The Politics of INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

PATTERNS AND INSIGHTS

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Patterns and Insights

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Preface

International organizations are a relatively new phenomenon in international relations. Yet, in today's interdependent world, they play a vital and expanding role in a wide variety of activities. Some of the earlier books on international organizations focused exclusively on the United Nations and its role in security affairs. Over time, the actual functions performed by international organizations spread well beyond security affairs and involved more than the United Nations.

In selecting the readings that follow, I was guided by several principles. First, I wanted to present readings that showed this diversity of activities carried out by international organizations. Accordingly, this book contains articles on how international organizations undertake actions in international trade, development, human rights, relief services, and many other fields beyond their traditional role in security affairs. Second, I wanted the reader to be aware that the United Nations, while very important, is not the only international organization with a significant role in international relations. Thus, I've chosen articles that look at the activities of the International Monetary Fund, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the World Health Organization, among others.

Beyond expanding the scope of traditional anthologies on international organizations, I've made an effort to ensure that the readings here represent the best and most recent scholarship in the field. Economic and political analysis, in particular, have a short shelf life in the rapidly evolving international system. Thus, with a few exceptions, the articles in this collection were originally published within the last decade, and their analyses retain their relevance today. Each of the selections also was originally published in a book or leading academic journal. This ensures that, unlike a magazine article, the selections here have undergone anonymous peer review before being published; hence the reader will be exposed to the works of some of the leading scholars in the field of international organizations.

Finally, although this book is composed of scholarly articles, it should be accessible to undergraduates, graduate students, and scholars

alike. There is a tendency in any academic discipline for some scholars to address a very narrow audience, using particular phrases and methods of analyses that are not adequately explained for the general readership. Each of the selections here was selected and edited to assist all readers in understanding the politics of international organizations.

I benefited greatly from several individuals in the preparation of this manuscript. Leo A. W. Wiegman of Dorsey Press deserves credit for encouraging me to pursue this project. At every stage of the editing process, he provided timely advice and assistance. My research assistant Nikos Zahariadis was instrumental in the identification and collection of these articles; he also proved to be an able editor of the introductory sections, as did my colleague Christopher Allen. The Department of Political Science at the University of Georgia provided the clerical help necessary in this project. In particular, Bridget Pilcher was indispensable with her fast and accurate typing.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to those of my colleagues at other universities who read and commented on this manuscript at different stages of preparation, namely, Harold Jacobson, Robert Jordan, Joseph Lepgold, Jack C. Plano, and Robert E. Riggs. I adopted many of their suggestions and am grateful for their help, although final responsibility for the manuscript rests with me.

Paul F. Diehl

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

There are two predominant views of international organizations among the general public. The first is a cynical view that emphasizes the dramatic rhetoric and seeming inability to deal with vital problems that are said to characterize international organizations and the United Nations in particular. According to this view, international organizations should be treated as insignificant actors on the international stage. The other view is an idealistic one. Those who hold this view envisage global solutions to the major problems facing the world today, without recognition of the constraints imposed by state sovereignty. Most of the naive calls for world government are products of this view. An understanding of international organizations probably requires that neither view be accepted in its entirety, nor be wholly rejected. International organizations are neither irrelevant nor omnipotent in global politics. They play important roles in international relations, but their influence varies according to the issue area and situation confronted.

This book is designed so that the reader gains a balanced and realistic view of international organizations. In this way, the selections in this collection dispel a number of myths. Narrow views about how international organizations make decisions or respond to conflict are called into question. An understanding of international organizations requires the correct knowledge of how, where, and why they operate. Only then can we learn to recognize their limitations as well as their possibilities. We begin the study of international organizations by briefly tracing the origins of the present United Nations system.

The League of Nations was formed following World War I, and it represented an attempt at international cooperative efforts to prevent war. The breakdown of the League system in the 1930s was the product of many factors. Yet, the failure of will by the major powers of the era and the unwieldy requirements for concerted action certainly were the primary causes. As with most initial experiments, the results were far from ideal, but the total effort gives some basis for optimism. In the case of the League, it was not able to prevent World War II, but it did provide

a means for cooperation and consultation among states on a variety of issues not confined to security matters, although this was the major purpose for which it was created.

