DECISION MAKING WITHIN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
An Overview of Approaches and Case Studies

The paper is in draft form; comments will be gratefully received

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Introduction
This paper comprises four sections. The first section deals with the main empirical trends concerning international conferences and organisations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The second part briefly discusses the academic interest in international conferences and organisations. It will be argued that this interest has been insufficient, notwithstanding theoretical renewals since the 1970s. However, there also are some positive trends in the sense that international organisations in a certain way are being brought ‘back into’ international relations theory. The third part discusses theoretical approaches dealing with decision making in international organisations. The nature of the fourth section is empirical again, as it summarises what we actually know about decision making in international conferences and organisations, based on articles in the journal International Organization between 1970 and 2000.

SECTION ONE: EMPIRICAL TRENDS I – CONFERENCES AND ORGANISATIONS

In this section I will attempt to discuss the rather diverse phenomenon of international conferences and organisations from an evolutionary perspective, which sees social change as a process of growth and a succession of stages, ‘each displaying a greater degree of social complexity and a more sophisticated division of labour than its predecessor’ (Axford 1997, 147). This will help to demarcate the phenomenon we are discussing: international institutions in the widest sense of the word (conventions, organisations, regimes). I believe that this is necessary, because of the voluptuous attention that has been paid to nation-states as constituents of the international system and the relatively little attention that has been paid to other international actors, such as international organisations. Both the mass media and international relations theory sometimes reveal a lack of importance of international organisations, which has been transferred back in history as if the these organisations never were of much importance (cf. Yoder 1997, 5). What I attempt to do is to sketch a more unprejudiced history of international organisations by tracing in brief the essential moments in its institutional development during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

International Conferences and Organizations in the Nineteenth Century
Discussions about international relations often depart from 1648. The phenomenon of what we now call nation-states is regarded to date back to the Westphalian peace treaties concluded in that year and to the concomitant principal of both internally and externally sovereign states, which was made explicit in the Articles 64-67. In a similar way it can be argued that the Congress of Vienna in 1815 gave birth to the modern system of international conferences, where nation-states meet to discuss and – through a process of deliberation, which is also accessible to other international actors – to decide on common interests. I am aware of the fact that conferences were called before, such as Münster (1648) and Utrecht (1713), but Vienna can be regarded the beginning of the conference system which, together with the gradual codification of international law, is the heart of international organisations. In Vienna the major powers concluded a special alliance among themselves. Other states, however, became involved through subsequent peace treaties. Although the major powers intended to reserve the real making of decisions to themselves, they actually were at the beginning of a process of more and more states becoming involved in such common efforts, including less restricted procedures to take decisions (cf. Scott 1985). The final act of the congress comprised the various agreements in one great instrument, which the states would adhere to subsequently. During congress special arrangements were made, in order to deal with common issues such as international rivers, the slave trade and diplomatic rules. The congress led to a system of signing treaties in the French alphabetical order of states and to a classification of heads of diplomatic missions, which ended battles about precedence. A new peace treaty with France later that year called for periodic meetings of the signatories to consult on common matters related to that treaty.

The process of European nation-states meeting in conferences more or less regularly during the nineteenth century can be understood against the background of a simultaneous combination of nationalism (nation building) and internationalism: ‘the growth of industrialism, the development of transport and communications, the migrations of men, capital and goods, the search for markets and raw materials, all contributed to an economy which far transcended national units’ (Lyons 1963, 11).
This internationalism, according to Lyons, was virtually all-embracing in its scope and its visible result was ‘an unprecedented number of international gatherings – nearly 3000 between 1840 and 1914 – and the creation in the century after Waterloo of more than 450 private or non-governmental international organizations, and over 30 governmental ones’ (Lyons 1963, 12). This conference system contributed to a further institutionalisation of world politics, according to Murphy. ‘Ironically, it could have this effect because it was so imperfectly institutionalized itself. It was never clear who had the right to call such meetings, what topics could be broached, or which dignitaries and officials from invited states should attend. Yet the trend was always towards increasing the scope of the conference system along each of these three dimensions’ (Murphy 1994, 56). The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907 constituted another step in this development, because they were to take place regularly (every seven years), to be preventive of nature (not taking place after a war had occurred) and to establish rules designed to regulate the international system (cf. Coulommbis and Wolfe 1990, 276).

Four elements of this conference system are remarkable and relevant for decision making at conferences and in organisations: the role of experts, the role of private actors, the experimental nature of conferences, and the process of institutionalisation. The first characteristic is the tendency to empower a wide range of professionals and experts as the voice of the state. Only part of these were civil servants from the government ministries. Others were private experts who were temporarily employed by governments to advise them and to take part in the intergovernmental discussions. Generally speaking, the international conference system attracted so-called public system builders (cf. Murphy 1994, 62 and 64). A second interesting aspect is the participation of private, or as we call them now: non-governmental, organizations (NGOs). Charnovitz rejects the rather general idea that NGO involvement in international policy making only started after World War Two. He shows that involvement by NGOs is a story of continuous, though uneven, growth. Issue-oriented NGOs emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and became international by 1850. These NGOs began to organise for influence and travelled to international conferences to pursue their interests. NGOs discovered their ability to influence governments, while government officials recognised the benefits of securing inputs from NGOs, both for expertise and societal support. And when NGOs were not invited to international conferences, they invited themselves. By the end of the nineteenth century there was both ‘a pattern of international co-operation evolving into public international action’ and ‘NGO fingerprints on new international conventions’ (Charnovitz 1997, 212).

The third aspect to be mentioned is the tentative and experimental nature of the conferences. Murphy believes that this helped minimise domestic political costs to governments taking part, which, in turn, encouraged more experiments with the institution itself, ‘more attempts to see whether an international conference could reveal common interests in new regimes covering more and more aspects of life that had never before been the subject of multilateral agreement’ (Murphy 1994, 61). He compares these international conferences to committees within any modern complex and hierarchical organization such as companies, which provide a forum for multidirectional communication that otherwise would not occur: ‘they create a temporary equality among unequals (great powers and small powers, princes and politicians, experts and ambassadors) which encourages the sort of open discussion that often gives rise to innovation’ (Murphy 1994, 62). Whereas large firms committee meetings were an innovation of the early twentieth century, after the stultifying effects of pure hierarchical control had been felt in many firms, the conference system of states developed earlier, ‘simply because national governments had long accepted the contradictory notions of sovereign equality and the hierarchy of states’ (Murphy 1994, 296). Its success at the end of the nineteenth century depended also on many potential sponsors with different interests and aspirations (among them princes and monarchs), rather than on a single dominant power with a single set of interests (Murphy 1994, 78).

The fourth aspect to be discussed in this respect is the process of institution building and further institutionalisation. By 1910, regular conferences called by the public international unions, which were established during the second half of the nineteenth century, began to outnumber those called at the invitation of monarchs or governments. Murphy regards this the perhaps most important institutional innovation engineered by the public international unions, and ‘ironically most state members did not expect it to have the effect it did’. While states saw the periodic conferences as a way to oversee the unions’ work, the preparations for the conferences gave the unions’ functionaries power over the international agenda as well as the negotiation and implementation processes (Murphy 1994,
111-2). Some of these unions were abolished before World War One, while others survived and still have a place in the UN system established after World War Two.

Decision making within these international public unions does not confirm the realist notion of tight constraints placed on the unions by their member states. It rather confirms the functionalist idea that the limits governments place on international organisations can actually contribute to their effectiveness. Because national governments are not apt to see ‘limited organizations as potential rivals’, they will give them ‘the autonomy they need to do their jobs’. Nearly all international unions had a general mandate and ‘almost all acted with a great deal of autonomy, even though the constitution of the agencies make some look more autonomous than others’ (Murphy 1994, 107). Data collected by Murphy (see Figure 1) show that, in spite of more formal rules in the unions’ constitutions, 53 per cent of the decisions in the public unions in 1914 were taken by majority rule and 18 per cent by weighted voting; 13 per cent even took place without official oversight from the member states. Member governments rarely appointed permanent representatives. Most of the time they appointed officials ‘somewhat detached from the machinations of the powers themselves’. All this is understandable because the unions provided a service to domestic or foreign allies of its member states (9 per cent) and allowed the members to ‘perceive common interests’ (71 per cent), or in Keohane’s terms: they reduced the information and transaction costs. Murphy collected similar data for international organisations in 1970. These confirm the relative autonomy and show a 13 per cent decrease in ‘unit veto’ (which rejects the realist presumption) and a 13 per cent rise in ‘imposed sanctions’ (which favours the functional presumption).

**Figure 1: Formal Control by Member States over International Organisations, and Means Used by the Organisations to Influence Their Members, 1914 and 1970**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How member states controlled international organisations</th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit veto</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted voting</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority rule</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little oversight</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How international organisations influenced member states</th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported allies</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced costs of coop.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported opponents</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitored compliance</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposed sanctions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Murphy 1994, 108 (figure 3), 109 (Figure 6) and Appendix).

**International Conferences and Organizations in the Twentieth Century**
Following on from the development of international conferences and organisations in the somewhat longer nineteenth century (1815-1914), the twentieth century gave rise to some more developments relevant for international decision making: 1. a continued institutionalisation and creation of international governance structures, 2. a primacy of multilateral over bilateral diplomacy, 3. the phenomenon of modern summitry, and 4. the relevance of regional groupings of nation-states.

