows from such considerations that when becoming more global the process of constitutionalization meets new barriers. To overcome them, it becomes bound but it can be completed if shorn of its highest ambitions.

Now, let us examine what happens in a specific situation: Internet governance.

244 As everyone knows, DiMaggio and Powell oppose mimetic, coercive and normative isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 153).

245 This is how these three authors reformulate DiMaggio and Powell’s axiom: “To increase their legitimacy and ensure their persistence, organizations embrace rules, norms and routines that are widely valued in their organizational environment” (p.65).

15.3.2 Full Constitutionalism? The Internet as a Benchmark

As a single global constitution is not (yet) on the agenda, sectorial attempts to build a legal framework in specific domains are likely. Then, legalization can be as basic as a protection of liberties (a Bill of Rights) supported by arbitration procedures in a single field (a specialized Act). It can be medium-range, as with a fundamental text additionally covering instruments like checks and balances between powers within the same realm. More ambitiously, it can be poly-sectorial and compel agents to behave according to the law in several sectors (as a true Constitution does).

Constitutional texts are meant to solve a basic contradiction in human politics. In the past, proto-constitutionalists were unaware that they were drafting long-lasting fundamental texts, which could later be constitutionalized. Their purpose was: 1) to limit the power of state authorities as well as the power of the people; 2) to construct a political and legal order that would simultaneously allow both to accumulate more power.

Of course, such a delicate balance is difficult to achieve. How much power is sufficient to grow a robust polity, and when does this accumulation and centralization trespass the limits beyond which members of a political unit could be arbitrarily suppressed?

Power became manifest when popular and national sovereignty were defined, habeas corpus invented, and a due process of law respected. Then, fundamental laws (i.e. solemn, national, granted by rulers under pressure) *constituted* sovereign entities (the states). They institutionalized social rules, allowed civic empowerment, listed basic rights and built authorities with limited powers. They differentiated public space and public order (Teubner 2012)

Scholars working on the Internet have repeatedly raised such questions. The matter has become urgent since governments have ever decreasing control over the regulation of this field after the empowerment of ICANN put an end to the so-called “IANA transition” process in October 2016 (Palladino and Santaniello 2021). Three constitutional options are open. Firstly, we can protect the Internet as a separate subsystem, with its own chart. This text would include guarantees granted by states and other stakeholders that it could operate with discretion. Its end users would be protected by their own specific bill of rights instead of the usual “terms of service” drafted by platforms. Secondly, we can protect sovereigns—either the people or the state—from the undesirable or unexpected effects of the Internet on diplomacy, currency, taxation, privacy, etc. Thirdly, we can build a transnational order that will do both: protect the subsystem and protect its principals.

As for the first “sectorial” option, the imbalance between *limitative* and *constitutive* powers reflects the increasing divergence between *procedural* and *substantive* conceptions of democratic regimes—the former being

individualistic, while the latter is redistributive and much less easily achievable (Dunn 2015). What matters the most in a procedural/libertarian polity is precisely the protection of every person's rights, and not a fair balance of rights across dividing lines in terms of income, lifestyle, and capabilities to prevent injustice (Sen 2009). While the former goal can be achieved, the latter is out of reach through a simple freedom Act. Therefore, a sectorial constitution would not suffice to move towards an authentic democracy on a world scale.

The second option, "protecting sovereigns", implies clarifying the blurry public/private distinction. Nowadays, state institutions often operate under ordinary law. Conversely, private agencies act as public moderators when guaranteeing freedom of expression about sensitive public issues or when prohibiting the exercising of political liberties (like expressing socially harmful opinions). Thus, constitutionalizing the Internet inevitably leads to inserting the private sphere into public texts. Moreover, because constitutions must engrain a degree of acceptance to the way people are governed. Once this consent is obtained by invisible though legal means in private contracts, the Law is of little help against abuse through the dark post (Facebook users unaware that they were targets during the 2017 US campaign) or the dark net (from a cyber hideout black hats plot against their or other governments).

The third alternative may be the only one to pass the reality test. Were they to remain limited to one sector fundamental laws regulating the relations between citizens and the state as well as those among state and interstate institutions would not suffice. Bills of rights and checks and balances acts should be complemented by a third series of laws, about the essential capabilities of the sovereigns. For instance, texts should say something about limits imposed on tech firms' disrespect for privacy—a risk linked to the usual practice of collecting publicly expressed views or deducing them from personal statements, relations with web groups or street demonstrators, and even one's health. Adding a psychological dimension (the manipulation of the mind) to such statistical measures would see a call for urgent regulation from national and international Assemblies.

So far, we have addressed constitutionalization as if it were a domestic affair. With globalization, problems multiply: if this process ever existed on a world scale it would be vertical (i.e. it would unfold from the theory of a hierarchy of norms, as stated by Kelsen and other great lawyers of the nineteenth century) and not horizontal (as among social networks, which promote contractual relations between firms and clients).

Global constitutionalization would be legitimate if it brought normative improvements to national institutions. It should not disseminate allegedly

“universal” hegemonic norms in a “pluriversal” world. On the contrary, it ought to require a cosmopolitan philosophy²⁴⁶.

Would a global constitution include a digital clause, or would these two matters remain separate? Should we adapt the principles of existing constitutionalism to the digital age or, alternatively, should we make the cyber world compatible with our political regimes in which constitutions cover the whole spectrum of societal activities? Are we aiming at the constitutionalization of the digital environment in its entirety or do we want digital constitutionalism alone? These questions remain unanswered.

15.4 To Sum Up

In the absence of a true world government the multipolar world is the most centralized we can contemplate. A world of multi-stakeholders would in principle be the most decentralized we can imagine.

In between, there are several levels of multilateralism (e.g., minilateralism and plurilateralism) while bilateralism remains. For instance, the Appellate Body of the WTO has been overburdened for years because multilateral negotiations have not progressed—if they had, dispute would have paved the way to settlements. As a rule, progress in multilateral negotiations cannot be made without plurilateral and bilateral negotiations. Solutions can be found elsewhere than in the regular multilateral process, often via bilateral meetings, as between India and the US in 2013, which unlocked part of the Doha agenda.

Although they may seem incompatible—and sometimes are—such formats can complement each other. Multilateralism can be boosted by multistakeholderism, or rescued by bilateralism and plurilateralism.

For instance, it is a well-known fact that multilateral trade negotiations have not progressed much since the inauguration of the Doha Round in 2000. This explains why the WTO Appellate Body is overloaded with cases: the less likely it is that integrated agreements will be ratified, the more probable there will be an increasing number of appeals.

Of course, multilateralism can derail when governments call for multilateralism “a la carte” or claim that it must respect local specificities like the “Chinese characteristics”. However, this drifting away from the initial logic of the organization is not discretionary. It is linked to structure and not

246 Otherwise, “there is no theoretical reason to assume that democratic iterations will necessarily produce a fusion between universal ethics at the domestic level and their reappropriation at the international level... there is no guarantee that more constitutionalization is better, for without a reasonable moral component, it might be the case that we are simply constitutionalizing just more of the same” (Brown 2012: 224, 228).

agency. Indeed, no power can exercise its freedom of choice and, say, refuse to negotiate in global forums just because the solidarity it is supposed to display is costly. Assumed egoism is not and cannot be on the agenda.

However, individuals—not governments—can impose an inclusive and broad version of multilateralism under the guise of multistakeholderism. The risk exists, of course, that such an enlargement of international stakeholders' constituencies slows the pace towards the institutionalization of the world.

Multilateralism may work again without seeing the fruition of a world government for our planet come closer, but rather the opposite: unsatisfactory multilateralism prospers because welcome institutionalization does not. We shall now see what conditions should be filled for “world-ization” to progress.

16 Towards a World Government

A true world order should rely on shared and not just legal rules. Beyond *legality*, *legitimacy* helps to prevent transgressions of international Law such as, for instance, annexations, use of prohibited weapons or negative externalities when a government does not protect its neighbours from the mutation of a virus during a pandemic.

This statement has a major consequence because transnational economic activities cannot remain private for long. Multinational corporations soon lose control over the networks they have created. Utilitarian goals are increasingly drowned in the sea of public interest-driven claims. At the other end, states that should apparently benefit from this growing publicness also lose control over the networks they have sponsored. As apprentices sorcerers they have created monsters, which now escape control.

The two major actors of the Westphalian and Post-Westphalian world, States and Multinational Corporations, are increasingly deprived of their sovereignty, as are rank and file voters on the one side and shareholders on the other (or citizens and “netizens”). With their demise, the theories built on sovereignty are refuted or will soon be. As smart as such intellectual constructions are—and some are really impressive on that line (Glaser 2010, 2013)—gesticulations to restore their relevance are doomed to fail: Ptolemy’s attempt to adapt Aristotle’s cosmography to puzzling anomalies has proven useless. Claiming that international organizations are exogenous to the state-controlled system, and confined to a marginal regulation of the puzzles of public goods that could not be solved by national governments will not save the Westphalian soldier.

Networks by their very existence spoil the sovereignty of states and their people. Simultaneously, they wreck the autonomy of firms and their owners. Size and density, plus the mechanics of unending overlapping and expanding processes explain how states are ousted from power over world affairs. The increasing degree of publicness and the imperative of justification explain why firms are progressively side-lined in multilateral and transnational decision-making processes. Exit 1648 and the nineteen seventies century, exit realists and international political economists altogether.

How Hobbes, Rousseau, Rawls and other theorists of popular sovereignty and delegation of power are still relevant today is less clear. Can popular sovereignty resist when both national sovereignty and market autonomy are vanishing? What happens when the institutionalization of the world seems stoppable since and reinforced by the very measures taken to restore the independence of its two former pillars (rulers and ruled)? In their most autonomous cantons Swiss citizens may get the impression that they are sovereign

but their liberty and room for manoeuvre is made possible by a conglomerate of the biggest financial institutions and multinational corporations, like Nestlé, which are themselves under pressure from even larger networks, like the Basle Accord on banks' hedges, the EU anti-trust policy, and the fiscal authorities of the USA.

People and partisans have the same dilemma: they must become smart players in a game they no longer play alone. Bits and pieces of sovereignty may remain here and there. Their beneficiaries being regressive instead of proactive, democratic national states might soon be nothing more than the traces of an ancient civilization.

16.1 Is Hobbes' Constant as Limiting as Light Speed?

In Einstein's equation ($E=mc^2$) the constant (c) is light speed. Nothing goes faster. Likewise, Hobbes' theory relies on a constant in world politics. His famous delegation of power from individuals to the Leviathan occurs within national boundaries but not beyond, as if the international border was the end of politics and the beginning of war. Hobbes' dilemma is still haunting IR specialists because the UNSC is not the world Leviathan, nor does it have the resources to make this cosmopolitan dream come true soon.

When comparing 18th century England and the 21st century world we cannot deny that transfers of sovereignty now occur outside national borders and not only from states to Regional Organizations (when parts of the domains of competence have already been transferred to a supra-national Commission and Council. However, such delegation remains "bounded"). States nonetheless keep limiting the discretion conceded to IOs in specific sectors, about certain issues, and for a particular span of time. To reach a stage in which most domestic decisions will be either framed or dictated by an outside source of power, delegation must become "unbounded", free of any conditions imposed to become legitimate. Is this extension possible, and is it likely?