It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that world leaders sought to form another general international organization at the conclusion of World War II. The occurrence of war has generally had a stimulating effect on the development of international organizations in the modern era.[1] What may be surprising to some is the similarity between the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations.[2] The Security Council and the General Assembly had comparable antecedents under the League system. Furthermore, the United Nations was also predicated on the assumption that continued cooperation among the victorious coalition in the previous war would insure global stability. One might think that given the League experience, the United Nations would suffer similar setbacks. Although the United Nations and its affiliated agencies have not achieved most of the goals set out in its Charter, neither have they been insignificant in dealing with many of the most pressing problems in the world. This can be attributed to the radically differing environments faced by the League and the United Nations.

After 1945, the international system was structured in a bipolar fashion, with each superpower retaining an interest in maintaining its status. Consequently, there has been little pressure for the rapid systemic upheaval that characterized the periods prior to the world wars. This does not imply that conflict has abated; rather, such conflict has been more limited and less threatening to the international system or the existence of the United Nations. Second, there seems to be a greater recognition in the last forty years of a need for cooperation among states. The ideas behind the United Nations are not new ones, but the prospects of global devastation from nuclear war or environmental alteration have been sufficient to prompt a greater commitment to international organizations. It has become clear that various problems, such as pollution, hunger, and nuclear proliferation, are not amenable to action by only one or several states.

Finally, the United Nations has acquired a symbolic importance that the League of Nations lacked. States feel obligated to justify their actions before the main bodies of the United Nations, even when they may appear contrary to the Charter principles. As the United States did during the Cuban Missile Crisis, states may use the United Nations as a means to legitimize their actions or policy positions.[3] Most important, however, states are exceedingly hesitant to withdraw from membership in the United Nations, even when that organization's actions appear contrary to their national interests. Such reluctance prevents the debilitating loss of significant actors that plagued the League during most of its existence.

The United Nations and its affiliates are the most significant international organizations, but they are hardly the only ones. In this century, the number of international organizations has grown exponentially. The current number approaches 5,000.[4] The list includes a wide range of memberships and purposes, and they vary in significance from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission to the World Bank.

One method of classifying international organizations is according to their membership potential and scope of purpose.[5] International organizations can either be designed for universal membership, potentially including all states in the world, or the membership may be limited, as are many regional organizations. We may also classify international organizations according to the breadth of their concerns. Specific purpose organizations may be confined to one problem, such as the SEATO Medical Research Laboratory, or one issue area, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization. A general purpose organization is concerned with a variety of problems in several issue areas. Most international organizations are nongovernmental entities in the limited membership, specific purpose category. Although reference is occasionally made to these bodies in the readings, most of our attention is directed at intergovernmental organizations of a general membership variety. As the only universal membership, general purpose organization, the United Nations gets much of our attention.

This first section provides an overview to the study of international organizations. The next section of this book focuses on the various theoretical approaches to the study of international organizations. It is evident that the ways analysts have studied international organizations have changed dramatically over the last 40 or more years. The reader is especially advised to note the description and critique of regime analysis. This approach is currently the most prominent in the field, and accordingly, some of the remaining articles in this book adopt that framework. The third section is devoted to the patterns of cooperation that exist in international organizations. The reader will note both the extent and depth of involvement of states in such entities. Furthermore, the degree of cooperative behavior in international organizations may surprise some who regard international organizations merely as hostile debating societies.

The fourth section details the decision-making processes of international organizations. The range of activities and the bureaucratic actors and processes that are often hidden from public view are revealed in these selections. Furthermore, proposals to change the most visible aspect of decisionmaking—voting—are assessed.

After the first four sections, the reader will have a broad view of the place of international organizations in the world system and the patterns of their activities. Armed with this understanding, the reader is

now directed to the actions of international organizations in three major issue areas: peace and security, economic, and social and humanitarian. In Sections V through VII, one can appreciate the number of organizations involved, the scope of activities undertaken, and the variation in effectiveness across organizations and issue areas. While the first four sections highlight common patterns in international organizations, the next three sections provide more details and reveal the diversity of the bodies.

The peace and security articles provide an historical overview and some empirical evidence on the effectiveness of international organizations in the period since 1945. One article focuses on the most successful approach to peace used by international organizations, the deployment of peacekeeping forces. The economic section details the major organizations and processes in this issue area. Much of the growth in the importance of international organizations has taken place in this area. Articles on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund reveal the current state of the world economic system. Articles on the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reveal the desires of some states to change the system and the barriers that stand in their way. With respect to social and humanitarian issues, international organizations are an integral part of several controversial activities, including the monitoring of human rights behavior and the regulation of consumer products across national boundaries.