**Continued Institutionalisation and Creation of International Governance Structures**
The creation of international governance structures for both security and the economy in the twentieth century began in 1919 in Versailles. With regard to security, the League of Nations aimed to achieve international peace, not to resort to war, and to establish international law as a rule of conduct among governments. The organs are an assembly, a council and a secretariat, as well as an international court. The assembly is meant as a legislature, with every member state having one vote. The council is primarily concerned with crises and gives the big powers a major voice, the secretariat arranges the
meetings and provides all the relevant services, such as translations and reports, and the court decides about differences of opinion between the member states. The subdivision of assemblies or conferences, councils, bureaus or secretariats, as well as, albeit to a lesser extent, dispute settlement procedures shows that the League of Nations continues the work of the nineteenth-century public unions. Hence, these unions can be regarded as institutional prototypes of the twentieth-century international organisations (Couloumbis and Wolfe 1990, 276-7). Although most realists consider the League of Nation to be a complete failure in respect of security, a less prejudiced account of its activities reveals that the League’s institutions were actually taking a stronger stand against aggression during the 1930s than ‘the power brokers in control of foreign policy, who were acting outside the League framework to muddle through and to appease Mussolini and the Japanese’ (Yoder 1997, 21). Furthermore, the League’s structure was used as a model for its successor after World War Two (the UN), be it with modifications to correct some of the weaknesses of the League. Among these was the introduction of a Security Council in which the League’s principle of actual unanimity was replaced by the requirement of nine affirmative votes in which the votes of the five permanent members must be included.

Apart from its direct competence in security affairs, the League had an indirect involvement, which can be summarised in the so-called functional thesis, which argues that the more stable the social and economic conditions of nation-states are, the smaller the chances of war will be. These ‘functional’ activities can be found in the work of the League in the fields of health, traffic in women and other social affairs, as well as in the activities of its specialised agency, the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO, with its remarkable tripartite composition and decision-making procedures, is mentioned here because of its international standard-setting activities. It introduced the method of international conventions adopted by a given majority by international conferences, which are binding for states which ratify these conventions. ‘The importance of this method resides in the fact that – due to their legal nature, the obligations to which they give rise and the procedures for supervising their implementation – such international instruments are by far the most effective means of action at the world level’, according to ILO-minded Valticos (Valticos 1985, 93). Within the ILO’s constitutional organs, the director managed to secure for himself a position ‘not unlike that of a minister introducing and defending his proposals in Parliament’ (Ghebali 1989, 12). This enhanced the political role of the director, which is supported by the ILO’s committee structure and the tradition to discuss conventions in two rounds. It can be argued that the ILO’s international standard setting mechanism can be regarded a prototype of similar (though often different and weaker) mechanisms of other specialised organisations.

The post-war global governance structure in the economic and social field rests on two evaluations. One is the insight expressed in the Atlantic Charter, which was issued by Roosevelt and Churchill in 1941 and adhered to by the allied states in 1942, and in the convening of the conference in Bretton Woods in 1944. The insight here was that worldwide cooperation was to be promoted actively. The expectation that free trade would result in international cooperation, as was supposed after World War One, was reversed. ‘If free trade did not lead to international cooperation then perhaps international cooperation could establish free trade’ (Evans and Newnham 1992, 79). This reversion of the relationship was achieved in the UN institutions that resulted from the Bretton Woods conference, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which replaced the planned International Trade Organisation. Unlike other UN organisations, the IMF and World Bank have a system of weighted voting which gives power to effect outcomes to those states which make the greatest financial contributions.

The second evaluation relevant in this context is the assessment of the social and economic activities of the League of Nations by the so-called Bruce Committee. The assessment of the diverse social and economic activities by the League were rather positive. While the League did not coordinate the activities of the various ‘specialised agencies’ (the international private unions remained outside the League because they were afraid of too much political interference, but in principle the League was able to act as a coordinator between them on the basis of Article 24 of its Covenant), the UN found ways to incorporate the public unions as specialised agencies and followed the advise of the League’s Bruce Committee to establish a coordinating body, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Hill in 1946: ‘Upon the foundation laid by the League, the economic and
social organization of the future is being built’ (Hill 1946, 199). Specific arrangements were made for the representatives of the specialised agencies to participate on the basis of an observer status (Article 70) and for those of the non-governmental organisations on the basis of a consultative status (Article 71).

This is not the place to discuss the further evolution of the economic and social mechanisms of the UN system, nor its relationship with the United States and its role in the post-war bipolar world. All that needs to be said is that social and economic issues dealt with in this system appear at two agendas, that of a specific organisation and that of the coordinating body of the world organisation. If disputes arise, the issue may also appear on the agenda of international forums for breaches of international law, such as international courts and tribunals or specific dispute settlement mechanisms of international organisations or international treaties (cf. Evans 1998). The combination of these various agendas important, because the interrelationship between these organisations may have an impact on the final results of each of them. Restricted resources encourage them to be efficient and to avoid double work.

International organisations have been dynamic institutions, which means that they evolve ‘to meet changing needs and circumstances, and, as time goes by, becoming further and further removed from its treaty base’ (Bowett 1982, 338). Cox and Jacobson agree: ‘Regardless of the rigidity of their charters, though, once international organizations are established, in many instances they evolve in ways that could not have been foreseen by their founders’. In addition, ‘international bureaucracies created to serve international organizations, may add new ambitions to those of the states: from the pursuit of specific technical goals the aim might be extended to the desire to make international relations more peaceful or to redistribute the wealth between rich and poor countries. Thus, once established, organizations take on a life of their own and develop their own inner dynamics’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 7).

**Primacy of Multilateral over Bilateral Diplomacy**

During the post-war period the role of diplomats and the nature of diplomacy changed in various respects, such as the scale of participation, the procedures at the conference, the participants coming from other than foreign ministries, the linkages between issues, and the role of the mass media. The most important one, however, is the primacy of multilateral over bilateral diplomacy. ‘The intergovernmental conference is the most conspicuous, and probably the most frequent, vehicle of multilateral cooperation – and confrontation’ (Scott 1985, 44). The level of complexity is far greater in a multilevel conference than in bilateral diplomacy, as multilateral negotiation is characterised by ‘multi-parties, multi-issues, multi-roles, and multi-values’ (Muldoon Jr., Fagot Aviel et al. 1999, 11). Among the solutions that have been invented to cope with this complexity, is the so-called group system. This refers to consultations and negotiations within and between groups of ‘like-minded’ delegations, *i.e.* groups that share a common purpose or a geographical, ideological or level-of-development proximity. These can be regional, political and formal economic groups or groups of countries formed on the basis of common economic and negotiating interests. The functions of the groups are partly procedural and partly a means of strengthening collective bargaining. ‘The functions include consultations before or at the start of a conference. The aim here is to arrive at common positions either in support of or in opposition to anticipated initiatives and to agree on negotiating tactics and voting behaviour’ (Scott 1985, 46).

International conferences may serve various objectives, such as serving as a forum for general discussion, making non-binding recommendations to governments and international organisations, making decisions binding upon governments or giving guidance and instructions to the secretariat of an international organisation, negotiating and drafting a treaty or other formal international instrument, providing for the international exchange of information, and reviewing the progress under an agreement or treaty concluded earlier. The normal procedure at these conferences, whether they are the regular conferences organised by intergovernmental organisations every year or special conferences convened for the sake of specific issues, is debate, resolutions and voting. Draft resolutions are at the centre of interest of all delegations. ‘A draft resolution can be defined as the draft of a decision in a specific form: a preamble, setting forth the reasons why a certain action or recommendation is necessary, and an operative part, which contains the action or recommendation. Debate precedes the adoption of a resolution’ (Kaufmann 1996, 17). This is not the place to further
discuss the details of this conference process. Crucial is the existence of a negotiating system for rather large groups of states (up to nearly two hundred states), which also leaves room for influence by the international organisation itself and by representatives of other international organisations and of non-governmental organisations. When in the 1970s the UN started to organise mega-conferences on specific issues, the system of ‘shadow’ conferences or forums for NGOs was developed.

Whereas international conferences and organisations in most cases are open manifestations (unlike the period of secret democracy, international organisations and conferences profit from openness and transparency), NGOs may add to this transparency because they often have access to their constituencies and the mass media more easily than, for instance, governments and these international organisations themselves. This, however, should not be confused with democracy, because, as Dahl puts it with regard to international organisations, ‘international policy decisions will not ordinarily be made democratically’ (Dahl 1999, 23). He prefers to speak about bureaucratic bargaining systems. ‘Just as rulers in most authoritarian governments are to some extent and in some ways responsive to the opinions and desires of those over whom they govern – even corporate managers cannot indefinitely ignore the desires of their subordinates – so leaders in bureaucratic bargaining systems cannot indefinitely ignore the limits set by the opinions and desires of the governed’ (Dahl 1999, 33-4).