16.1.1 *Unbounded Sovereignty Transfers Within National Boundaries*

Hobbes wrote *The Leviathan* in 1651. Political scientists and philosophers attribute him the modern conceptions of power, liberty and other rights, and sovereignty. Regarding the latter, Hobbes compares nature with an organic society in which "the sovereignty is an artificial soul... giving life and motion to the whole body" (*Leviathan*, introduction). Therefore, his work is

centred on the powers of the Sovereign rather than on the capabilities of the people over which he or it rules [“he” for a monarch, “it” for an assembly or an aristocratic elite], since “[t]here is no perfect form of government” (XIX). Note that this is an additional obstacle to the constitution of a world government, since we do not know in which form such an Executive would rule.

Furthermore, Hobbes opposes natural “rights” that make people free and natural “laws” that bind them (XIV). Rights can be kept or “transferred”, in which case they cannot be retrieved in goodwill: “when a covenant is made, then to break it is unjust”; people agree “to submit their wills, every one to his [the Leviathan’s] will, and their judgements to his judgement”; “to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will” (XVII). Rights must either be transferred or “renounced”, for this is the second law of nature: “we are obliged to transfer to another such rights as, being retained, hinder the peace of mankind” (XV). The third law is “contracting”, because signing any covenant is a step towards peace whereas the absence of contract leads to war. Only covenants can make transfer of power possible. In our modern language, this sounds like “international treaties”.

Now, the most intriguing excerpt is this: “when a covenant is made, then to break it is unjust” (XV). This sentence underlines Hobbes’ fear of dissidence. It also shows how mechanical the spiral of rights and transfers is in his mind. This automaticity explains why national governments hesitate to sign treaties and international agreements for fear of not being able to withdraw from their earlier commitments.

Moreover, the intrinsic asymmetry between the people who delegate their powers to the sovereign who “make(s) no covenant with his subjects” means that any delegation of competence to a non-national body could not be retrieved. The latter has no obligation (and no capacity) to sign contracts with “the multitude” (XVIII). This is particularly striking in this excerpt, if we replace a “man” among other “citizens” by a state among other states once they have opted for a world government—“a Commonwealth of the Commonwealths”,

“because the major part hath by consenting voices declared a sovereign, he that dissented must now consent with the rest; that is, be contented to avow all the actions he shall do, or else justly be destroyed by the rest. For if he voluntarily entered into the congregation of them that were assembled, he sufficiently declared thereby his will, and therefore tacitly covenanted, to stand to what the major part should ordain” (XVIII).

Suppose there is a League of Nations then the latter would definitely lose the “right of making war and peace with other nations and Commonwealths”. It would also abandon any right to renegotiate the covenant: because the powers transferred to the World Leviathan are inseparable (to coin money, tax estates, centralize militias, distribute honours, supervise courts, etc.), they

are conveyed en bloc to the supreme Sovereign. In other words, the powers obtained from the signatories of an international treaty are indivisible; they cannot be selectively returned to the “Kings” one by one (XVIII).²⁴⁷

To sum up, Hobbes considers that there is what I call a *spiral of transfers of powers and rights* to “cities and kingdoms, which are but greater families for their own security, enlarge their dominions upon all pretences of danger, and fear of invasion, or assistance that may be given to invaders” (XVII). However, he does not dare to hope that such translation will continue beyond national boundaries because (1) “the design of men [who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others] in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, in which we see them live in Commonwealths, is the foresight of their own preservation” (XVII); (2) “Whatsoever we imagine is finite. Therefore there is no idea or conception of anything we call infinite. No man can have in his mind an image of infinite magnitude; nor conceive... infinite force, or infinite power” (III)—and a world government would be an infinite Power at planet-wide level. However, even within Hobbes’ theory, there is room for global concerns. As he writes: “He that is to govern a whole nation must read in himself, not this, or that particular man; but mankind”.

In the original text, we can dig into our past sensations to build new images, which are hybrids (made of things which exist and things which do not that we would like to create). Following on from that, supranational sovereignty is a hybrid of remembrance (of national sovereignty) and fiction (world government). Is it as fictional (“a fiction of the mind”) as Hobbes claims, though? An excerpt from the *Leviathan* makes us doubt that he would always prefer reality to dream (“I often observe the absurdity of dreams, but never dream of the absurdities of my waking thoughts”). Boarding “the train of thoughts” (successive thoughts linked together), any scholar should consider (even for the sake of controlling his or her analyses) that the succession of changes is mechanical.

16.1.2 Bounded Delegation of Powers Beyond Borders

However, this did not work as planned. To understand why, a new reading of the *Leviathan* reminds us that national “bodies politic” can only ally in Leagues of States “for mutual defence”, which are *temporary* alliances: “For a league being a connexion of men [or states] by covenants, if there be no power given to any one man or assembly (as in the condition of mere nature [i.e. anarchy] to compel them to performance, is so long only valid as there

247 Thus, if “the name of sovereign [is] no more given by the grantees to him that grants them, the grant is void: for when he has granted all he [the world ruler] can [as fiscal, police, justice, etc.], if we [members of the international community] grant back the sovereignty [to national states], all [i.e. the pre-Commonwealth privileges] is restored”.

ariseth no just cause of distrust” (XXII), while the opportunity to deny former partners worthiness to deserve confidence are manifold.

If military and temporary alliances are the only tools available beyond national borders, then a coalescence of Commonwealths relies on weapons alone. As Hobbes elegantly puts it: “[international] covenants, without the sword, are but words” (XVII).

It will be impossible to erase national borders until there is an international force endowed with powers that have so far been refused to security forces such as UN peacekeeping troops, Interpol and Frontex searches, and IAEA or OPCW inspections. For that reason, the only acceptable delegation is conditioned to the availability of exit options, exemptions, the waiving of commitments and sanctions for rulers who break the law.

Apart from these ongoing exceptions to the rule, transfers of sovereignty are restricted to specific sectors and activities. Within these limits delegation of power from national states to international organizations is bounded. This applies to realms including agriculture and vaccines, social and environmental standards, or humanitarian and human rights operations.

Another deferral of competence is less visible albeit with as much impact on our daily life. It is due to increasing standardization under the pressure of members of IOs during evaluation processes. There are telling cases like the OECD plans for offshore taxes or pension schemes; the Basel agreement on savings and investment ratios; the WTO reviews of trade practices: all can freeze free-riding temptations. As all governments are subject to such invasive investigation none will cheat to grab the benefits of economic constraints applying to all with the illusory hope of having a comparative advantage for a while in the global economic competition.

Governments can protest, multiply rebuttals of unpleasant diagnoses, and then withdraw from an IGO. Each can ban any organization from surveying its activities in a particular sector. It can dismiss consensual assessment of its performance. Alternatively, it may contain transfer of sovereignty to anything else but securitization issues—security as the capability to protect its population from any kind of risk and threat, not the merely military in nature. In some cases a government can prevent the building of an upstream dam on a major river to preserve irrigation on its land, but it cannot work on repeated droughts caused by climate changes—specialized IGOs alone can mitigate this risk.

Such examples show that national rulers can fine-tune their loss of power. However, this is not the only motive behind renunciations to sectorial monopolies. Evaluating the degree of acceptance of sectorial transfers also depends on the social groups impacted. Members of the national decision-making elites are more protected against losses of sovereignty, the more so when their sector is a pillar of national independence, such as food or drug production. Sometimes the two criteria converge, in particular when a power-

ful lobby controlling vital sectors and employing agents by the hundreds of thousands and even millions is able to resist any loss of capability.

Therefore, transfers of power and losses of sovereignty are confined to sectors in which the interest of the elites, the expectations of the security forces, and the predicament of necessity converge.

To establish a parallel with the progressive opening up of the ruling elites in Douglass North and his colleagues' history of violence within a state, we can foresee similar gains in access to global decision-making bodies by national ruling alliances. This is either because this tolerance does not weaken the effectiveness of a world government or because elites that join the global ruling coalition come from minor circles of influence within their own country.

In the long run, binding strategies are doomed to fail and national barriers will be torn down due to the combined *spiralling, snowballing and spill-over* effects. Unfolding from our reading of Hobbes, this prospective mainly derives from economic and political analysis. However, these two sectors will not suffice to accelerate the pace of globalization of powers and reach the stage where there will be only one paramount structure for the whole world. Other causes are determining: cultural factors—or, more precisely, the safety and comfort given by addressing the Other as you wish to be addressed.

This is where the English School and Alexander Wendt's audacious visions saunter into our analysis.

16.2 Making Bull's Dream Come True?

What has lately been called the “English School of International Relations” had its premise before Hedley Bull published his influential book in 1977 on *The Anarchical Society*. His main contribution to knowledge is manifest in its subheading (*A Study of Order in World Politics*). Hedley Bull's work has been commented on and enriched by his team during the eighties and nineties. We now have in retrospect a full model of what might lead us towards a unified system of relations not only among states but also between societies.

What Bull brings to Hobbes' views is both impressive and limited. It is impressive because the Hobbes “constant” no longer exists: states do transfer sovereignty rights to international institutions.²⁴⁸ It is limited, though, because

248 As Bull maintains, “the alternative theme of a society of sovereign states, and of the maintenance of order within it by devices which are not borrowed from domestic society but are unique” (Bull 1984).

such transfers remain formal; they do not change the substance of interstate relations. Bull assumes that diplomatic rules, international law and the organizational charts of multilateral agencies accompany and bind such transfers. The world “Leviathan” is not absent from his work, as in Hobbes, but it is a sovereign by proxy.

Later on, his successors like Barry Buzan would add cultural mores and social organization to the drivers (or inhibitors) of global unification. In the original version, though, sharing values originating from various parts of the world is neither necessary nor likely. This point has evolved in Bull’s considerations. His latest position is that only a sincere and ethical agreement could push states to unite at the worldwide level—not too dissimilar to Wendt, as we shall see.

This implies tolerance for and even recognition of difference. Bull started with difference between European states and then extended his analysis to what opposed the West to the Rest. What is at stake is not only uneasy cohabitation between unequal powers but pacific and mutually enriching coexistence between equally respectable states.

Additionally, Bull’s *conjecture* about what the world relies on acceptance of formal Western (Westphalian) rules by the newly independent nations once the decolonization process came to an end. Their rulers did not contest the routines and procedures existing prior to their accession. The premise of their judgment was that “international institutions were simply never intended to provide a stable and universal peace but only to mitigate the inevitable conflicts that would arise from the existence of a multiplicity of sovereignties” (Alderson & Hurrell 2000).

Bull’s legacy is central to my thesis. He has identified the drivers of unification, moderately believing in their effectiveness, while being unable to see recent changes like the demand for a fairer distribution of positions within IGOs or the multiplication of exceptions to global commitments in the name of specific “characteristics” (in particular in the realm of rights).

What we mostly owe to Hedley Bull, though, is a change from a society of national states to an international society of the peoples.

16.2.1 From a Society of States to a Society of the Peoples

As Bull once said: “[W]hile an international society presupposes the existence of an international system, an international system does not necessarily entail that there is an international society”. Thus, whatever rules states have found to regulate their relations they would not suffice to make their inhabitants feel open and tolerant to foreigners since cohabiting would remain possible “without accepting a common framework of rules and institutions”.