The eighth section moves away from the previous focus on universal and public international organizations. The first selection addresses the regional organizations, the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or Comecon) and their interrelationship. The other article looks at the activities of the best-known private international organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

I do not believe that any discussion of international organizations is complete without evaluating the relationship of the United States with the United Nations. Accordingly, the ninth and final section explores the basis of the U.S.-U.N. relationship with new insights on the convergence of interests between the two. This should provide some different perspectives on the ongoing debate concerning the importance of the United Nations to American foreign policy goals.

Before proceeding to these issues, the book begins with a brief essay on the roles of international organizations in global politics. Charles Pentland identifies three central roles of organizations. Consistent with a cynical viewpoint, he first points out that international organizations may be used as tools of a state's foreign policy in order to achieve na-

tional interest. Yet, international organizations are more than policy instruments in the manipulative hands of member states. Pentland additionally notes that international organizations can also modify the behavior of states and even function as semiautonomous actors in international relations. Thus, this first article not only broadly defines the place of international organizations on the world stage, but also suggests that simplistic views of international organizations are unlikely to be accurate ones.

NOTES

1. See J. David Singer and Michael Wallace, "International Government Organizations and the Preservation of Peace, 1816–1964" *International Organization*, 24 (1970): 520–547.
2. For a definitive comparison, see Leland Goodrich, "From League of Nations to United Nations" *International Organization*, 1 (1947): 3–21.
3. Ernst Haas, "Collective Legitimization as a Political Function of the United Nations" *International Organization*, 20 (1966): 367–379.
4. Harold Jacobson, *Networks of Interdependence*, 2nd edition (New York: Random House, 1984), 36–53.
5. *Ibid*, 11–13.

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR ROLES

Charles Pentland

What roles do international organizations play in the international system, and what kinds of organizations—in terms of types of activity and patterns of membership—play those roles most prominently? In the sections that follow, we shall examine in turn three of the roles most widely attributed to international organizations: (1) instruments of national policy, (2) systematic modifiers of states' behavior, and (3) autonomous international actors.

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY

As instruments for the collective pursuit of foreign policy goals, international organizations are subject to evaluation by member states in terms of their utility. From national capitals the whole field of international organizations is likely to be perceived as an array of more or less useful pieces of machinery through which to enhance national policy aims. This instrumental outlook means that, as with other modalities of foreign policy, the national policymaker weighs the costs and benefits (insofar as they can be estimated) of participating in an international organization or attempting to mobilize it for specific purposes. Such utilitarian calculations are made both by small states pursuing policy goals through coalitions and by major powers which may by themselves be able decisively to influence the organization's performance.

Clearly states vary greatly in their ability to mobilize and manage international organizations for the pursuit of their foreign policy goals, and organizations in turn vary in the degree to which they can be so used. Major powers can often determine if organizations will be active at all in areas of interest to them. In regional organizations especially, a hegemonic state can usually be assured of sufficient small power backing to permit it to manage the organization toward acceptable decisions. Its calculations will tend to center less on the probability of creating a winning coalition around itself (this being assumed) than on the relative virtues of multilateral and unilateral action. For smaller powers, largely incapable of effective unilateral action and much less sure of their ability to create winning coalitions to control the multilateral setting, the calculations have to be more subtle and complex.

Important for both great and small powers are the power disparities embodied in the organization and the degree to which any working consensus created among the members is likely to be compatible with their particular interests. A good measure of the power relationship is the "presence" of the state in the organization, reflected in its contribution of finances and personnel, its demands for action, and its level of participation in decision making. The degree of compatibility between the working consensus of the organization and the state's interests can be seen in the responsiveness of the organization's policy decisions and executive actions to the state's original demands. . . . Cases of evident domination of an international organization by a single state remain exceptional. For most states, using international organizations to pursue foreign policy objectives means collaboration, not manipulation (although the distinction can sometimes be rather fine). The emphasis is less on individually "managing" the organization toward certain ends and more on working to create or maintain co-

alitions which can collectively generate and oversee organizational policy and collectively share in its benefits. . . .