The Phenomenon of Modern Summity

When the so-called Bretton Woods system collapsed in the early 1970s, after Nixon’s decision in 1971 that the dollar would no longer be convertible into gold (the basis of the international monetary system), a new phenomenon originated: economic summity. The best known example of course is the G7 summit, which in 1973 started as a meeting of the finance ministers of the US, the UK, France and Germany in the Library of the White House. It developed into a mechanism of the heads of states of a small group of major powers that attempted to create a collective management of the world economy at a time when American hegemony was weakening, and to find solutions for the problems of an ever increasing interdependent world. The interesting side of this new management and coordinating mechanism for the international economy and related political issues, which meets annually, is that it became intertwined with other economic institutions, partly within the UN system, partly outside of it. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the IMF, which was now allowed to examine national policies that lie behind exchange rates, are involved in both the preparation of the summits and in the monitoring of the decisions being taken. Specialised UN agencies are in fact subordinated to this new mechanism, although their functions continue to be relevant. During the mid-1970s a similar mechanism arose in the European Community, which established its own European monetary system, as well as a kind of coordinating mechanism for the complex of European communities and institutions: the European Council. This became a new intergovernmental body, which was not foreseen in the Rome Treaty and would not receive an official status until the Amsterdam Treaty. Other, more recent, examples of regional summits are the Asia Pacific Economic Coordination (APEC), which started in 1993, and the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), which started in 1996.

Professionals in the employ of foreign ministries have disdained summity because of the dangers it poses for the diplomatic process. They regarded presidents and head of states as persons who were inexperienced and/or unprepared for what they regarded as their old and superior profession. However, avoiding these summits was no longer possible in a world and in regions that needed macro-economic coordination. It turned out that heads of state were also able to do the job of negotiating on behalf of the interests of the country (cf. Muldoon Jr., Foght Aviel et al. 1999, 113 and 204). It did create, however, a tension in traditional domestic politics between the heads of state and their foreign ministries. Apart from changes in national political systems, international organisations such as the IMF, the European Community and the UN system also had to adapt to this new phenomenon of international policy and decision making, which by now also includes mechanisms to control the implementation of its decisions. The institutionalisation of these modern summits differs from that of the public unions and the twentieth-century international organisations, because the personal representatives of the heads of state, who prepare the summits, belong to national political bureaucracies (the so-called sherpa system). Coordination takes place through the system of the
alternating host, who has influence on agenda setting and specific procedures, preparatory sherpa meetings and meetings of foreign and finance ministers.

The Relevance of Regional Groupings of Nation-States
A final aspect of international organisations in the twentieth century, which is related to the same interdependent world as summity, is the rise of competing regional groupings of states. Although in Western Europe it is quite common to think of the European integration project as something unique, we may note that more regional groupings have existed and have become more and more important. During the 1960s various efforts were made to start economic cooperation in Africa and Latin America. Many of these arrangements were stillborn and failed to accomplish their stated purposes. To a certain extent this was the result of the fact that the member states were not yet prepared and able to cooperate, which, as the European project shows, is also a process of learning (cf. Macbean and Snowden 1981, Ch. 9 for these negative results outside Western Europe). Furthermore, they were not as lucky as the Western European states, which were encouraged by a benign hegemon, whereas most of the non-European integration efforts suffered from the unequal economic and political power relations between ‘North’ and ‘South’.

At the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s, however, a resurgence of interest in regionalism occurred against the background of a more global economy and the ongoing trilateral competition on the world market between the US, Western Europe and Japan. This led to an ongoing process of integration in Western Europe, the formation of MERCOSUR by Argentine, Brasil, Paraguay and Uruguay in 1991 (effective in 1994), the start of a reform of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) into a free trade bloc in 1992, the effort to create a Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992, the establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 and the renewal of the older Andean Pact in Western Latin America in 1996. Many of these new regional efforts have had predecessors and it can be argued that these nation-states are going through an intensive process of learning to cooperate with each other.

What can be discerned in this respect is an ever more intensive world market, in which both states and groups of states compete. Within these regional groups of states, such as the ones mentioned above, states continue to compete with each other (as they do with the rest of the world), while simultaneously they cooperate in order to create free trade zones, a customs union and (the beginnings of) a common market, according to the various phases that can be discerned in the process of economic and political integration (cf. Balassa 1994). By cooperation they hope to strengthen their common economic position on the world market, notwithstanding the fact that simultaneously they want to survive as a nation-state and to secure and optimise their national interests (cf. Milward 1992). Hence, this regionalism is not the expression of regional entities in the narrow sense of the word ‘regional’ but the product of explicit policy decisions by national decision makers. Regionalism therefore is ‘an outgrow of government policies … intended to increase the flow of economic or political activity among a group of states in close geographic proximity’ (Mansfield and Milner 1997, 3). The ways in which this two-sided goal of common and national interests is pursued are quite different. When comparing the rather complex system of the European Union, with its combination of quite a few supranational and intergovernmental institutions, with the Northern American free trade arrangement, which hardly has any common institutions, the Latin American efforts of MERCOSUR and the new Andean Pact, which are more prepared to and engaged in building common institutions than the NAFTA members, are in a position somewhere in between EU and NAFTA. Asia presents still another solution, as the Asian countries prefer a system based on common values rather than common institutions such as created in Western Europe or Latin America. The institutional structures of APEC and ASEAN hence are quite different from those of the EU and even the NAFTA. Whatever relationship between a nation-state and a regional grouping of states exists, the regional groupings must be understood as international actors, alongside the other international actors mentioned above. In many ways these regional organisations are comparable to other international organisations discussed above (for instance, the mechanisms they use), in other ways they are not, because they are a cover of the national interests hidden underneath.
Conclusions of the First Section
Apart from the fact that this first section only contains a sketch and not a thorough description, some conclusions can be drawn.

1. International organisations are a rather old phenomenon. They seem to form a coherent and still expanding complex of international actors and forums.
2. The heart of it seems to be the conference system, which was supplemented by bureaucratic apparatuses at the international level and with connections to national bureaucracies. Both phenomena (conferences and bureaucracies) need to be discerned, in spite of the logic of institutionalisation.
3. The number of actors engaged in international conferences and organisations cannot be reduced to nation-states, given the fact that experts, private actors and international servants have played roles and have been engaged in international policy and decision making.
4. Multilateral diplomacy seems to have gained primacy over bilateral diplomacy and has introduced all kinds of mechanisms to cope with multilateral complexity.
5. The realist notion of tight constraints placed on international organisations by member states is subject for debate. International organisations might be less of an agent of the national principals than supposed.
6. There are interrelationships between international conferences and organisations through coordinating bodies, in particular the UN Economic and Social Council, specific conferences, summity and regional groupings.
7. Regionalism adds a new dimension to the already existing complex of international conferences and organisations, because the member states act in two capacities: as individuals and as members of a combination of states.

SECTION TWO: THEORETICAL TRENDS I – INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Rethinking International Relations Theory
When, in 1986, Rochester discussed international organization as a field of study, he spoke about the rise and fall of this field, and the failure of IO academics ‘generally to anticipate or shape international organization developments’ (Rochester 1986, 778). Kratochwil and Ruggie were more optimistic given some progressive analytical shifts, such as the gradual abandonment of the assumption that formal arrangements of international organisations explain what they do and the shift to the actual and potential roles of international organisations in ‘a more broadly conceived process of international governance’ (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986, 756). The attempts to further develop international relations theory and theories on international organisations was a rather slow process, which eventually accumulated in the concept of ‘international regimes’. ‘By creating or accepting procedures, rules, or institutions for certain kinds of activity, governments regulate and control transnational and interstate relations’ (Keohane and Nye 1989, 5). The good side of this development was its effect of a widening of horizons. This was exactly what a new generation of editors of the journal International Organization, among whom Keohane, had in mind. However, there is a dark side of this development as well, given the fact that the attention being paid to the phenomenon of international organisations, as well as its basic mechanism of international conferences, diminished. In the words of Abbott and Snidal: ‘regime scholars embrace an earlier turn in IR, which unnecessarily coupled a move to theory with a move away from consideration of IOs themselves’ (Abbott and Snidal 1998, 6). Although we understand international cooperation better than we did before, our understanding of international organisations has not grown accordingly. If someone would like to get some information on the functioning of international organisations, (s)he might be better off by turning to law students than to political scientists, who have not been really interested in this phenomenon. They have not been closely following these developments, as International Organization once used to do.

The trend I am referring to can be read from Kahler’s account of international relations theory after 1945. He writes that the study of international organisations continued and that investigation of regional integration began in the 1950s. However, ‘international institutions more broadly defined (including international law) were hardly regarded as the most exciting frontiers of research in the
field’ (Kahler 1997, 29). The interest actually diminished ‘and would not revive for nearly two decades’ (Kahler 1997, 31). Around 1970, when the collaborative management of international economic relations rose on the scholarly and policy agenda, international organisation, ‘which had become a backwater of postwar international relations’, revived (Kahler 1997, 33). However, the new elements of interdependence and international regimes lost ground due to the persistence and reassertion of realism during the 1980s, when neorealism ‘simply offered more parsimonious explanations’. ‘By the mid-1980s not only had neorealism claimed a central position in the study of international security (where realism had never been seriously challenged), but also it had, in the form of hegemonic stability theory, claimed a central place in international political economy, which had been the primary source of alternative theoretical viewpoints within international relations’ (Kahler 1997, 35). It lasted until the end of the Cold War, the accelerated institution-building in the European Union and the widespread opening to the international economy by developing countries in the 1990s, before interest in a broadened liberal theory returned. ‘The new turn in research addressed the role of international institutions in facilitating cooperation and the transformations produced by economic integration (or the desire for such integration)’ (Kahler 1997, 39). In addition to this neoliberal turn, Kahler mentions the social-constructivist criticism of ‘the narrow neoliberal definition of international institutions as an expression of exogenously defined state interests’, whereas they argue that institutions constitute states and their practices, and as such are ‘preconditions for sovereign states and meaningful state action rather than consciously chosen artifacts’ (Kahler 1997, 41).