Therefore the priority to achieve a better kind of world order is to accept that “the operation of institutions of international society, like diplomacy and international law, are generating new organisations, practices and normative propositions that are novel, in Westphalian terms”. They are new because they operate “according to a global logic that is exogenous to these structural conceptualisations (like capitalism and accountability)” – a dynamics which goes far beyond their own purposes (Williams 2005: 12).

The major change in logic is a move from a world centred on territory to a world focused on diversity. Note that such a plurality “is not a product of the states system, but a fundamental feature of the human condition” (Williams 2005: 12). In terms reminiscent of Wendt’s theory, Williams updates Bull’s ideas, regretting that “diversity has been corralled into a territorial form” so that the constitution of international relations [is] an anarchically organised and territorialised social activity” (Williams 2005: 14).

Once seen as respectable, difference is conducive to “a form of politics that is characterised by a dialogue between different identities, communities and ethical schemas that, at least in ideal form, leads towards reconciliation and universality through dialogue and conversation” (Williams 2005: 15). This assumption is obviously conditioned to self-restraint, and does not apply to terrorist groups. Therefore, we should design “institutions that are able to restrain violently intolerant groups that threaten the normative potential of world society” to limit “the unpredictability of a global politics that is predicated on diversity”. This is why “a pluralist world society... has the potential to offer individuals and groups not just the comfort, safety and familiarity of their own communities, but the chance to step out into the world... on their own terms” (Williams 2005: 16).

Leaving aside Williams’ view about the advantage of “solidarity” over “pluralism” (a distinction which reminds us of the difference between Wendt’s “thin” and “thick” recognition, to which we will return in the next section), let us spend some time on attempts to upgrade and update Bull’s paradigm. Alderson and Hurrell commented on it at length in the homage to Bull that they convened. They start from a paramount assumption (against Hobbes) according to which “international society should not be conceived in terms of the direct transposition of domestic ideas about government and order”. They continue (following Bull) assuming that a universal, harmonious, and peaceful order is out of reach. It is then that they depart from the initial model. They state that pluralism is an ethic of difference. This is a major step forward, because the authors make this claim contrary to “[t]he dominant conceptions of order that emerged within the classic European state system [which] were largely concerned with elaborating limited rules of coexistence” (Alderson & Hurrell 2000: 3-4).

What would the new ambitious norms of a solidarist international society based on non-debated difference entail? Well, they may involve more

extensive schemes of cooperation. Firstly, to safeguard peace and security (for example, prohibiting aggression or extending the list of threats to peace and security); secondly, to solve common problems (such as tackling environmental challenges or managing the global economy in the interests of greater stability and equity); thirdly, to sustain common values (like the promotion of human rights or political democracy) (Alderson & Hurrell 2000: 5).

Such ambition is grounded on another assumption, that “there is at all events no reason in principle why European or Western norms and institutions of international society cannot be transferred to cultures that are different and display some capacity of resistance.” This is so because “all cultures are amalgams of various cultural components and influences”. Why, then, should “Western ideas on international relations... remain permanently outside the experience of other cultures”? Why could new norms jointly contemplated not “gradually... draw the cultures of the two sides together”?

One explanation might be that Europe and its domination are facing growing criticism. Scholars from the South reckon that “a reasonably cohesive international society has, as a matter of historical fact, developed within the classical European state system”; but they disagree on the consequences of an increased cultural heterogeneity on the constitution of an international society (Alderson & Hurrell 2000: 7). Bull himself eventually asserted that before and even after the European expansion various international regional systems,²⁴⁹ which were “interdependent but not integrated into a single system”, coexisted until 1648. However, “they were not united by a perception of common interests nor by a structure of generally agreed rules setting out their rights and duties in relation to one another nor did they cooperate in the working of common international institutions” (Bull & Watson 1984).

Such regional systems differed from Europe because their hegemonic centres left some leeway to peripheral states. They were “able to maintain a complete independence in spite of nominal claims of the Supreme ruler” under the rule of natural law²⁵⁰ whereas hegemony and the absence of legal codes were “repudiated” by European rulers.

The conciliation of different societies and states was made possible because the evolution of the European system of interstate relations and the

249 “[T]he Arab-Islamic system, which stretched from Spain to Persia”; “the international system of the Indian subcontinent and its expansion eastward, founded upon a traditional Hindu culture but with predominant power in the hands of Muslim rulers”; “the Mongol-Tartar domination of the Eurasian steppes, which had also become Muslim”; and “the Chinese system, long under Mongol domination”.

250 “Beyond each fluctuating periphery there lay kingdoms and principalities which were recognized, even by the Supreme ruler, as independent, although not as his equal, for example, the reduced state of Byzantium before its final collapse in 1453, the kingdoms of the Deccan and Java, some Russian principalities, and Japan” (Bull & Watson 1984: 2).

expansion of Europe across the globe were *simultaneous* processes, which influenced and affected each other” (Bull & Watson 1984: 4, my emphasis).

Therefore, we could once more be in a context which might favour a switch “from *consent* to *consensus*” (Alderson & Hurrell 2000, my emphasis), each international regional system establishing itself among others and on an equal footing. Integration of their societies into a society of peoples would nonetheless require more concern for natural law than positive law, and more interest in ethics than tactics.

Bull himself recognized that natural law “did exist during the centuries prior to the emergence of a universal international society... and was often invoked in Europe to show that there were rules governing the relationships between Europeans and other peoples”. This idea, which was “inherited from the Greek and Roman Stoics and elevated to a central position in the political theory of Latin Christendom, proclaimed that rights and duties attached to human beings as such and apparent to the light of reason *existed by nature throughout the world as a whole*, whatever convention decreed at particular times and in particular places” (Alderson & Hurrell 2000, my emphasis).

So, why could natural law not still be considered universal today? It could, but one must remember that this doctrine “had no foundation in the will or consent of political communities throughout the world”. Universality of Law “had been asserted only in European countries even if there are parallels to it in some non-European traditions” (Bull 1984: 3-4).

The dominance of Western values declined at the end of the 19th century when “China, Japan, Siam, and Persia entered into diplomatic relations with European powers, and took their place at the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907” (Bull & Watson 1984: 425-435). Since then, other powers from the Global South have been integrated into the international system, inducing more changes therein, despite the arrogant or conservative attitude predominating in the West, according to which “[t]he very conception of the entry of non-Europeans states into international society [was] conceived as a process whereby candidates were accepted by the original members, prepared and finally deemed to have graduated, took for granted a world directorate of European states”. (Bull & Watson 1984: p. 429-30)

All this changed after the Second World War, and the admission into global IOs of non-Western states now in the majority, albeit often weak. Such inherent weakness also enfeebles the potential cohesion of states within these IOs. What we have at present is “a shared cosmopolitan culture of modernity” (Bull & Watson 1984: 434-435). The cause of its triumph is due to the fact that “[t]he recently admitted states within IOs] manifest little if any wish to revert to the... suzerain system which prevailed outside Europe before its expansion. What the new states demand is ‘full diplomatic recognition’”.

The engine of integration into a European-designed international society is its adaptability because it was “able to absorb such a vast accretion of new

members, interests, values, and preoccupations, without giving rise either to any clear sign that its rules and institutions are collapsing under the strain, or that the new states have repudiated them”.

The lesson to draw from this reading of the English School is that the European system was able to integrate non-European states because it was resilient. However, to survive in the long run it also had to accommodate demands for equality, pluralism, and solidarity.

16.2.2 *From Difference and Pluralism to Solidarity and Unity*

There are many examples of the cross-fertilization of theories meant to explain the evolution of the world system towards more balanced, pluralistic and effective governance. Pluralism has a long academic genealogy. In its classical version, it characterizes a liberal “international society of *states*”. Peoples are dispatched into nations, and they all accept a basic set of rights, at least in international negotiations held under the auspices of IGOs.

The constructivist vision of pluralism tends towards a more pro-active view of mutual help. Often called “solidarism” it comes with an “international society of *peoples*” as discussed by several British authors (such as Buzan, Linklater, Blaney and Inayatullah), a society in which rulers are not the only decision makers. Lastly, “neo pluralism”—one step further along on our journey to a federation of peoples (if not a world government)—is grounded on the true recognition of diversity in a “world society” that would be more or less unified by shared values (Williams 2005).

Pluralism and solidarism are necessary ingredients for such a World Society, which is of course grounded on *thin* pluralism. However, it goes far beyond this, until *thick* pluralism is reached. In a seminal paper tracing the journey “from international society to World society”, John Williams claims: “English School theory holds that elements of world society, as of the international system and international society, are always present in international politics... [Its] debates have tended to assume that solidarism is ‘hard-wired’ into world society... [despite] definitional imprecision” (Williams 2005).²⁵¹ This is regrettable, because two properties make this “*world society*” distinct from an “*international society*” (one step down on the evolution scale): firstly, a process of institutionalization; secondly, “normative progress understood in universal terms”, i.e. the implementation of a solidarist agenda.

Without solidarity, pluralism leads to infra- and intra-state fragmentation. It can neither boost cooperation between stakeholders nor accommodate “*ethical diversity*”, which is more desirable than *ethnic* pluralism.

251 “One searches vainly for a clear, generally accepted definition such as those provided by Bull for an international system and an international society” (Williams 2005).

In Williams' view, proof of this statement would be a "lack of agreement over the nature of the good life and the status of human beings, or even the possibility of such agreement". More precisely, we should explicitly abandon hope of finding such a consensus. Otherwise, agreed norms of reciprocity would merely remain Western, except for "limited, universal ethical consensus... on some questions, such as moral outrage at genocide" (and even this is debatable: what exactly deserves to be qualified as a "genocide"?).

According to Williams, David Blaney and Naeem Inayatullah, two of those contesting the normative premises on which the established world order is grounded, "have made a strong case that the question of ethical diversity played a central role in the establishment of the sovereign-states system as an international society". They assert that "the profundity of the questions raised by... diversity were ultimately unresolved (in 1648)". This was "the Westphalian deferral' of the diversity question" (Williams 2005).

Following such a line of reasoning, the ability of international society to continue to operate as a successful deferring mechanism is doubtful. The proof of that is the growing importance of humanitarian intervention, which "raises the political significance of a universal human community. For solidarists, such a community is based on claims that certain values and ideals, or rights and duties, either are or ought to be shared globally" (Williams 2005).

The only means to have them shared is to go through international organizations "such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Criminal Court (ICC)", about which Williams says that "although requiring inter-state order and being created by states through diplomatic negotiation, [they] represent incorporation into international society of a global logic that is exogenous to these structural conceptualisations". The other sort of assets that benefit such IOs is a capacity to represent diversity while states are confined to expressing territoriality. Moreover, without borders diversity cannot be "corralled" into national territories, when "different identities, communities and ethical schema... lead towards reconciliation and universality through dialogue and conversation" (Williams 2005).

Hence, if solidarity could overcome pluralism three consequences would follow: 1) *diversity* would replace *territory*; 2) IOs *staffs* must take the place of *governments*; 3) *dialogue* would overcome the *conflict* over who actually owns the ideal of universality.

Solidarity, diversity, and dialogue: these are signposts on the path towards recognition as the main engine of world unification. And here comes Wendt.

16.3 Is Wendt's Recognition Process Working?

Alexander Wendt did much to boost the epistemology of constructivism. The world as he sees it can be constructed as a United Nation in the making, a world government being the endgame of globalization as a cultural process in which material objects (like weapons) and economic issues (like capitalism) are not the main drivers of institutionalization.