The important coalition patterns in the UN have not reflected the perceived difference between big power and small power interests. The most institutionalized coalitions are the caucusing groups—the Eastern European states, the Arab states, the Latin Americans, the African and Asian states, and the "Western European and other" grouping—which meet regularly to elect bloc "representatives" to various UN organs and sometimes to concert policy on issues of substance. Among these formally designated blocs the degree of cohesion varies considerably. That of the Soviet bloc has been consistently high for all sessions on nearly all issues; the Latin American states have also been remarkably like-minded. For the other groups, cohesion is considerably lower.[1] In fact the usefulness of such regional designations is exhausted rather quickly in analyzing General Assembly voting, since they obscure the great amount of coalition formation which takes place across regional lines—particularly on cold war, development, and decolonization issues. An inductive analysis of General Assembly voting suggests that the members divide into six groupings for which geographical or "pro-West, pro-Soviet" labels are quite inappropriate, and which support each other to differing degrees on different substantive issues.[2]

It is nevertheless true that the composition of the prevalent "winning coalition" in the United Nations has changed, to the point that many observers argue that the organization has moved from being an instrument of American policy (wielded with the support of Western Europe, Latin America, and a handful of other states) to being the captive of the underdeveloped, anticolonial states of Asia and Africa (usually aided by Latin America and the Soviet bloc). The voting power of this group of states was evident, for example, in the passing of General Assembly resolution 1514(XV) of 1960, which set out more uncompromising demands for further rapid decolonization than most Western states felt they could realistically accept. . . .

Of course, massive General Assembly majorities and elaborate new programs do not by themselves indicate that the UN has become the policy instrument of a cohesive underdeveloped, anticolonial majority of its members. Certainly the organization's priorities and preoccupations have changed radically.

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[1]R. O. Keohane, "Political Influence in the General Assembly," *International Conciliation*, vol. 557 (March 1966), pp. 10–11 (table 1).

[2]H. R. Alker, Jr. and B. M. Russett, *World Politics in the General Assembly* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965). See also B. M. Russett "Discovering Voting Groups in the United Nations," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 60 (June 1966), pp. 327–339.

But so far the increased organizational presence of the Third World has not been matched by effective, concrete policy outcomes: the organization's responsiveness is largely verbal and symbolic, and is likely to remain so as long as the Western states, which control the purse strings, the bulk of the world's military force, and its few remaining colonies, remain determined in the face of what they deem empty rhetoric or irresponsible "voting machines." Moreover, the Third World is not as cohesive as the voting totals suggest. Attitudes toward development, decolonization, and other issues vary widely, as do the political strengths of the Third World countries within their coalitions. Hence the payoffs of successful action by these coalitions are rarely distributed evenly, and the cost-benefit calculus concerning the UN as a policy instrument can produce divergent conclusions. Some states will choose to emphasize collective Third World action through the General Assembly; others will opt for regional solutions (mobilizing the OAU against southern African racism, forming regional common markets for economic development); and others still will make their own deals with the rich countries. The UN option is rarely dropped entirely, but the costs of solidarity and UN diplomacy may appear greater, and the benefits less (or more remote), than those accruing to more exclusive regional arrangements sometimes involving dependence on a great power. . . .

In general, regional organizations do not provide us with much clear evidence, in terms of the relative "presence" of member states or the responsiveness of policy outcomes to their interests, to suggest that coalitions of certain states consistently benefit disproportionately from these organizations' activities. In most cases the coalitions formed are shifting in composition. The process of political influence through which states pursue their foreign policy interests in these organizations thus tends to take place in something approaching a pluralistic setting.

To sum up, it is comparatively rarely that international organizations serve directly as controlled, effective instruments of one state's foreign policy. In these rare cases the dominant state's support for, and demands on, the organization will far outstrip those of any other member; it will have ready-made majorities of its clientele to determine the outcome of all decisions it considers important; and the actions of the organization will amount to putting a multilateral gloss on a unilateral interest. The cold war alliances, the UN on rare occasions such as the Korean action, and the OAS are about the only international organizations which fit this pattern to any notable extent. It is worth adding that smaller members of a hegemonic organization may find this situation the most rational in terms of their own policy goals. The theory of "collective goods" suggests that the small can in fact "exploit" the large,