We are now in a situation, in which, in addition to social-constructivism, more and more attention is being paid to international organisations. Abbott and Snidal, for instance, asked why states so often act through formal international organisations and as an answer identified two functional characteristics that lead states, in appropriate circumstances, to prefer international organisations to alternate forms of institutionalisation. These are centralisation of collective activities through a concrete and stable organisational structure and a supportive administrative apparatus, and independence as the capacity to operate as a neutral in managing interstate disputes and conflicts (Abbott and Snidal 1998, 4-5). Verbeek and Reinalda asked for the extent of autonomous policy making by international organisations and found that several of them have obtained autonomy in policy areas that clearly affect the vital interests of nation-states. International organisations have various tools of influence at their disposal such as the use of technical knowledge and juridical language in order to define issues and alternative solutions and the building of coalitions with domestic and transnational actors. In addition to that, they found that international organisations seem to be more successful when they operate in a relatively institutionalised environment, that is, when member states have an interest in continuing cooperation despite the short-term disadvantages of adopting policies (Reinalda and Verbeek 1998, 6). To recover the agency and autonomy of international organisations Barnett and Finnemore elaborated on the constructivist approach. Building on Weber’s analysis of bureaucracy, they argued that international organisations are more powerful than supposed because they make rules, and, in doing so, they create social knowledge. They deploy this knowledge in ways that define shared international tasks, create new categories of actors, form new interests for actors, and transfer new models of political organisation around the world. Both the legitimacy of the rational-legal authority they embody and their control over technical expertise and information provide a theoretical basis for treating them as autonomous actors (Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 707). They also shed light on the dysfunctional behaviour of international organisations, which has been rarely investigated by international relations researchers, such as irrationality of rationalisation, bureaucratic universalism, normalisation of deviance, insulation and cultural contestation (cf. Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 715-25). The attention being paid to the process of decision making within international organisations in this ECPR workshop is in line with this trend to take international organisations more seriously.

SECTION THREE: THEORETICAL TRENDS II – DECISION MAKING

Politics as a Process of which Decision Making is a Part
In this section I will discuss theories on decision making and start with the most common assumption in political science systems analysis, namely that politics can be regarded as an input/output process
between citizens and their government. This was elaborated for national systems, in which, according to Easton, the authoritative allocation of values for a society constitutes the heart of politics (Easton 1965). Demands of citizens flow as inputs into the governmental system (as such a ‘black box’), where they are converted into outputs in the forms of decisions and actions, which can be regarded as the authoritative allocation of values to the citizens. Based on their assessments of the received outputs citizens can raise new demands and start a new flow of inputs (feedback), etc. Decision making in this flow rests within the black box of the governmental system. The conversion process within this box (throughput) starts with agenda setting, which is followed by a process of deliberation on causes and alternative solutions, and ends with voting on a preferred solution. The outcome is a decision shaped like a measure or an enactment. The actual shape and interrelationship of the government institutions engaged and the fact that all kinds of actors outside the black box may influence decision making within it are irrelevant for the assumption of politics as a process.

Although the working of this process model is based on the use of governmental authority (the ‘authoritative’ allocation), it can also be applied to the anarchic international system of nation-states, which lacks such supreme authority as it exists in hierarchic national political systems. Instead, the international system is one of self-help. Yet we may consider international organisations as black boxes, which convert the demands of nation-states (inputs) into outputs in the form of international decisions or agreements. These outcomes return to the nation-states, which are supposed to carry them out notwithstanding the fact that there is no international authority to enforce the implementation of these international decisions. Decision making in this international model can be found within the organisation, where we can also trace agenda setting, surveying and decision making in the narrow sense of a vote and an outcome. A few authors have elaborated on what happens within the black box of international organisations, among whom are Ernst Haas and Robert Cox and Harold Jacobson.

**Ernst Haas and his Analysis of Process and Possible Outcomes**

In his seminal work *Beyond the Nation-State* (1964) Haas based himself on organisation theory and treated international organisations as ‘polities that respond to external demands’ and the administration of these organisations as ‘a politically adaptive pursuit in which leadership is crucial’ (Haas 1968, 88). In the political process within the organisation most of the impulses come from the environment in which the organisation is active. The majority of these impulses stems from ‘the reasoned demands of governments rather then the subjective needs of bureaucrats’ (Haas 1968, 88). The leadership has to define aims ‘specifically enough to act as a guide to policy, but generally enough to achieve rapport with an articulated body of values’ (Haas 1968, 101). If an international bureaucracy’s leader has true insight, he may use the opportunity to make the organisational influence as extensive as possible. ‘The very fact that he can rely on no homogenous and stable body of supporters gives him the chance to move and maneuver as the logic of functionalism suggests’ (Haas 1958, 118). In other words, just as we may presume states to have motives of behaviour and action, international organisations with a well-developed leadership may also have such motives, notwithstanding the fact that these motives are a compromise between the organisation’s and the member states’ wishes.

In his attempt to discover what happens within the black box Haas is concerned with both the outcomes of a decision and the process through which it is reached. ‘When we deal with outcomes, we must have in mind the initial preferences of the actors; but when we deal with the process, the actors’ notions of causation, of antecedent facts, of scientific data relating to the decision, or of sequences of past events perceived as relevant, are the dominant factor’ (Haas 1968, 105). He gives an analytical scheme based on diagrams developed by J.D. Thompson and A. Tuden, who referred to these features and assumed that decision makers can either agree or disagree with respect to both preferred outcomes and causation. This is expressed in the matrix of Figure 2, in which the labels describe patterned types of behaviour by decision makers in making choices. The requirements in the matrix refer to the structures found appropriate for making choices according to a given strategy. ‘A bureaucratic structure is made up of individual experts with large delegated powers in an administrative hierarchy; a collegium is a body of wise men, inspired by a common purpose, and judiciously able to weigh – and vote on if they cannot agree – the causative factors in dispute; a representative body is a body of less expert delegates from some constituency – i.e., a party, interest group, nation, or region; and the structure for complete disagreement can only be anomic or charismatic’ (Haas 1968, 105).
Haas traced the possible outcomes of the compromise between the organisation’s and the member states’ wishes and observed four actor-related patterns – in which we recognise the presence of experts, bureaucrats and representatives of other organisations apart from government representatives – each with a specific method to make decisions:

1. **Bureaucracies** with a hierarchical/specialist structure (staffed with specialists who are linked to national groups having parallel interests), and ‘computation’ as resolving method;
2. **Independent expert groups**, who are called upon to make recommendations for programming or examining organizational performance, with a collegial structure (with occasional voting), and ‘judgement’ as resolving method;
3. **Official expert groups**, subject to instructions by the appointing governments, with a collegial structure (with occasional voting), and ‘judgement, shading into compromise’, as resolving method;
4. **A conference of delegates** of governments or large organisations representing the interests of these environmental structures, with bargaining in a representative structure, and ‘compromise’ as resolving method (Haas 1968, 109-10).

Since organisations are ruled by coalitions of interests depending on mutual accommodation, Haas believes that internal consensus can come about only as a result of a ‘judicious mixture of judgmental with compromise decisions’. This implies a continuous bargaining between government delegates and the bureaucracy or the independent experts. The mixture of judgement and compromise may result in three different patterns of outcomes. The least demanding one, the **minimum common denominator**, is typical of classic diplomatic negotiations and leaves no room for an autonomous role by organisations. The second outcome, **splitting the difference**, leads to a result ‘somewhere between the final bargaining positions’. It exists in international economic organisations where parties may have admitted the mediatory services of a secretary-general or an ad hoc international expert study group to reduce demands and to exchange concessions of roughly equal value. The third outcome, **deliberately or inadvertently upgrading the common interests of the parties**, leaves even more room for an organisation’s leadership to play a role of its own, because in terms of method this mode of accommodation explicitly relies on the services of an institutionalised mediator. The parties thus are trying to ‘redefine their conflict so as to work out a solution at a higher level, which almost invariably implies the expansion of the initial mandate or task’ (Haas 1968, 111).
Cox and Jacobson and the Anatomy of Influence

The best-known attempt to unravel the decision-making process in international organisations is the study by Cox and Jacobson and their collaborators of eight specialised organisations of the UN, which appeared under the title The Anatomy of Influence (1973). The eight cases studies and their wonderful qualifications are: the International Telecommunications Union (‘A Potpourri of Bureaucrats and Industrialists’), the ILO (‘Limited Monarchy’), the UNESCO (‘Pluralism Rampant’), the World Health Organisation (‘Medicine, Regionalism, and Managed Politics’), the IAEA (‘Atomic Condominium?’), the IMF (‘Monetary Managers’), the GATT (‘Traders’ Club’), and the UNCTAD (‘Poor Nations’ Pressure Group’). The authors examine these organisations as distinctive ‘political systems’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, vii) between 1945 and 1970 (the three base years studied are 1950, 1958 and 1967), in which patterns of influence can be traced out. ‘The legal or formal character and the content of the decision is less important than the balance of forces it expresses and the inclination that it gives to the future direction of events’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 3).