What is at stake is pacific coexistence. Once the very Hobbesian claim to prioritize security over wealth and authority over justice is abandoned we can deliberately build a world based on solidarity, toleration, and recognition. However, why should we need a world government to achieve this end?

16.3.1 *Will a Social Construction of the World Work Beyond Borders?*

Wendt's tentative explanation is not fully convincing, since he himself lists five successive stages of institutionalization, resulting in a unique world state.

In his most seminal (albeit little cited) paper "Why a world government is inevitable" (2003), he analyses the tendency of systems to develop toward stable end-states, i.e., a "global monopoly on the legitimate use of organized violence in a world state". The rationale behind this evolution is "recognition", because "[a]t the micro-level world state formation is driven by the struggle of individuals and groups for recognition of their subjectivity. At the macro-level this struggle is channelled toward a world state".

I shall leave aside the possible bifurcations and regressions analysed with great care by the author²⁵² to focus on his defence of teleology. According to Wendt, "order can emerge in a system as a result of the interactions of elements following purely local rules. Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' is perhaps the most well-known example of... a dynamic... without central coordination". This process is unavoidable and out of control because agents cannot bear the woes of instability for long and because their target (a world government) is a powerful "attractor". In other words, it is "a distinct pattern toward which a system may move and lock into, after which it settles down into a self-sustaining logic". It also offers recompense, such as the collective capacity to regulate interactions without having to wage wars²⁵³ and even without requiring any monopoly over violence. Constraints are unnecessary

252 For instance he claims that "the process is neither deterministic nor linear, and forward movement may be blocked for periods of time. There are many pathways by which a world state may be achieved".

253 He puts it this way: "the loss of some agency at the micro-level may create agency at the macro-level. By taking war off the agenda, a world state would create capacities for collective action that its members could never realize in an anarchy".

when there is collective identity and “collective intentionality”.²⁵⁴ What matters greatly, though, is the cultural capability to recognize the Other as one’s equal, a process that starts domestically before reaching a stage of universalization, with demands for recognition emanating from countless people(s). Recognition may or may not follow; and it can be “thin” (as a citizen with whom to coexist beyond differences) or “thick” (as a human being to respect because of differences). The spiral of rights naturally has no limit “which means that struggles for thick recognition are open-ended and never-ending in a way that struggles for thin recognition are not”. Nevertheless in the long run desires for recognition undermine systems that do not satisfy them”. Once the Pandora box of demands is opened, however respectable and even attractive they may be, nothing can prevent them from escaping. There is no end to their proliferation. Any intermediary stage between the state of anarchy and a world state (except the ultimate one: thick recognition for all) remains unstable, is not self-sustaining, and may regress to earlier steps.

Here lies a huge difference between Hobbes’ barrier to globalization and Wendt’s mechanics of mutual recognition. Wendt systematically compares his own vision with Hobbes rational choice, arguing that collective action cannot meet individual needs in security and identity issues. In an anarchical world the agents of history are not citizens but national rulers, whose goals are material with no room to respect the subjectivity of individuals. States are recognized as legitimate international relations actors whereas individuals are not. Alliances are possible but collective security is unlikely.

16.3.2 Thick and Thin Recognition: Steps Towards a Single World

What will change in the future? Apart from cases in “degeneration back to (earlier) stages” in which the international system would be unstable, the spiral of rights to “universal recognition” that started long ago between communities should eventually reach the global level. At that stage, the spiral could push towards the constitution of a world government, which would guarantee that such rights are not only respected but also enforced.

254 It is enlightening to learn what he thinks of Hobbes views and compare that to mine: “Hobbes used his theory to justify obedience to an existing state (by warning people what would happen if they did not obey), not to justify creating a new one out of the state of nature. It was a retrospective theory. This matters because even if we accept Hobbes’ rationale for obeying an existing state, when used prospectively—which is how it must figure in a theory of world state formation—his theory is vulnerable to a collective action problem. The fact that it is collectively rational to submit to a common power does not mean that it is individually rational” (Wendt 2003).

Certainly, the social and cultural drivers of recognition will not suffice. Firstly, “thin recognition” (the minimum due to respect differences) does not generate enough energy to go beyond collective security (a stage in which states could decide to remain); “thick recognition”, full, sincere, egalitarian, must therefore become the rule domestically and internationally.²⁵⁵

Secondly, legal texts must lock the outcome of this spiral in. A constitution would do just that since the possibility out of withdrawing from this spiral would disappear forever. It is not out of reach, though, because the people who are the most dissatisfied by excessively limited mutual recognition are also those “whose self-conception is that of civilized, law-abiding actors who believe that all individuals and groups should be recognized”.

Democratic states can no longer contain pressures for recognition from citizens on the one hand, and governments of small and medium powers on the other. They cannot rationally prefer to be accountable for their own deeds or to compel less influential states to be accountable for their crimes. These two weaknesses will generalize recognition. Constitutionalizing this process at the world level would be advantageous for them.²⁵⁶

As we can see, despite their respective reputations for selfish realism and mutually beneficial constructivism, Hobbes and Wendt share the same beliefs about the inevitability of a final transfer of sovereignty “whether or not anyone intends to bring it about” (Wendt 2003),²⁵⁷ a statement which is much in tune with my own epistemological assumption.

255 “Genuine recognition means that the recognized has a right to recognition, and the Self therefore has a duty to the Other. Genuine recognition is about obligation, not charity. Only when acting on behalf of the other has become an enforceable obligation is recognition secure” (Wendt 2003).

256 “We can expect individuals and Small Powers to continue pressing for recognition, and as their violence potential grows through the diffusion of more destructive weapons they will be able increasingly to threaten the Great Powers (think North Korea here, or al-Qaeda)” (Wendt 2003).

257 “[A] World state might look very different than states today. In particular, it could be much more decentralized, in three respects. First, it would not require its elements to give up local autonomy. Collectivizing organized violence does not mean that culture, economy or local politics must be collectivized; subsidiarity could be the operative principle... Second, it would not require a single UN army...enforcement operations might be sub-contracted (along the lines of NATO perhaps)... The EU is already not far from meeting these requirements on a regional level. Were a ‘completed’ EU to be globalized it would be a world state... Finally, it would not even require a world ‘government’, if by this we mean a unitary body with one leader whose decisions are final. As long as binding choices can be made, decision-making in a world state could involve broad deliberation in a ‘strong’ public sphere”(Wendt 2003).

16.4 Neither Micro nor Macro: A Mesocosmic World

The future of globalization is often imagined as giving birth to two contradictory situations, which may nonetheless coexist: either a return to communities of belonging and their combination within micro decision-making systems for global issues—made possible through the Internet and ICANN; or a jump towards a future comprising macro structures, like an updated, upgraded, and enlarged UN ready to generalize peacekeeping operations.

The emergence of interorganizational networks blurs this clear-cut dichotomy. When they operate in isolation and stick to the perimeter assigned to them by the authors of their initial mandate, IOs can be part of macrocosmic politics, if only as mere extensions of states' power with or without some discretion if not full autonomy. However, once they have become a basic component of a network they join a world comprising several networks active in various realms and characterized by a significant number of overlaps. When this is the case, horizontality and heterarchy among unlike-units replace verticality and hierarchy among like-units. These two disruptions can only be tamed by hegemonic powers meeting in world summits.

In a networked world, things are different: instead of a strict division of labour between agencies according to their respective contribution to world governance, what we have is a complex of intermingled relations between networks, themselves born out of the necessity to steer an increasing number of overlapping mandates.

Therefore, interorganizational networks rule the world either from its centre or from its middle, depending on the mental geography by which scholars assign them a place on Earth. Although the world is actually full of a growing number of institutions operating at the macro (i.e., international) level, there is a theoretical void at the medium level, where I shall place what could be called “mesopolitics”, undertaken by organizations.

The most important characteristics of this meso level are its contribution to an institutionalization of the world, which I call its “Organization” (with a capital O). An organized world is achieved when it is structured enough to be ruled harmoniously—requiring a world government.

Within this framework, micropolitics is the domestic politics of national states. Local leaders with neither the experience nor the pretension to play a regional or global role indulge in political games. In countries with organized opinion polls we have enough statistical evidence that international issues do not matter much in the careers of politicians. The most they can do is to confer authority in particular realms to private transnational actors. Likewise, diasporic citizens retain some power within the private sphere (like parental authority).

Meanwhile, macropolitics favours national rulers' access to non-national arenas when they have a global agenda. It is the level and place where power matters with its own unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar structure as a parallel to unilateralism, bilateralism and multilateralism. Heads of states and governments meet in clubs and national states retain control over world politics.

There is another interpretation of this distinction. Micropolitics mobilizes ordinary citizens and focalizes their protest movements. Setting goals that are supposed to protect communities from the woes of politicization, it returns to the local and communitarian origins of social ties, a time when local markets and bartering for goods and services preceded any exchange of monetary values.

By contrast, rulers involved in macropolitics have on their mental horizons the unity of all nations. Guessing what our world will look like in a hundred years, global decision-makers ask themselves questions like: Will the constitutionalization of every polity convert the world into a single Polity? If so, will this polity be hegemonic (driven by the USA, China, Europe, Russia, or, why not, Australia)? Will it be either consensual (the United Nations finally fulfilling its universal function) or competitive (with various regional groupings such as the European Union and its replicates in Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, Africa, the Greater Middle East, Latin America, etc.)?

With mesopolitics there is no need to answer such questions because there is no obsession with world unity, understood as a kind of Organization below which no one could be held responsible for not contributing to the provision and delivering of global public goods.

No messianic prediction of one Earth is necessary to drive networks towards filling all the administrative functions of a world state—without the unnecessary politicking found at the micro level and even within inter-organizational clusters that have not (yet) become networks.

To help readers focusing on mesopolitics, I invite them to observe governmental reactions to the growing institutionalization of the world. As states are relevant behind and beyond national boundaries, they are considered as crowning a pyramid of micro-institutions on the domestic scene while surpassing multilateral organizations in the international sphere. However, in the space delineated by these two realms, states are subservient to interorganizational networks from which they cannot withdraw easily.

16.4.1 *The Clock Stops at Noon*

What comprises this meso level? And in what way does it contribute to stabilizing the world order below the level of unifying it? In other words, could it bring governance without government?

Interestingly, the meso level is full of “collaborative entities”, among which “interorganizational networks” are the most prominent. These two concepts are used in conjunction to depict private and public networks whose sustainability depends on a capacity to cooperate. This meso stratum is both denser than the micro-political and less tense than the macro-political.

What consequences will arise from the growing impact of mesopolitics on daily domestic and intergovernmental lives? Much depends on how we conceive states, which are thus far the sole top decision-makers. States retain some rule making and law enforcement monopoly; they have a monopoly of coercion. However, they do more than that. They protect their citizens, watch over markets to guarantee fair competition, and facilitate the provision of public goods. Since they face significant numbers of stakeholders, states are coordination entities operating when people fail to solve collective action problems.

With the globalization of challenges states are expected to oversee a process now led at the world level. Whenever issues become too complex to be handled by governments they are deferred to larger collaborative entities, like military alliances and intergovernmental institutions. As problems that cannot be solved without collaboration proliferate, states complete the transfer of capabilities and capacities to specialized IGOs, one step back from establishing a global and universal government.