Cox and Jacobson believe that their study is more concerned with the processes within organisations than the study by Haas, who, according to them, was concerned primarily with the outcomes and impacts of decisions (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 14). As part of their framework for inquiry Cox and Jacobson provide a helpful taxonomy of decisions by international organisations. These are divided in seven categories: representational, symbolic, boundary, programmatic, rule-creating, rule-supervisory, and operational. Two of these are of particular importance for the authority and autonomy of organisations in the process of international standard setting: rule-creating and rule-supervisory decisions, whereas discourse analysts and social-constructivists will be interested in symbolic decisions, as they are primarily tests of how opinions are aligned (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 9). Cox and Jacobson also classify the actors involved according to seven categories: 1. representatives of national governments (who may be appointed by various ministries), 2. representatives of national and international private associations (including interest groups and commercial enterprises), 3. the executive heads of organisations, 4. high officials and other members of the bureaucracy of each organisation, 5. individuals who serve in their own capacity, formally or informally, as advisers, 6. representatives of other international organisations, and 7. employees of the mass media (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 12).

The exercise of influence is viewed in terms of initiation, vetoing, brokerage, and controlling. ‘In each decision some actor or group of actors must take the initiative and hence become the initiator. The real initiators are not always the formal initiators. For example, international officials sometimes prepare draft resolutions that are then submitted by members of national delegations. The identification of initiators is a matter for critical inquiry, not a simple given fact. Some actors have the power, perhaps because of their strategic location in the line of communication or because of their control of extensive political resources, to block initiatives and hence to become vetoers. The term is not used exclusively in the formal sense of one having a legal power to veto, but in a practical, functional sense to denote one having the power to prevent a decision by whatever means he may require. There are some actors whose known or surmised views may have to be taken into account because of their control of resources or their formal authority, or for some other reason. They can be called controllers. Finally, others serve as go-betweens among the participants and as consensus builders. They are the brokers’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 12). The actual exercise of influence is divided into two modes of interaction. One is called analytical and refers to the settlement of differences by intellectual processes: ‘facts are examined and rational techniques of analysis applied to them’. This mode is employed when parties agree fundamentally about values and about the principles and criteria for decision and is used in a court of law or a body of experts. The second mode is called bargaining: ‘If agreement is to be reached, it will have to be on the basis of compromise achieved more by barter than by rational argument’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 14).

Cox and Jacobson do not treat international organisations as independent units but they see them as political systems that include linkages with member states, because the activity of international organisations frequently depends upon actions by member states. However, states are not regarded monolithic. ‘There may not be unanimity within a state about the policy that is should pursue in an international organization; and interdepartmental differences or differences between an important interest group and a department of government can have extremely serious consequences for decision making in that organization’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 16). The political system of an international
organisation consists of two subsystems. Potentially influential actors are either part of the representative subsystem or of the participant subsystem. The first consists of ‘country subsystems’ (states), which are regarded as most important, as well as representatives of the Roman Catholic church, the International Chamber of Commerce or multinational corporations. The second subsystem comprises those who actually participate in the organisation’s decision-making processes, for example, as delegates at international conferences. These may be representatives of national governments, members of the bureaucracy, the executive heads and representatives of national and international private organisations. While representative subsystems are oligarchic, the participant subsystems can be monarchic (administered by the executive head) or pluralistic-bargaining (many actors competing) (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 429). Segments of the two subsystems can ally with each other. With regard to the structures created in the political process itself Cox and Jacobson looked for persistent groupings of actors such as formal groupings and caucuses or informal groupings of actors involving an ingroup or establishment of actors who occupy key positions and who normally consult among each other about important decisions. ‘Persistent groupings may enhance or decrease the possibility of an individual actor’s exercising influence. An actor may find it easier to attain his objectives because of his membership in a coalition, or an opposing coalition may place obstructions in his path’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 23).

Cox and Jacobson also take environmental impacts into account. They conceive the general environment in terms of states (qualified as the principal units in world politics), their characteristics and their broad policies. The major variables describing the general environment are: the stratification of state power, the economic and political characteristics of states, and the pattern of alignment and conflict among them. Apart from these forces stemming from this general environment there are forces stemming from an environment that is specific to the organisation. The basic concepts of the framework for inquiry developed by Cox and Jacobson is given in Figure 3.

At the actor level, to mention only a part of their detailed conclusions, it was found that the representatives of a small group of key member states were among the most influential. Executive heads inevitably were also influential in many decisions. ‘At the very least they are controllers with respect to programmatic decisions, but they can also be initiators, vetoers, and brokers in these and other decisions’ (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 397). Representatives of private organisations were found to be important in decision making but they exercised substantial direct influence only in some organisations. Members of international bureaucracy were found to be most influential in operational decisions, individuals serving in their own capacities were found to have been involved in decision making at one time or another in most of the eight organisations, the representatives of other international organisations played a relatively limited role, whereas employees of the mass media were hardly involved in the organisations’ decision making (cf. Cox and Jacobson 1973, 397-401).

Cox and Jacobson’s book, I believe, is well-known. However, its research programme has hardly been followed, to my opinion, as a result of the fading attention being paid to international organisations in the dominant strand of the 1970s and later mentioned above. In *International Organization* I found one article explicitly following their theoretical framework (Coddind Jr. 1981). Jacobson himself used it in his *Networks of Interdependence* (1979), when he discussed the powers, functions and structures of international organisations, and the influence and interactions of the participants in decision making (Jacobson 1979, Part II), as did Feld and Jordan in their comparative approach of international organisations, where they also pay more attention to the roles of other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in decision-making processes (Feld, Jordan et al. 1994, chapters 4-6). When Hazelzet was asked to review *The Anatomy of Influence* in the context of Verbeek and Reinalda’s autonomy project, she concluded that the framework of analysis still holds: ‘Cox and Jacobson have done a remarkable job in developing a framework which is still fairly valid to describe and analyze decision-making processes in international organizations as well as outlining prospective views of the future’. She also criticizes them, because they wrote ‘in reaction to functionalism without posing a clear alternative and arrived at a realist conclusion’ (Hazelzet 1998, 39). But that cannot be a reason not to reconsider their framework in order to understand decision making within international organisations, and in the interrelationship between international organisations and national governments, as is the case in the multilevel governance approach, where decision-making competences are shared by actors at different levels and neither the organisations nor
the states are considered unitary actors. However, there is more to be said about decision making than only from the political process perspective.

**Figure 3: Influence in International Organisations**

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<th>Patterns of influence in decision types</th>
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**Bron:** (Cox and Jacobson 1973, p. 35, Figuur 1.1).

**Decision Theory and the Rational Actor**

Game theory encouraged the study of decision making, in the sense that it drew attention to the way in which decisions are or should be made according to rational calculation: which are the most efficient means to effect given goals? The metaphor of the prisoners’ dilemma, for instance, inspired Keohane’s insight that individually rational action by states could impede mutually beneficial cooperation. ‘Institutions would be effective to the degree that they allowed states to avoid short-term temptations to renege, thus realizing available benefits’ (Keohane 1984; Martin and Simmons 1998, 744). The most general advantage of the rational-choice perspective for international relations, according to Kratochwil and Ruggie, is ‘the claim that both conflict and cooperation can be explained by a single
logical apparatus’ (Krautwil and Ruggie 1986, 762). Olson’s theory of collective goods was introduced in *International Organization* in 1971 by Russett and Sullivan in an article on collective goods and international organization (Russet and Sullivan 1971), followed by an article by Olson himself on increasing the incentives for international cooperation (Olson 1971) and a critique that the three men fit the theory of private (= national) goods better than the theory of public goods (Loehr 1973). Other general discussions comprised international organisation and the theory of property rights (Conybeare 1980) and the public choice view of international political economy (Frey 1984). Frey is most relevant for the issue of decision making within international organisations, because he also discusses decision rules in organizations and the internal bureaucracy.

The major features of the rational behaviour approach to social problems and the public choice theory are, according to Frey, the individual as the basic unit of analysis, the explanation of his or her behaviour by concentrating on the changes in the constraints to which he or she is exposed, and the fact that the results must yield a proposition that can be subjected to econometric or politicometric testing. It is assumed that the individual responds rationally to incentives: ‘courses of action are chosen that yield the highest net benefits according to the individual’s own utility function’. It is not assumed that he or she is fully informed but that ‘the amount of information sought is the result of an (often implicit) cost-benefit calculus’ (Frey 1984, 202). International organisations, according to the public choice theory, are providers of public goods and services, coordinators of activities of actors in the international system, institutional settings for alliances, as well as providers of private (national) goods. Since much of their output has the character of a public good, they provide an incentive for states to behave as free riders. This means that the organisation will only be able to ‘operate effectively if it involves a small group of countries, permitting direct interaction and imposing high costs on free riders; if private goods are offered selectively to the members of the organization, providing an incentive for individual countries to join and participate in the financing of the organization; or if participation is achieved by coercion’ (Frey 1984, 215). In their article, Russett and Sullivan showed that, with regard to the first condition of a small group, small, regional or international organisations are indeed more successful than large ones. The option of creating selective incentives for members, the second condition, is a well-known bargaining tool used by governments in persuading their parliaments to agree to join. The third condition, coercion, however, is a difficult tool to use, because sovereign states are unwilling to give up their independence. The same goes for the use of education and propaganda as a tool to increase a potential participant’s perception of the advantages of membership and the social pressure to belong to it. Unlike the political process approach, the public choice approach does not regard supranational authority as a solution of international problems and therefore offers a much more limited role for international organisations than supposed by most federalists, (neo)functionalists and pluralists (cf. Conybeare 1980).