This is exactly where to bring networks in: when functional and bounded transfers of responsibility produce a radical change of philosophy, inter-organizational networks step in. They have one merit: they are robust substitutes for a world government, itself cursed by the impossibility of solving many problems in different countries simultaneously.

This is not to say that mesopolitics is unaffected by difficulties of its own, like second-order cooperation problems, increasing differences in organizational charts, or lack of overall legitimacy and efficiency. Such shortcomings are due to the incompleteness of any world order given the absence of a world supreme court (which the ICC is not), not to mention a specialization between the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary (which is blurred within IOs).

In the past, private actors had incentives to draft public constitutional texts on the domestic stage. On the world scene today rulers do not find the completion of the international constitutional order profitable or mandatory. Drafting a global constitution is the limit of interstate cooperation, and the odds are it will remain limited. Firstly, states will resist further transfers of

sovereignty; secondly, the issue of a representative democracy at the world level is still barely addressed. A growing acceptance of “accountability” would not suffice to foster legitimacy. The prerequisite of a world citizenship and a world Parliament would be missing to boost representation.

Mesopolitical actors suffer from a contrast between the increasing number of recommendations they make to enhance basic individual rights and the unsatisfying implementation of these worldwide. This situation opens new windows of opportunity for individuals who expect their home government to adopt universal norms and enfranchise people. The spiral of demands for empowerment has virtually no end since what IGOs and NGOs can “sell” on the global consumer market of basic rights is exponentially growing.

However, IOs have a great advantage over states, because the normative fabrics of governments are less and less creative. Diminishing returns on normative investment induce national actors to rely on the “cascade” and “boomerang effects” of norms. Governments are therefore pressed from within to integrate exogenous norms into their home legislation. Hence, domestic actors and mesopolitical institutions ally and compel national governments to comply with the new international regime.

Close scrutiny of policy measures also comes from within: in the absence of a world government to provide last resort decisions, citizens use domestic channels to solve international problems. American stockholders defend their claim on Argentina’s debt bonds in New York, depriving the IMF part of its global competence. Watchdogs are now operating from both below and above state level: hence, every government is weakened compared to its mesopolitical creatures. Consequently, the balance of power between states and mesopolitical actors is no longer skewed towards the former.

The multiplication of claims from individuals and domestic groups may be counter-productive, however. Overwhelmed by such pressure, states cannot endorse them all, which increases distrust—hence surveillance from IGOs and NGOs. To avoid this, democratic states concede more autonomy to their citizens. They empower their own nationals to whom they guarantee an ultimate security. When this works smoothly, national states can ensure the loyalty of their citizens, who cannot so easily bypass their home country to get satisfaction from foreign (a US court) or regional (the ECHR) structures. It is more complicated to turn to IOs to solve problems usually addressed by nation States than to put pressure on a national government and achieve the same end.

Admittedly, multilateral deliberation (if not final decisions) are now open to ordinary citizens (think of the famous “amicus curiae briefs”). Deliberating at the world level to solve problems from which someone suffers at home is nonetheless deceptive: deliberation without representation is no democracy.

Ever-expanding NGOs, online meetings, and street demonstrations cannot conceal the growing deficit in the people’s direct involvement for long. The

more citizens estrange themselves from their home state the less representative they are outside it. NGO and advocacy coalitions that claim to “represent” citizens and convey their demands to multilateral conferences are no substitutes for parliamentary channels because there is no such a thing as an “international civil society”. The associative component of a civil society may, of course, be easily identified, but there is no overall institution to resist popular demands, make concessions, accommodate private initiatives, and favour certain partners over others.

Moreover, to palliate a lack of legitimacy due to weak representation processes private actors tend to “go public”, turning progressively to more inclusive institutions than their home government. Trying to gain momentum on the world scene social movements and social groups just consolidate an interstate order.

16.4.2 One More Effort to Be Global

Mesopolitics is a hybrid of diverse activities from various actors: nation States, IOs, advocacy coalitions, policy networks, epistemic communities, transnational lobbies, etc. Finding consistency among so many heterogeneous sources of contradictory demands is a challenge for every actor operating at that level. Consequently, international governance is not the automatic outcome of a natural aggregation of interests.

Complexity stems from the fact that world order and basic sovereignty each have three layers of capabilities and compliance. The capabilities are: (1) a capacity to define the basic rights attached to a particular realm of activity; (2) a capacity to enforce rules; and (3) a capacity to organize relationships between rights owners. Compliance comprises: 4) principles of justice and allocation processes; (5) a constitutional system organizing the respective powers of the executive, the legislative and the judiciary; (6) protocols and procedures needed for communication between the people and their rulers, such as elections, political freedom, and other forms of conventional participation like authorized demonstrations.

Two questions remain to be answered, however. Firstly, we can wonder if constitutionalization is necessary and sufficient. Secondly, are Regionalization, sectorialization and federalization the right solutions?

As for the first matter, we can make some sound assumptions. Completing the transfer of power from states to IOs implies deferring competence to endorse norms, enforce rules, and enact laws to an interstate forum. As long as states restrict loss of capacity to one or two of these layers only, and do not abandon the full package, IOs powers will remain limited: translating principles of justice into ordinary rights will not be automatic. Full

delegation of power to mesopolitical actors is therefore conditional on the constitutionalization of the world.

We already have a rough equivalent of a global constitution without having global unity. The universal declaration of human rights and the separation of the UNSC, the UNGA, and the ICJ—as well as the distinction between the European Council, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice—may suffice to lock in minimum transfers of power without aiming to reach the stage where a single government would rule the planet.

The UN, the EU, and the WTO display limited features of constitutionalization that do not fully overlap. Firstly, they create norms and rules; secondly, they were founded with an executive (the Security Council or the Ministerial Council); a Parliament (the General Assembly or the Plenary Council); and a judiciary (the International Courts or the Dispute Settlement Mechanism); thirdly, they provide standards for debating, consensus seeking, etc.

Transfers of sovereignty to the UN (as listed in Chapter 7 of its charter) remain limited, however: only a small quantum of power is transferred, while states retain the power to enforce decisions. Besides such ultimate capability, any state jealously guards its right to control and regulate associative and individual activities of a public nature. It provides the legal framework within which social interactions are possible, including the impact of IO resolutions. However, some citizens may consider this an archaic legacy of the past, to be abandoned when more efficiency can be expected from other institutions—a hypothesis that would, if correct, support Wendt's view about the centrality of recognizing people's demands for recognition.

If the WHO handled pandemic risks better than one's home state, rational citizens would turn to it when assessing the safety of a vaccine. If a region like Catalonia or Quebec were addressing post materialist issues better than national bureaucracies, people would tend to look for regional institutions instead of trusting their national authorities or dreaming of a global government. If a quasi-federal regional entity enacted regulations faster than domestic administrations, people would switch their allegiance to the European Union or its equivalent in other parts of the world.

Therefore, *regionalization*, *sectorialization* and *federalization* are potentially able to solve the predicament of what I shall call a compassionate World Leviathan—a freak institution born from the hybridization of Hobbes, Bull, and Wendt's models.

As for the second strategic question, the EU (for shared welfare), the WTO (for free and fair trade), and the UN (for long-lasting security and sustainable development) are good instances of a useful combination of region, sector, and confederation. Of course, each of the three trajectories is a second best compared to world unity achieved under the umbrella of a single global constitution, but they already exist.

Let us return to one strong pillar of the unification process that we have examined at length: solidarity, as the expanded product of thick pluralism, hopefully leading to thick recognition.

It is one thing for governments, even autocratic ones, to compel with rules imposed by IGOs on matters of solidarity and tolerance. In troubled times they can send aid to peers compelled to accept foreign solidarity when their national citizens are confronted by *disasters*. It would be quite different in *normal times* to abide by outside ideological pressures to change a political regime or concede full political freedom to a people thus far hampered by restrictive policies.

Globalized regionalism can solve this issue. It offers a decent exit from excessively solidarist hopes while limiting concessions to nationalists. Pro-active solidarity Bull and Williams-style is easier to practise within the same cultural area. However, such initiatives saw some limited success in the past, albeit with many failures. For instance, accommodating non-Arabs (Iranians, Turks, Israelis) within the Greater Middle East has never worked. In Asia, the double split between China and Japan, as well as between these two powers and their former vassals (i.e., Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, and Thailand) has precluded any advancement towards a more unified region.

Most regional arrangements have been ephemeral or formal so far because they are too focused on welfare instead of warfare. Many conflict settlements are still in the offing, and some seem intractable. Contrary to Wendt's predictions, symbolic reconciliation is probably out of reach because actual sorrows and sincere forgiveness will ever miss (e.g., between Korea and Japan).

On the material side, intra-regional exchanges and common interests cannot compare with extra-regional trade.²⁵⁸ It is an established fact that federalism stems mainly from free-trade zones, as the Zollverein between German-speaking principalities at the end of the 19th century. This was what Nasser hoped for when he launched the United Arab Republic with Syria and Yemen, and likewise the Emirs of the Gulf when they established the GCG. However, the former collapsed in three years and the latter was jeopardized when Qatar was "suspended" from it. Other sub-regional IOs like the Arab Common Markets have been shut down one after the other. Their limited scope highlights the difficulty establishing inclusive regional cooperation frameworks.

Therefore, political federalism does not appear a feasible option. The EU is not an actual federation, let alone ASEAN. To exist, a federal regime

258 Additionally, the size discrepancy between former rivals is out of proportion with the European model—the gap between China and Japan or Korea is much bigger than the gap between Germany and France or Britain, and is increasing, whereas in Europe it is progressively shrinking.

requires a balanced power sharing system. Neither the Organization of the American States nor the Arab League has ever been balanced. On the contrary, hegemonic powers or antagonist governments made them divisive in many areas—the economy, human rights, religious values, military alliances, etc.

Federalization at a regional level presupposes that there is a shared linguistic, cultural, philosophical, and legal heritage. Whatever the EU has already federalized is as a result of the centuries during which the Latin language, Roman law and institutions, and the movements of people in every direction across the Empire—be they migrants, soldiers, veterans, settlers, or literati—ensured peoples were increasingly able to communicate.

This situation has been observed elsewhere (noteworthy in North Eastern Asia and the Arab and Muslim Near East) but not everywhere, and not simultaneously. However, even the EU failed to rally nationalists to a common cultural identity, and even ignited new identity issues. It no longer succeeds in uniting people to take its sound economic rationality for granted (as evidenced by the withdrawal of the UK). A majority of European decisions are bounded. This “soft regionalism” is also the most suitable way to define the process in Asia.

Federalization at a world level would require states to abandon their power to improve their own citizens’ security or rely on a Federal administration to act as the ultimate player in terms of homeland security when there is no better alternative (as with cyberwarfare). However, few IGOs can fulfil this role since only a handful of them are dedicated to security issues. Moreover, their prerogatives are far from allowing them to guarantee law and order at every level. Interpol has limited outreach and UNODC is weaker still; NATO is an alliance of democratic states against potential aggressors; the Shanghai Organization has limited competencies (Chabal 2016); the EU has never succeeded in expanding its bi- or tri-lateral battalions (Franco-German, Franco-British, or the three countries altogether). Other organizations simply pool regional security assets, as the GCC does, but they have no leverage outside their geographical zone of influence.

The chances of federalizations are predicated on two prerequisites: looking at the past (memory and reconciliation) and glancing at the future (prospective and prosperity).

As for the past, reconciliation is never total. Even in Europe Germans and Poles, Hungarians and Romanians are yet to settle their conflicts, while Germans and French did so very recently. As for Asia “forgive” and “forget” is not on the cards between China and Taiwan, Korea and Japan, Vietnam and Cambodia, when borders are still challenged at different locations, e.g., the Kuril Islands, Tibet, Taiwan, and the 38th parallel. The opposition of Asia Maritima to the pen-insular Asia Major centred on Chinese characters and the

production of rice persists (Beeson 2008; Barnes 2007). The Indian sub-continent remains fractured along historical divisions (Frost 2008).

As for the future, economic uncertainty is now greater as a consequence of repeated pandemics, the wreckage of sectors to be rescued by national states, and the weight of a powerful regional bureaucracy.

A vibrant present does not suffice to guarantee any evolution towards the regionalization of institutions and political as well as social attitudes. It is also of note that, without any opportunity to delegate full powers in terms of defence and intelligence to a truly respected and efficient IGO, there will be no embryonic world government.

But do we actually need one?

16.5 Wrap up: From Warfare to Welfare and Back

Overly ambitious scholars may be seriously wrong. The quest for perpetual peace is conducive to a search for a world government able to ensure that the peoples on Earth will ever enjoy safety wherever they live. An obsession for war is misleading, however, because in the current context of interstate conflicts it cannot disappear without supranational institutions.

As Hobbes, Kant, Bull and Wendt all share a common concern for security they fail to foresee centuries ahead, unlike sci-fi authors. Their “brave new world” (to quote Aldous Huxley) depends on very demanding and somewhat unrealistic conditions, like a love for radical difference. If we firmly believed in salvation through reconciliation and recognition we should forever remain stuck on the route along a lengthy as yet unfinished journey.

Each of these tremendously stimulating authors has his own explanatory model and is able to make predictions of the “if...then” kind. However, their respective models are predicated on the monopoly of states over macro-politics and the connection between state, war, and peace.

Apart from a federation of republics, democratic peace, expanded UN and proliferation of EU-type confederations, most analyses miss the key link in a realistic model of world evolution. To achieve *international Organization*—i.e., a world organized to avoid conflicts or solve them when they are still in the offing—you need *international organizations* by the hundreds and networks of IOs by the dozens. Little of this famous literature addresses these bodies—as if the anarchical assumption prevented them from so-doing.

IOs suffered from a lack of recognition for so long. This is no longer the case: dozens of important books are already out and others will follow. I imagine they will miss my own contribution to predictions: interorganizational networks with a potentially global outreach may long remain ignored.

As we have seen, such entities are endowed with several specific characteristics and ruled by iron laws. Even in the organizations states have founded to avoid fighting against each other wars of attrition are still waged. Compared with this limited intergovernmental achievement, networks of IOs have unlimited capabilities. Joining a network is easier than mobilizing a world government. It is not precluded by excessively unrealistic requisites. Opting for bounded transfers of sovereignty in exact proportion of the benefit expected cannot be fine-tuned. Emotion plays no part in decision-makers' calculus. Neither "love thy neighbour" nor emancipating, empowering and enlightening future rivals to feel free and enjoy the benefits of being decently ethical are effective drivers of governmental and intergovernmental policies.

In short, the quest for universal networking is likely to be more successful than the hope to see a world government in one's grandchildren's lifetime. Resilient Organization is achievable while permanent peace is not. Far from being a Shakespearian "very coinage of your brain" (Queen Gertrude to Hamlet), Interorganizational networks are already here, in front of our very eyes although like Edgar Allan Poe's famous "Purloined letter" we do not see them. They govern nearly everything we do daily. We can observe them, and even access their decision-making bodies. At least, we should try to accelerate the pace of studying them as a priority.

Replacing brilliant philosophical reasoning by obscure O&M literature and governments by interorganizational networks is also replacing Warfare (and peace) by Welfare (and truce).

17 Conclusion. What We Have Achieved and What Remains to Be Done

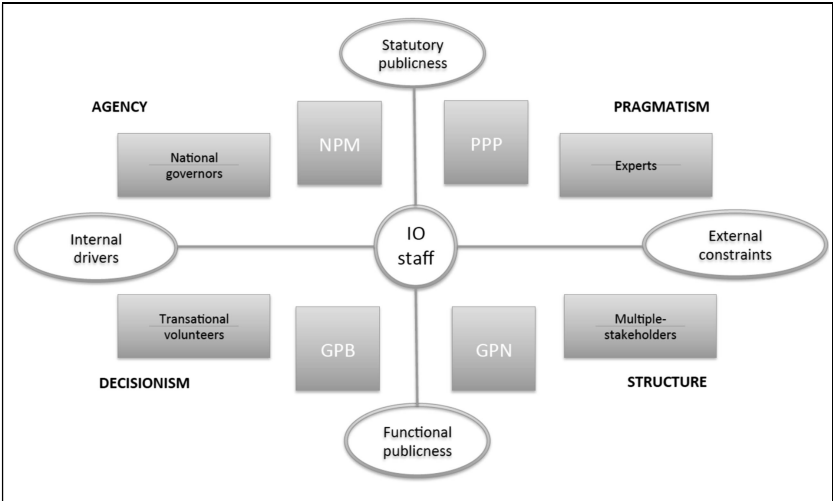
This book has tried to assess the impact of IOs on our daily life, now and in the far future. To this end, we have reviewed the endogenous factors that empower IOs rather than the exogenous contexts that constrain their action. Our inquiry has focused on inputs more than outputs and it has underlined networks rather than single units.

What has not been done here is a review of IOs' actual comparative advantages over Governments and Firms—their collaborative trends and their networking potential, although this was certainly our main reason for choosing IOs as legitimate targets for a global survey.

One graph can sum up the interplay between every factor employed here (explanatory, intervening, control, or to be explained variables). At the core of any transnational process there are real people who work in the administration of an IO. They are dedicated to the Commons as providers of global public goods. They work for the “public” either as drivers of an interstate structure or as advocates of the public interest within an NGO. Both types of staff opt for Public-Private Partnerships instead of applying New Public Management recipes mechanically. In each organization, people with diverse origins, competences, and training strive against institutional constraints, sailing between agency and structure. They are motivated by some voluntarism as well as concern for decisions that work. They eventually drift away from the usual administrative process, not applying rules by the book but constantly fighting to gain more room for manoeuvre.

It must be obvious by now that IO staffs are neither servants to their master states who simply try to implement intergovernmental resolutions nor free rational choice-rs in search of an optimum even if this quest implies a thrilling emancipation from governments. They are not ideal-typical bureaucrats, either waiting for instructions or purposefully extending their fields of operation. Most theoretical explanations have missed the point about what really happens within the “black box” of organizational staff on the one hand, and the boost to the power of “unlike units” due to network growth.

Does this book better capture the causal mechanism behind international Organization? Does it say something new about the net contribution of staffs to organizing? Is it not overly optimistic? After all, its statements might be but side effects of an initial bias. While most of my predecessors looked for cases that failed, I myself targeted IOs that succeed despite constant suspicion of low performance. My hunch was that they were far better performing and more resilient than the literature suggests.



Graph 14. A summary of the relations found between interorganizational agents and structures. GPB means Global Public Bureaucracy; GPN means Global Public Networks

There is an alternative explanation to my case selection and the impact it has on my theory. As the IOs investigated by my teams and I were rather efficient, we are able to sketch a theoretical model that was seemingly adequate for most organizations. That is something most “pessimistic” scholars who launched IOs’ studies could not achieve given the rigidity of their realist/neo-realist/rationalistic premises as well as their focus on defective or deceptive organizations and negotiations (the UN, UNESCO, the Doha Round, etc.).

Here is a major challenge for scholars working on IOs. To be convincing, they must mix hard cases with softer issues: if their model applied satisfactorily enough to security goals, then it could give a proper account of humanitarian and climate aims. It is a fact that security organizations resist durability tests much less than others. Various alliances like the Warsaw Pact, CENTO, SEATO, and even the “suspended” ANZUS (now AUKUS) could work as counter examples that—in a Popperian epistemology— could unseat our logic. While disarmament should be an interorganizational achievement, it is more often bilateral than multilateral and it yields half successes. The Disarmament Committee of the UN, for instance, is limited in its effectiveness, and inspection bodies such as the IAEA and the OPCW—not to mention courts like the ICC—are frequently side-lined by hegemonic powers.

Thus far, the available theories have often derived from an assumption of abnormality: IOs are allegedly weak (classical realism); their added value to a state-driven world is limited (neo-realism); they compare badly to bureaucracies, displaying the same pathologies (constructivism); they offer little but a switchboard of public information before serious negotiations start (liberal institutionalism); they suffer from the same constraints that weigh on a capitalist-dominated planet (green and other critical claims); above all, they exist only in our minds, until actors (or “agents”) make them work as they do (praxeology). Alternatively, their very effectiveness depends on internal coalitions of interest groups.²⁵⁹

To go against this pessimistic, prejudiced, or minimalist trend, this concluding chapter follows two lines of argumentation.

First, lessons are drawn from success stories (i.e. we return to reviews of IOs that perform well and remain resilient through collaborative and integrative processes). Then, counter examples are examined in order to assess their capacity to falsify our theory (they might be justified exceptions to the rule; or they can simply show that our general rule is not general enough).

Second, recommendations are made. I am deeply convinced, even more than before starting my research two decades ago, that international Organization is the most challenging issue we must address to ensure justice as fairness governs international relations and not only domestic politics.

Before making these two arguments, let me put forth some caveats I consider not as minor, rather as inevitable.

17.1 Do Limitations Weaken the Explanatory Power of the Network Growth Model?

In a perfectly scientific world—which is out of reach of social scientists and will long remain so—professional (and not student) teams would collect quantitative (and not merely qualitative) data in huge quantities. They would also include every organization in their comparison (not just some IOs chosen from a long list of possible candidates). Researchers would be accredited to attend actual negotiations on site (instead of relying on participants’ accounts that are often self-justifying and collected far from IOs headquarters long after the events). Above all, they could do all this simultaneously, whereas in our realm comparisons are often made between cases that have been surveyed at different times, which is an epistemological limitation that cannot easily be

259 The “pivotal domestic political actors” are particularly important within the “two-steps flow” paradigms (Young 2010: 135).

overcome without sending numerous teams of investigators who inquire into different IOs at the same time. Consequently, what may have been true in one or several IOs at T_1 may have become false for another IO at T_N . We must always remain aware that an IO can be assessed as a declining body at stage X, before growing again at stage Y. The reverse is true: a new IO may attract support and ingrain hopes before soon displaying strong limitations.

Leaving the real world to ascend to more abstract levels of thinking, some conclusions in this book can be contested because they are inferred from logic instead of deriving from history. The assumption made here can be summarised thus: whatever agents think or do, notwithstanding the interpretations of their mandate and the range of discretion they may enjoy, they all go in the same direction because choices are constrained (as illustrated by the “expand or perish” paradigm developed in this book). As a theory, mine is much more demanding than Rational Choice and Principal/Agents which it may resemble, because I do not consider that a multiple equation system can have one solution only, as adepts of these paradigms tend to do. If the reader believes in science, this mechanics can be provisionally accepted and then checked as time passes. If not, then this text will only provide food for thought and help to test other scholars’ theoretical views, if only to confirm that their vision resists the predictions of my explanatory model.