With regard to decision rules in international organisations, Frey discusses both the consequences of these rules and the most advantageous voting rules for given circumstances. As for consequences he argues that the formal rules defining how decisions are to be made within an international organisation can have an important effect on the expected costs of providing a public good (from the point of view of an individual country). A combination of a marginal policy contribution and marginal cost curves for various voting rules (simple majority, qualified majority and unanimity) shows that it becomes more and more difficult to reach an agreement as the rules become stricter (with the unanimity rule anyone can block a decision) and that the interests of the other members must increasingly be taken into account. Apart from this general insight he provides an example of an unexpected result from an analysis of voting rules in organisations such as the IMF and World Bank with their system of weighted voting. He argues that, given the formal decision rule, the number of voters from a particular member state (or group of states) determines the ‘power’ of that country (or group) within the international organisation. Power is defined as the chance of affecting the outcome of a decision. ‘A decision is influenced by control of the “pivotal” vote, the vote that transforms a nonwinning coalition (e.g., a minority in the case of simple majority voting) into a winning coalition (a majority)” (Frey 1984, 219). In this respect Dreyer and Schotter showed that the change in voting rules at the IMF that became effective in 1978 – against the background of the new mechanism of economic summity of the G7 discussed above – resulted in a surprising, counterintuitive change in the power structure. Four major states whose vote was increased to keep pace with their increased weight in the world economy (Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and
Belgium) suffered a decline in power, whereas thirty-eight states whose vote was reduced experienced an increase in power (Dreyer and Schotter 1980). Such a counterintuitive result, according to Frey, may arise ‘when the redistribution of votes has the effect that the major countries with additional votes increasingly obstruct each other from casting the “pivot” vote, while each of the countries losing votes has a higher chance of casting the decisive vote. If, however, the major countries with more votes were taken to be a bloc always voting in the same way, this bloc’s “power” would increase in relation to the countries with reduced votes’ (Frey 1984, 219).

In situations, in which nations are unwilling to be subjected to majority rule (for example, in international organisations) or were traditional methods have not worked well, public choice, according to Frey, may be helpful in the choice of the most advantageous voting rules for given circumstances. He discusses the voting-by-veto rule, the proportion-to-the-financial-contribution and the preference-revealing mechanism. The voting-by-veto rule allows each state to include its own proposition in the set of alternatives. The decision is made by each state except one deleting that alternative from the set which it dislikes most. The order in which the states ‘vote’ is randomly determined, and the alternative that is not deleted and survives is the collective choice. Since each state has an incentive not to introduce an alternative strongly disliked by one or more other states there is an incentive to consider the interests of the other states. The veto rule is rather clumsy to administer and open to undue influence by coalitions, but also has desirable features such as the expression of preference intensities, the bringing about of Pareto-optimal outcomes and an unbiased revelation of preferences in the sense that there is no incentive for strategic voting. The proportion-to-the-financial-contribution provides a rule which allows the weighting of votes according to a state’s stake in a particular issue. Its flexibility may increase the acceptability of the decisions taken. ‘When the traditional “one nation, one vote” is used, the largest and most severely affected countries may simply disregard the collective decision’ (Frey 1984, 220). In the preference-revealing mechanism it is supposed that each state casting a vote thereby negatively affects the utility of any other state, because without that state’s vote the decision would have been different. Hence the state casting a vote must pay a tax equal to the disutility imposed on other states. This mechanism has advantages over simple majority voting, because it allows the expression of preference intensity, is nearly Pareto-efficient and provides an incentive for the participants to reveal their true preferences. However, it is subject to coalition influence, it is complicated to administer and, according to Frey, at least for non-economists, it is difficult to understand (Frey 1984, 220). It should be taken into account that public choice theory and research has grown since Frey’s article was written, essential for discussions on decision making within organisations is its encouragement of having a closer look at the mechanism that exists within a particular organisation.

Frey also offers a theory of international bureaucracy, which I reproduce for the same reason. He departs from the idea that international bureaucracies have greater room for discretionary action than national ones, because there is neither opportunity nor the incentive to control them. Control is difficult because their ‘output’ is undefined and hard to measure, and political institutions that would gain by tightly controlling them are absent: ‘national governments would only run into trouble with other national governments if they tried to interfere with the workings of such institutions’ (Frey 1984, 221). They will only intervene if they feel that their own nationals employed in the organisation are being unfairly treated or that their national interests are being threatened by the organisation’s activity. Due to this lack of effective control, none of the layers in the hierarchy of the organisation has any real incentive to work toward the ‘official product’, according to Frey, because their utility depends hardly at all on their contribution. A further wedge between the individual’s utility and the organisation’s official function stems from the national quotas for positions that are a feature of many international organisations. This particular incentive structure leads to ‘a growth of international bureaucracies quite independent of the tasks to be performed, because all bureaucrats benefit from larger budgets and a greater number of employees’. Frey also holds that international bureaucracies are characterised by a low degree of efficiency and a profusion of red tape, because the formalised internal workings of the organisation become dominant. ‘A considerable share of the budget will be used for internal purposes, and to provide side benefits for the bureaucrats themselves’ (Frey 1984, 221).

Another vision of bureaucracies is given by Verbeek, who regrets that public choice has been rarely applied to the study of international organisations with Vaubel and Frey as exceptions (Vaubel 1986; Frey 1997). He rejects the assumption of traditional public choice literature that bureaucracies
are defined only in terms of keeping or expanding budgets, tasks and number of personnel. ‘In this perspective, the substance of policies is considered irrelevant, and only judged according to its implications in terms of personnel, budget or task’ (Verbeek 1998, 22). Using the principal – agent metaphor he argues that international bureaucracies may have their own substantial policy preferences and will try to implement these if the controlling principal s give them leeway. ‘The bureaucratic organizations will be more successful in promoting their preferred policies to the extent that they possess more relevant information on the issue than their principals and manage to exploit differences of opinion between politicians’ (Verbeek 1998. 22). This can be considered a base for autonomy of international organisations: ‘if an organization’s substantive policy preferences are relevant to explain its behaviour, it becomes possible to link up with the existing literature on epistemic communities that deals with the specific policy preferences of international organizations in certain policy areas’. Furthermore, if asymmetry of information between member states becomes an important source of influence for an organisation, it becomes understandable why the ‘technical’ expertise of international organisations has promoted their autonomous influence on international politics. Finally, he questions whether international civil servants defend first of all the interests of their home countries, because it might also be possible that they will pursue organisational goals rather than national ones. Here he follows Nicholson, who applied a rational choice approach to international organisations and suggests that peoples’ motives are much more complex and involve an ‘internationalisation of the goals of the organization, and even of an ideology, as well as purely personal goals’ (Nicholson 1998, 84).

**Bureaucratic Politics, Incrementalism and Neo-Institutionalism**

Both the policy process approach and the rational and public choice approaches are based on a model of rational action, with goals and objectives, alternatives, consequences, and choice as its core concepts. ‘The interests and values of the agent are translated into a “payoff” or “utility” or “preference” function, which represents the desirability or utility of alternative sets of consequences’. The rational agent must choose among a set of alternatives, with a set of consequences attached to each alternative. The rational choice finally consists of selecting that alternative whose consequences rank highest in de decision maker’s payoff function, according to Allison, whose famous book *Essence of Decision* (1971) appeared two years before that of Cox and Jacobson (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 18) This rational actor model can be applied to governmental behaviour. Generally speaking, this can be summarised as action chosen by a unitary, rational decision maker ‘centrally controlled, completely informed, and value maximizing’. This, however, is not the only model conceivable. Allison showed two more conceptual models. Governmental behaviour can also be understood less as deliberate choices and more as outputs of large organisations, which function according to standard patterns of behaviour. According to this *organisation-process model governments perceive problems through organisational sensors and define alternatives and estimate consequences ‘as their component organizations process information; governments act as these organizations enact routines’ (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 143). In his third conceptual model, *bureaucratic or governmental politics*, Allison explains government behaviour not as organizational outputs but as results of bargaining games of those who are actually engaged in them. There is no unitary actor but there are many actors as players focussing not on a single strategic issue but on many diverse intranational problems as well: ‘players who act in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives but rather according to various conceptions of national, organizational, and personal goals; players who make government decisions not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics’. The apparatus of each national government constitutes a complex arena for this intranational game, according to Allison. ‘Political leaders at the top of the apparatus are joined by officials who occupy positions on top of major organizations to form a circle of central players, central in relation to the particular decision or outcome the analyst seeks to explain. Some participants are mandatory; others may be invited or elbow their way in. Beyond the central arena, successive, concentric circles encompass lower level officials in the executive branch, the press, NGOs, and the public. Ongoing struggles in outer circles help shape decision situations among players who can affect the government’s choice and action in the case in question’ (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 255-6).

Although this book has changed our thinking about governmental behaviour, we can hardly find traces of it in the debates on international organisations, as far as I know. Allison is not mentioned in, for instance, Cox and Jacobson’s *Anatomy*, Jacobson’s *Networks of Interdependence* or Archer’s
International Organizations (Archer 1992). For an exception: (Katzenstein 1977). I guess that this results from the strong divide between domestic and international politics, which has existed in political science (but is now narrowing). The same goes for research on bureaucratic behaviour. This starts from the idea that bureaucratic government organisations pursue their own purposes, promote their own power and attempt to enhance their own positions in the governmental hierarchy. Eventually, every bureaucracy will develop a ‘shared mind set’ or a dominant way of looking at reality. Unlike assumed by traditional public choice theory, it is assumed that individuals who enter a bureaucratic organisation will socialise to its mission and organisational morale and therefore conform to its central norms. There are all kinds of mechanisms that support this socialisation process, and those who do not conform may risk a loss of influence or even of their jobs (Allison and Halperin 1972). Another relevant aspect in this context is what Janis called groupthink. In small-group decision-making situations attitudinal conformity is reinforced where social pressures that reinforce group norms sometimes produce a cohesiveness and solidarity of outlook that may lead to dysfunctional policy choices as the group’s search for unanimity overrides the realistic appraisal of alternative policy choices (Janis 1982).

Woods decided to use groupthink theory to analyse the response of the IMF to Mexico’s 1994-1995 currency crisis and concluded that it helped her to uncover several aspects of the organisation’s structure and incentives, as well as the mindset of officials which led them to overlook the looming crisis in Mexico. The IMF has a clearly enunciated and consistent framework for analysis and policy description, in the Mexican currency crisis, however, staff became blinded by their belief in that framework: ‘believing that because IMF-prescribed structural reforms had been undertaken by the Mexican government, its economy simply could not and would not go into crisis’. While analysts outside the IMF managed to read the signals, ‘economists within the institution clustered around just one scenario – that of successful transition. The evidence shows the extent to which they insulated themselves from outside sources of information and continued, even in the face of evidence to the contrary, to buttress their optimistic accounts of Mexico’s prospects. Overwhelmingly the prognosis remained upbeat – making it evermore difficult for any one member of the staff to disagree. Any possibility of disagreement was severely hampered by the structure of the organisation – its hierarchical way of resolving disputes which means that staff try to “second-guess” the upper management of the Board, its insulation, the high levels of group cohesion which exist within the institution’s teams of officials, and the homogeneity of its staff’ (Woods 2000, 11-2).

Public administration termed the idea of a rational decision maker ‘synoptic’, because in complex organisations there are no such rational decision makers as assumed in theory, there hardly is a situation of complete information, and it is rather difficult to choose the best means from the nearly endless variety of alternatives. Various models have been suggested to characterise a more real description of what decision makers are doing. Lindblom named it ‘muddling through’ (Lindblom 1959), Cohen, March and Olson spoke about garbage cans, in which problems, solutions, decision makers and choice opportunities come together as a result of being simultaneously available, instead of being understandable as the consequence of the autonomous time-dependent flows of problem, solutions, and decision makers into choice arenas. ‘In pure form, garbage can models assume that problems, solutions, decision makers, and choice opportunities are independent, exogenous streams flowing through a system’ (March and Olsen 1989, 12). Incrementalism is another way of describing what is going on. It can be argued that a decision making process may start off as a rational-synoptic pretence, but in reality it will soon result in incremental adaptations of the situation.

In their book Rediscovering Institutions (1989) March and Olson explore the ways in which administrative and bureaucratic institutions provide order and influence change in institutions. They assume a more independent role for political institutions than in the political process or rational actor approaches. They regard the state as being affected by society (it mirrors the social forces), but also as an institution affecting society in the sense of defining the framework within which politics takes place. ‘Bureaucratic agencies, legislative committees, and appellate courts are arenas for contending social forces, but they are also collections of standard setting procedures and structures that define and defend values, norms, interests, identities, and beliefs’ (March and Olsen 1989, 17). With regard to the question of in what way people and institutions take decisions two different logics can be discerned. The first is the logic of consequence, which regards decision making as a process in which political order arises from negotiation among rational actors pursuing personal preferences or interests in
circumstances in which there may be gains to coordinated action (March and Olsen 1998, 949). Behaviour is driven by preferences and expectations about consequences. It is ‘willful, reflecting an attempt to make outcomes fulfil subjective desires, to the extent possible. Within such a logic, a sane person is one who is “in touch with reality” in the sense of maintaining consistency between behavior and realistic expectations of its consequences. The sacred texts are Bentham and classical decision theory’ (March and Olsen 1989, 160). The second interpretation is called the logic of appropriateness. In this case actions and decisions are regarded as rule-based. Political institutions are ‘collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relations between roles and situations. The process involves determining what the situation is, what role is being fulfilled, and what the obligations of that role in that situation are. When individuals enter an institution, they try to discover, and are taught, the rules. When they encounter a new situation, they try to associate it with a situation for which rules already exist. Through rules and a logic of appropriateness, political institutions realize both order, stability, and predictability, on the one hand, and flexibility and adaptiveness, on the other’ (March and Olsen 1989, 160). Here they come close to the aspect of internationalisation of the goals of institutions Nicholson referred to. ‘Linking action exclusively to a logic of consequences seems to ignore the substantial role of identities, rules, and institutions in shaping human behavior’. Human actors, according to March and Olson, are imagined to follow rules that associate particular identities to particular situations, approaching individual opportunities for action by assessing similarities between current identities and choice dilemmas and more general concepts of self and situations. ‘Action involves evoking an identity or role and matching the obligations of that identity or role to a specific situation. The pursuit of purpose is associated with identities more than with interests, and with the selection of rules more than with individual rational expectations’ (March and Olsen 1998, 951).

With regard to international institutions March and Olson see another issue to be discussed, namely the question of historical efficiency. For those who regard history as efficient, the primary postulated mechanism is competition for survival. ‘Political actors compete for resources and primacy, and the resulting equilibrium eliminates actors who fail to achieve optimal resource allocations and strategies’. Those who consider history inefficient emphasise the slow pace of historical adaptation relative to the rate of environmental change, thus the low likelihood of reaching an equilibrium. Even more, they emphasize the existence of multiple equilibria and internal dynamics that make it difficult to escape local optima’ (March and Olsen 1998, 954). History in this case follows a meandering, path-dependent course distinguished by multiple equilibria and endogenous transformations of interests, identities and resources. Given the two logics and the two conceptions of history, March and Olson note that students of international political order tend to emphasise efficient histories and consequential bases for action, which leads them to underestimate the significance of inefficient histories and rule- and identity-based action. Figure 4, which presents the combination of the two logics and two conceptions of history, explains the situation.

According to March and Olson cell 1 in Figure 4 contains the group of researchers that emphasises a view of action based on a logic of consequences and a view of history as efficient, which they believe is the most common perspective in international political studies. ‘Scholars in this group see history as resulting from interactions among consequentialist individuals, groups, organizations, or states, each seeking to realize as much as possible in terms of individual preferences but collectively confronting the fact that not everyone can have everything desired’ (March and Olsen 1998, 956). Cell 2 emphasises a view of action based on a logic of consequences but with an inefficient historical process. It comprises many economic and evolutionary studies of search and local feedback. ‘Outcomes of action taken at one time depend on factors of attention and probabilistic interaction that are not predictable from environmental conditions. Those outcomes, however, determine subsequent paths of history in a way that makes a consequential history path dependent. In addition, interests and resources evolve from the outcomes of history. The premises of history are not fixed but coevolve with their consequences’ (March and Olsen 1998, 957). Cell 3 emphasises a view of action based on a logic of appropriateness and history as efficient. It comprises work by institutional economists and some by institutional sociologists, as well as, according to the authors, social-constructivists as Finnemore. For them, ‘action is rule-based. Institutions and norms are important. Individual actors seek to fulfil their identities. However, the rules, norms, identities, organizational forms, and institutions that exist are the inexorable products of an efficient history’ (March and Olsen 1998, 958).
Cell 4 emphasises a view of action based on a logic of appropriateness but history as inefficient. It comprises the work by March and Olsen themselves and evolutionary economists who emphasise the process of evolution rather than any necessary outcome. ‘The rules, norms, institutions, and identities that drive human action are seen as developing in a way that cannot be predicted from prior environmental conditions. They coevolve with the worlds in which they act. They are subject to local positive feedback that traps them at local optima. Rules are understandable only by understanding their histories’ (March and Olsen 1998, 958).

Figure 4: Four-Fold Division of Perspectives on the Dynamics of International Political Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSUMED LOGIC OF ACTION</th>
<th>Logic of consequences</th>
<th>Logic of appropriateness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficient history</td>
<td>1. Functional rationality</td>
<td>3. Functional institutionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inefficient history</td>
<td>2. History-dependent rationality</td>
<td>4. History-dependent institutionalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (March and Olsen 1998, 957, Figure 1).