Notwithstanding this preliminary list of inevitable limitations in any work, and this book is no exception to the rule despite repeated warnings to match the epistemological norms of demanding readers, I shall start with success stories because they have much to teach about how IOs actually emerged in the past.

Then, we shall go together beyond research and see to what extent we can draw lessons from this survey. Might its conclusions help policymaking and, if so, to what extent? Suppose that IOs’ stakeholders like this book because it sheds new light on how their organizations—and those they know less—function. What kind of action would they like to implement, which they would not have considered if they had not read it? Would they boldly engage in risky behaviour and link enlightenment to empowerment, whereas most of their statements are meant to reassure their IOs’ members, give them additional proof of their loyalty, check their conformity to their initial mandate, and display their respect for extant boundaries with neighbouring organizations? Would representatives of governments or activists accept the autonomization of the decision-making process against which they are powerless because it is ingrained into the mechanics of international Organization, in the singular, i.e., the organizing of world affairs?

17.2 Do Success Stories Suffice to Explain International Organization and Organizations?

A preliminary question would be: what does “success” mean when it comes to international organizations as structures and international Organization as a process?

Well, certainly not what firms use as metrics of performance, since they are less concerned with resilience and the promotion of global ethics than IOs, considered vulnerable bodies in an anarchical context.

Let us detail all implications of this finding. As we have seen, none of the concepts of “public” management (i.e., private operating standards that are taken for granted when corporate organizations must be profitable and then exported to administrations) have made their way into the IO world. To take but a couple of examples, when firms favour a cost/benefit ratio, IOs focus is primarily on earmarked (conditional use) vs. mandatory (discretionary use) funding, because the percentage of biannual budget coming from yearly governmental contributions to pay for operational costs matters more than the share of voluntary support whose use depends on a specific goal.

While a firm’s staff try to assess if there is a profitable market for a new product before investing in R&D, IOs decide on the necessity to supply a global public good that otherwise would not be available. While corporations applaud transactional leaders for their capability to impose their will on their agents and principals, IOs select transformational leaders who change the rules of the game, the very objectives of their organizations, and the rationale for making a service or a product reach every end user, so entitled. When shareholders demand a return on investment from their mandated CEOs, IO stakeholders expect an actual commitment to social, environmental, and climatic responsibility from their chief executives, as well as enough dedication to the promotion of global justice and fair peace. Where heads of firms may be satisfied with efficiency, even when it entails some suboptimality, heads of IOs aim for effectiveness (the highest possible impact on the reframing of issues). When top managers ask for compliance to its protocols and routines, IO leaders encourage innovative behaviour, “high risk/high gain” attitudes, and an appetite for learning. Overcapacity and unabsorbed slack are not considered liabilities, quite the opposite. Diplomatic rivals are sources of emulation with whom collaboration is sought, and not a threat of bitter economic competition that must be avoided by all means.

In short, what is left of the “public management” heritage is a propensity to set benchmarks, follow guidelines and copy/paste best practices that were successful elsewhere. Whatever works can lead to structural isomorphism and policy-making transfers.

To such characteristics one must add complex (i.e. multi-layered) hybridism with varying degrees of publicness, a dual organizational chart (official and otherwise), and a combination of local, national, regional, and planetary levels of action (Schemeil 2013). Another aspect, but not the least, is the networking vocation of each IO. Since collaborative trends are enhanced, the apex of collaboration is admission into a network, which diminishes if not eliminates transaction costs, while finding substitutes for the advantages brought by belonging to a network entails alternative costs. Somewhat increasing coordination costs within the network itself cannot balance the advantage of pooling assets into a network, benefiting from economies of scale, shrinking redundancy, etc. Ultimately, networks prevent deadlocks (since the negotiations they steer are integrative endeavours meant to achieve institutional fairness and not zero-sum games or BATNA quests for the best alternatives to a negotiated agreement (Narlikar 2010 a).

Networks make the fight for narrower win-sets obsolete because opportunities to reap joint benefits for all through a superior prospective agreement are attractive enough (Young 2010: 124-125). They neutralize the relevance of the two-level game framework because state representatives or national activists lose leverage over network operations. In other words, interorganizational and global networks go against everything assumed by scholars working on sectorial learning and lobbies.

At the end of the day, networks solve the credibility problem because generating trust is no longer necessary. Whereas unstable coalitions are sources of worry for potential partners, perhaps deterred from rallying to the flag by a lack of confidence in their allies' capacity to stick to the alliance (Narlikar & Van Houten 2010: 143), this is no longer true when alliances meld into a single coalition of all network members. In the end, lobbies and coalitions just evaporate, since the network itself is the sole coalition and the only lobby for stakeholders.

Viewed from this angle, IOs are very peculiar actors on the world stage. They have been able to invent new ways of management and governance upon which heads of business corporations could take stock. They have made their organization more ambidextrous, cognitive, transformative, and networking. IOs achievements are also weighing on global decisions, now constrained by the proliferation of dispute settlements mechanisms such as the ICJ for the UN, the ECJ for the EU and the Appellate Body for the WTO and their adjudicating outcomes (Gehring 2010; Davis 2009).

17.3 Beyond Research: Will this Book Be Helpful?

It is of course beyond the competence of the author to answer such a question definitely. However, some promising lines can be followed here. IOs can pool incentives for staff members, diplomats, ministers, and scholars to accelerate this unavoidable evolution instead of denying it and then, before the evidence, trying to decelerate it. IOs offer unique opportunities to send a message to their members and their critics, which could be worded as follows: “Stop pretending that IOs do not matter when they fail; or that they should be tamed when they succeed”.

The main lesson to be drawn from a benevolent reading of this book is simple. To go beyond our main conclusion (i.e., there are some mechanics behind actual behaviour and trajectories), we must ask what the sustainability and consequentiality on such physics are in the long run. This in turn will depend on the provision of global public goods that IOs are able to guarantee in every sector. Therefore, the nature of these public goods also matters.

IOs not only supply global public goods, they are a public good themselves, and so they must be carefully protected from intergovernmental turbulence. Public interest could not be achieved purposefully without them, although national egotism and global welfare might incidentally coincide from time to time. Contrary to liberal, neo-liberal and institutionalist visions of international relations, IOs are not mere convenient venues for exchanging information and reducing communication costs. Contrary to realist, neo-realist, rationalist, and hegemonic theories, IOs are not ancillary bodies to those stakeholders that actually matter in last resort, states on the one hand, activists on the other. IOs are much more than that. They organize, plan, and frame cooperative behaviour at two levels: among their members, and among themselves.

While the former trend has long been recognized, the latter is at best ignored or understated, and certainly misunderstood. Cooperation between governments is a puzzle. Its solution has already monopolized many scholars’ agendas for decades. Cooperation between international organizations is a more recent target of investigation among international studies specialists. It is a permanent source of concern for IOs’ staff, whose agents are persuaded that they are breaking the law while they just are just doing what they were created to do.

IOs staff and their adjacent experts or volunteers should definitely choose to break the chains that their founding fathers put on their gates, and march towards independence. This is not an estrangement from their mission. On the contrary it is the only way to fulfil their mandate. They should not be concerned with the masters they leave (national governments) but concentrate on the people they shall serve (the world population). In doing this they

should also be persuaded that this is the right thing to do because it is at the heart of the very logic that governs how international bodies operate. This is not hubris, because they would behave wrongly allegedly. It is rightness, because they actually make possible all the collaborative potential able to protect humanity's Commons.

In line with some of my predecessors, e.g., Jutta Joachim, Bob Reinalda, and Bertjan Verbeek (2008), IO staff members should drop the guise of tepid "managers" and truly become "enforcers" if they want to be considered world "authorities". Instead of being reluctant to adopt NPM procedures and business recipes or trying hard to catch up with progress in Organization and Management knowledge, they should opt for the positivity of proactive agency in promoting the mutual interests of their stakeholders, while keeping in mind Global Ethics issues. They must accept that legitimacy not only arises from efficiency, it also stems from effectiveness: a capacity to change the parameters of a problem, the rules of the game, the context in which decisions are made, etc. It is not a matter of authority or popularity, but the effect of a transformative vision.

For their parts, stakeholders should admit that performance might at times be incompatible with resilience. They should also anticipate the possible benefits of altruistic behaviour or benign neglect for selfish interests. Democratic governments and charismatic NGO leaders tend to have a short lifetime horizon because support for their action must be renewed periodically. The staffs of IOs have a longer time span and greater freedom to achieve long-term targets. This gap is indispensable to improve knowledge, explore future paths, innovate, invest in new operations, and perform again. Instead of concealing it or denying it heads of governments would be better off seeing that good use could in fact be made of a necessary fallow time, during which national taxpayers continue to fund (an apparent lack of) international activity.

Another benefit of writing this book is less expected since it was absolutely not on the agenda when I started to write it: notwithstanding pessimistic accounts or predictions about the fate of the big international negotiations flourishing nowadays multilateralism can eventually prevail over plurilateralism, bilateralism or hegemonic behaviour.

This is a consequence of taking at face value the core meaning of "governance", in which stakeholders of various legal statuses, belonging to different layers of decision-making and having different sizes and scopes share some responsibility in the final outcome of their multilevel and multi-stakeholder debates. As IGOs do not only collaborate with each other but also work with NGOs, Foundations, Think Tanks, or Business Partners, their action is fully multilateral, even when it brings more limited frameworks of mutual commitments that, in truth, would not have been possible without them.

This is also the fuel of collaboration whose engine is expansion. Beyond “meta-organizations”, “organizational fields”, or “complexes of regimes”, “networks” inevitably grow each time a prominent global issue is urgently raised, like the flow of refugees, civil wars, poverty traps, natural disasters, etc. All in all, each aspect of such crises is connected to each other. There is multilateralism because there is multicausality. There is networking because this is the best if not the only way to negotiate common solutions to common problems in the long run.

Many examples of involuntary or purposeful networking activity have been given in this book. My personal conviction is that network growth cannot be slowed down, let alone blocked as desired by rulers who place identity above all other reasons to trade with others, and subsequently make their country more protectionist or isolationist than ever. Once initial problems are solved such networks lock in. As with big planets and stars at various stages of their life in outer space, units that are not part of a network must fight alone against the gravity of such celestial giants. Asymmetry of power gives IOs a strong incentive to join another existing network, or even build their own, and so on and so forth. Therefore, if there are any recommendations to make to decision-makers in the multilateral world in which we still live, they could be summed up in one single imperative: “let’s network!” (just as with IOs staff). This comes through the inauguration of joint structures with peers (again, the book is full of such examples like the 1964 “Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture”); contracts with unlike units (the 2018 “GloFouling Partnerships” project, which unites the Global Environment Facility, a Fund, the UNDP, a program, and IMO, an IGO); or coordination with like units (the 2015 IOM/IMO “inter-agency platform for information sharing on unsafe mixed migration by sea”).

State representatives, by contrast, must reckon the importance of a performative act and say “let’s delegate!”—in specific areas at the very least—even though in decades they may lose the control they had over single organizations or clusters of organizations not yet connected to a network.

In recent years, governments have lost part of the tremendous power they had over their people, to such an extent that the so-called “monopoly of legitimate violence” is a thing of the past. On parts of their territory civil security forces cannot intervene, courts must renounce punishing and jailing all suspects once judged guilty, frontiers cannot prevent refugees and economic migrants entering a country, terrorists strike at the very heart of it, etc. This is also occurring beyond borders, although it is much less impairing. Losing market shares to imported products or having to accept international aid after gigantic forest fires and major earthquakes cannot be as serious as being unable to prevent attacks in the heart of cities.

Therefore, heads of state must be prepared to give more leverage to organizational staffs. Instead of making inadequate decisions that eventually empower those pursuing malevolent ends, they will simply reinforce a common weapon to fight global harm and invent tools to provide the global good.

Another important recommendation is: never try to change the balance between public and private, i.e., the degree of publicness reached by extant IOs. Naturally, there is some benefit to expect from seriously considering the advances in Organization Theory and Management Studies; but this should not mean that neo-liberal recipes to get more satisfying returns on investment through severe audits will prevail without debate and then become undisputed benchmarks among heads of IOs.

International Organizations tend to be white knights. At least, they try hard to become superheroes able to tame the globalization process that they themselves have facilitated. As in blockbuster movies, this is a superperson's task. However, the world we live in is not at all a phantasmagoria, it is real life. There are countless obstacles on a journey towards a sustainable planet; there is little likelihood of achieving a world government, or even coming close.

Studies like the present one make us aware that we should support our super-organizations in their fight to win the war on global public harms, if not their capability to promise us a paradise exclusively comprising global public goods.

Afterword

As this book was nearing completion, a number of events occurred around the world, reinforcing the thesis defended here: the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan; Tunisia, lauded for being the only survivor of the Arab Spring movement of 2011 was on the verge of chaos; other Islamic fundamentalists survived in the Syrian/Iraqi desert and the Sahel; a Nobel Prize winner waged a tough war in Northern Ethiopia; North Korea exhibited powerful vectors of nuclear weapons; a controversial person was elected head of Interpol.

The lesson to draw from this endless journey towards a better world is that war, as well as ideological and religious cleavages and the hate of everything Western put a halt to the progression of democracy as a regime with elections, guarantees for the rights of the people, and protection of minorities.

Except one thing: *discussion*. The demise of constitutional democracy and bills of rights is a fact, at least for the time being. Nonetheless, deliberation progresses, as the only way to make acceptable and self-sustaining trade-offs between the haves and have-nots. Moreover, deliberation takes place during every negotiation round within IOs. While cohabitation may become difficult within nations, it remains a requisite for cross-border recognition and aid. In short, the more it becomes obvious that democracy is not progressing and may even regress globally, the more multilateral institutions become the ultimate reservoir of our hope of a better life for all.

As discussion is fed by expertise, negotiations offer a place to learn the principles of persuasion, respect, tolerance, and civility. To be understood by others, arguments must be formulated, adjustment to cultures is required to communicate, and expertise is much needed to reach an agreement. All this leads to trusting a community of knowledge, a sort of “epistemocracy”, to which the responsibility to find solutions to global problems is deferred.

Such a possible future has already been envisioned by a number of scholars, and not only in IR: Norbert Elias, Erving Goffman, Jon Elster have worked, respectively, on the civilization of the mores, the pacification of social relationships, and the civilizing power of hypocrisy. In IR, Robert Keohane, Steven Krasner, Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore extended this paradigm to accommodate cooperation, bureaucratic rule, and the connections between knowledge and power.

On the ground, the never-ending fight of local societies against modern states pretending to be “national” and “egalitarian”—revealed by the return of Islamic fighters and Marxist militants to power here and there—is a sign that anthropological structures always triumph over political institutions.

However, the need to negotiate with neighbours and hegemony remain intact. Therefore, the Taliban, Castroists, Indigenists, Korean communists, etc. head to the negotiating table and are socialized to the democratic organization they despise in their own country. Alternatively, they may continue to practice politics as usual and monopolize resources while working with the UN and IMF to sustain their society and their economy: street demonstrators in Lebanon and elsewhere target national institutions but spare local IO branches.

This opens new avenues for domestic and cross-national democracy. Hopefully, and much before we reach the stage where a world government is established (if this ever happens), IOs will have received from the states the democratic torch they will pass onwards one to the next.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Primary sources

Most IOs have a specialized library, and well-organized archives on shelves. Thus, access is not mediated by time to obtain a document, classified sections, or an inability to make one's way through an underground storage facility.

When spending time working on an IO, researchers sometimes have to detail its history, since few organizations have had their origins and their past told by professional historians (the WMO was a pioneering exception to this rule). David Fischer wrote the history of the IAEA (*History of the IAEA: The First Forty years*, Vienna, IAEA; 1997, 564 p.). The history of the GATT, not the WTO, was established and the history of the latter is partially told in Croome 1995.

Embassies, where permanent representatives to IOs work, are precious sources of information. Diplomats or experts interviewed within their precincts can provide elements of context that would otherwise be misunderstood or remain unknown. Journalists specialized in the issues debated within the organization may also be helpful to reconstitute the context of the decisions made.

Appendix 2: Methodology

A few words about methodology may be useful here. When surveying IOs, data may come from eight information sources.

Firstly, websites are crucial since they were designed as a response to NGO criticisms: they are detailed, precise, and exhaustive as far as official documents are concerned (tabled papers and official resolutions are distinct, brackets to be waived are signalled, notifications are counted, auditing reports are available). However, searching and browsing websites efficiently requires some Internet language fluency and a capacity to discriminate among countless WWW pages. Finding the relevant keywords is essential.

Secondly, downloaded primary documents from various websites also matter, like regulations, comments, legal decisions, audits, opinions, reports, notes, statistics, etc.

Thirdly, quantitative surveys are useful when available (e.g., opinion polls such as Eurobarometers, or Asiabarometers including specific questions on IGOs, usually the UN, the WTO, the EU, and major militant NGOs such as Greenpeace, Amnesty, CARE, etc.).

Fourthly, the core of the data gathered, interviews with IOs' staff members, NGO activists, and permanent representatives to IGOs, often constitute the original component of the materials collected by analysts.

Fifthly, face-to-face interviews onsite, or meetings with several persons at the same time, are conducted within the precincts of the organization: appointments are made in advance at request; unanticipated interviews are made possible whenever respondents introduce interviewers to colleagues then visited through a snowballing selection technique, and discussions are conducted loosely based on a preliminary grid. They are not recorded. The dates and places of the interviews are systematically reported. However, the full content of each interview is not available, and the names of the respondents are not communicated, readers only know their functions. The purpose of such interviews is neither to collect opinions about issues nor to identify individual sets of values and attitudes (such an aim would require sampling, and this possibility is quite out of reach for the moment). Interviews are considered part of an investigation: they help scholars to better understand from within the functioning, organizational culture, the management style, of agency members; and to assess the relevance of their questions for IOs personnel. The scholar's mistakes and misperceptions are eliminated during such encounters, and unexpected issues that could not come to the fore are made manifest. Therefore, the number of interviews is not of the essence: what is at stake is the possibility to reconstitute a full and reliable account of internal behaviour and perceptions of the challenges facing the organization. Statements of facts or beliefs can easily be checked and crosschecked. For those who conducted interviews within IOs, the sincerity of respondents, and the possibility to get background information on their assignment with little reservation is patent. Contrary to politicians, organization staff members do not make rhetorical statements and very rarely use cheap talk.

The major problem lies elsewhere: being accredited formally is not enough, there must be sufficient knowledge of the organization before investigating from within, which is rather contradictory. To get recognition, reliable scholar to whom confidential information can be released or even leaked has to know in advance... what they are trying to ascertain through the interviews and insider observations.

Sixthly, interviews conducted in diverse IOs with various respondents by different researchers for distinct purposes in a span of time of several years may be considered a single dataset. In this case, they are processed with the

help of suitable software, i.e., software that can quantify qualitative statements collected (CACDAS, QCS, etc.).

Seventhly, network analysis (and other methods based on relative interactions or reputation) may be pursued when the number of respondents related to each other is a minimum, if there is a possibility to trace multipositioning in several organizations, agencies, branches, etc. in which people act in different capacities.

Eighthly, contextual research does matter. Once the security control is passed, information can be obtained from the ambiance of each organization at the time of the visit (and compared from one visit to the next, which demands continuity: it is not a one-shot deal). Just as anthropologists do, buildings and artefacts reveal much about the status, ambitions, and previous achievements of an organization. For instance, visiting the original GATT/WTO “green room” is quite an experience. The diversity of meeting rooms and their wall frescoes and decorations are informative, as are the parts of the headquarters in which the staff work (old or new offices, architectural design, etc.). Note that to the best of my knowledge open space does not exist. Posted information about the agenda of the day is also precious—it shows how varied or focused an IO is, what kind of groupings meet and what specific issues are debated. The public controversies waged about the organization that are reported by the press weighs heavily on the mood of the staff, which is a barometer of their expectations, their motivation, and their dedication to their jobs.

Appendix 3: List of interviews

Here is a list of all the face-to-face interviews conducted personally by the author and by his teams. There are over one hundred total interviews available, conducted in more than 50 IOs (2001-2018).

Interviews conducted personally:

Directors, Deputy DG: 14 (WTO = 4; IAEA = 4; WIPO, WMO, ITU = 6)

Heads of offices: 11 (WTO = 10; IAEA = 3; UNDC = 3)

Other staff members: 14 (WTO = 5; IAEA = 5; ICANN= 1; WHO: 2; UN: 1; UNEP: 1)

Permanent representatives: 76 (WTO = 1; IAEA = 4; UN = 2)

NGOs: 6 (Pugwash = 2; IPPNW = 1; ACF = 1; CARE; Wassenaar Agreement = 1; Nuclear Suppliers Group = 1)

Interviews conducted by members of the team(s) and PH.D or M.A. students (numbers omitted, partial list, some IOs were visited more than twice with several interviews conducted each time)

IGOs: UNESCO, NATO, UNHCR, ICRC, IMF, ITC, GCC, OCHA, OECD, OPEC, ESCWA, SIDH, UNDP, UNCTAD, UNICEF, UN Mediation Support Unit, UNISOM, UNITAR, World Bank.

NGOs: Amnesty, CPTech, Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Geneva Centre for Security Studies, Enfants du Monde, International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), IP Watch, NGO Energy Caucus, MSF, Oxfam, Quakers United Nations Office (QUNO), South Center, Swiss Terres des Hommes, Third World Network (TWN), Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), VOICE, YWCA.

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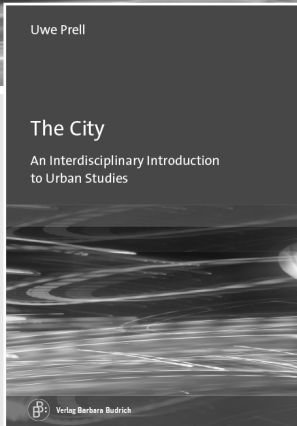
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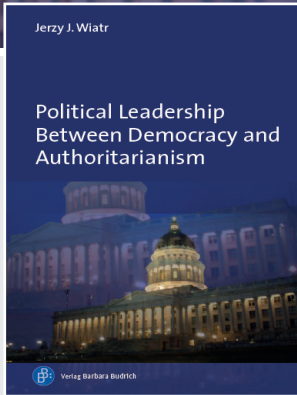
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