In their research programme March and Olson discern two mechanisms of historical path dependence in the evolution of the international political order, in which international organisations are also discussed. One is the effect of engagement in political activities on the shaping of identities, the other is the effect of engagement on the development of competence and capability. With regard to the first mechanism of engagement in political activities they also discuss the unintentional creation of international identities, which may happen because either international identities will evolve from a ‘spillover’ of domestic orientations and identities into international politics, or because they evolve from the practice of experts cooperating around specific tasks. In the latter case of expert cooperation, they argue that concepts of expertise stimulate associations and collaborations that recognise national boundaries but tend to subordinate them to shared professional concerns. ‘These “epistemic communities” and international networks of experts and bureaucrats define problems, construct conceptions of causal knowledge, and create frames for action that integrate across nation-states’ (March and Olsen 1998, 963). The resulting order can be characterised by functional networks of people often organised around representatives of ‘sister-institutions’, such as central banks, professional associations, courts, and bureaucracies operating at national and international decision-making levels. This pattern stimulates and supports new transnational identities and suggest that the institutions of expertise associated with the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, the EU and other IGOs have to be seen as creators of meaning in general and more specifically of identities. Hence, they are not only ‘decision-making institutions but also institutions for socializing individuals and creating meaning and for promoting specific concepts of the nature and role of the state, markets, human rights, and international organisations’ (March and Olsen 1998, 964).

In this respect, I would like to add the reciprocity between NGOs that are in favour of change and international institutions. When I first researched the international women’s movement as a transnational actor active within intergovernmental organisations, I was impressed by its success in respect of international standard setting and the concomitant transformation of national legislation and practices. However, when I reconsidered the international women’s movement as an actor within a bureaucratic context, I assumed that when agents of political change become active in such bureaucracies, we may expect them to evoke their counterparts (agents of conservatism). If institutions can no longer deny the agents of change and recognise them by allowing access to their mechanisms,
their major response to opposition will be accommodation. This indeed was confirmed (cf. Reinalda 2000). Whenever private actors have been recognized by international organisations, they have brought expertise into the intergovernmental decision-making and implementation processes and have shared responsibilities for their public policies. As such they have influenced agenda setting and have added to the decisions’ qualities and efficacy and the organisation’s legitimacy. Simultaneously, however, international organisations have confined the role of these private organizations through their official procedures in order to make them an instrument of intergovernmental problem solving. Given their dependence on the power relations between nation states, international organisations are conservative with respect to changes in power relations and to a radical restructuring of economies and societies. Because they set the rules of the game, they have been able to limit the private organizations’ room for manoeuvre with respect to the scope of their activities and official positions (cf. Reinalda 1999, 122). I believe that these power relations should be taken into account when the socialisation process which results from this reciprocity is being discussed.

With regard to the second mechanism of the effect of engagement on the development of competence and capability, March and Olsen refer to competency traps, which may be relevant for understanding the flexibility or stagnation of international organisations. They argue that political institutions become more efficient as the rules are refined and as actors become more competent in operating within them. Efficiency, however, easily becomes the enemy of adaptiveness and a competency trap may occur if the institution becomes firmly locked into a particular rule-based structure by virtue of developing familiarity with the rules and the capabilities for using them. Refined capabilities may strengthen a system in the short run but make it resistant to change (March and Olsen 1998, 964). In this case, the IMF, as mentioned by Woods above, could be taken as a case to test this proposition. March and Olson also discuss the change of international institutions from the perspective of competence and the transformation of objectives. The development of competence in the service of institutions is primarily a stabilising force, but it also creates foundations for new institutions and new objectives. ‘Organisations not only become better and better at what they do, they also see new things to do. Having the capability of doing new things leads, in turn, to seeing their desirability. Capabilities stimulate recognition of the salience of problems to which they can provide solutions. By transforming capabilities, therefore, competence transforms agendas and goals’ (March and Olsen 1998, 966). They regard the EU as a good example to illustrate this and call the resulting institutional structure more of ‘a marble cake than a hierarchy’ (March and Olsen 1998, 967).

I am aware that this section is a bit long and still insufficiently oriented towards decision-making processes within international organisations. However, the visions of March and Olsen help to understand what kinds of developments take place within bureaucracies and in what ways these agencies are subjected to constraining and encouraging forces. Neo-institutionalism as an approach is different from earlier generations of studies on institutions, which mainly focused on the legal and administrative structures of formal organisations. In this latter respect, however, one should be careful in its judgement, because when rereading older texts, one may be impressed that these texts are not as a-political as may be suggested. When I reread Beyond the Nation-State by Haas I did not find the caricature of neo-functionalism as sometimes displayed by those who are not impressed by this approach, but rather a well-developed analysis of what is happening within international organisations that can be used very well (cf. Reinalda 1998). Notwithstanding this remark, neo-institutionalism has a wider understanding of the term institution, as it also points to patterns of behaviour, structures of economic distribution and organisational networks. Both rational choice scholars can be found in it, who regard institutions as important features of the strategic context of rational actors pursuing their self-interest, and historical institutionalists, who deviate from such strict rationality assumptions and are interested in the ways that both strategies and goals pursued by actors have been shaped by their institutional context (cf. Falkner 1998, 21).

**Learning, Epistemic Communities and Social-Constructivism**

Attitudinal changes has been an issue in neofunctionalism, which ascribed a dynamic role to individuals and interest groups in the process of integration. It was assumed that these participants would learn about the rewards of their involvement and undergo attitudinal changes in favour of integration. ‘As the beliefs and aspirations of groups undergo change due to the necessity of working in a transnational institutional framework, mergers in values and doctrine are expected to come about,
uniting groups across former frontiers’ (Haas 1958, 14). New loyalties may come into existence, according to Haas, as end values (i.e., when the new order is desired as an end in itself), as a response to a pressure for conformity exercised by the new centre of power, or as a belief that they grow haphazardly in their function as intermediary means to some ultimate end, perhaps the same end also fought for in the context of the established national loyalties. ‘Groups and individuals uncertain of their ability to realise political or economic values in the national framework may thus turn to supranational agencies and procedures, without being attracted by “Europeanism” as such. If the process of developing dual loyalties via this mechanism continues for a sufficiently protracted period, the new central institutions may ultimately acquire the symbolic significance of end values’ (Haas 1958, 14-5). Isn’t this what March and Olson call the effect of engagement in political activities on the shaping of identities? Political integration, according to Ernst Haas, is the process ‘whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states’ (Haas 1958, 16).

A further element for understanding what happens within bureaucratic agencies was introduced by those who argued that actors can learn new patterns of reasoning and may consequently begin to pursue new state interests. It was argued by amongst others Peter Haas that control over knowledge and information is an important dimension of power. This was illustrated by the role that networks of knowledge-based experts, better known as epistemic communities, play in articulating cause-and-effect relationships of complex problems, helping states identify their interests, framing the issue for collective debate, proposing specific policies, and identifying salient points for negotiation. The diffusion of new ideas and information can, according to the proponents of this approach, lead to ‘new patterns of behavior and prove to be an important determinant of international policy coordination’ (Haas 1992, 3).

There are various reasons why experts can play a role in the context of decision making. One of them is complexity, given the increasingly complex and technical nature of the ever-widening range of issues considered on the international agenda, the growth in the complexity of the international political system in terms of the number of actors and the extent of interactions, as well as the expansion of the global economy and the modern administrative state. ‘Forced to deal with a broader range of issues than they were traditionally accustomed to, decision makers have turned to specialists to ameliorate the uncertainties and help them understand the current issues and anticipate future trends’. A second reason is uncertainty itself: ‘Without the help of experts, they risk making choices that not only ignore the interlinkages with other issues but also highly discount the uncertain future, with the result that a policy choice made now might jeopardize future choices and threaten future generations’ (Haas 1992, 13). Under conditions of uncertainty, decision makers may have various incentives and reasons for consulting epistemic communities. Following a shock or crisis, for example, epistemic communities can elucidate the cause-and-effect relationships and provide advice about the likely results of various causes of action. They might also shed light on the nature of the complex interlinkages between issues and on the chain of events that might proceed either from failure to take action of from instituting a particular policy. Furthermore, these communities can help to define the self-interest of a state, or factions within it, and help formulate policies (cf. Haas 1992, 15).

Epistemic communities can be seen in the context of both bureaucracy and of change. It is argued that epistemic communities are relevant for decision makers because they may convey new patterns of reasoning to decision makers and encourage them to pursue new paths of policy making, which may in turn lead to unprecedented or unpredictable outcomes. It is important to see in this respect the difference between epistemic communities and bureaucratic bodies, even if both share the administrative empowerment of specialised knowledge groups. Bureaucratic bodies, according to Peter Haas, who falls back on the traditional vision on bureaucracies, operate largely to preserve their missions and budgets, whereas epistemic communities apply their causal knowledge to a policy enterprise subject to their normative objectives. ‘Consequently, although members of epistemic communities may use the bureaucratic leverage they are able to acquire through obtaining key personnel slots within bureaucracies, their behavior is different from that of the individuals typically analysed in terms of their bureaucratic constraints’ (Haas 1992, 19-20). With regard to what happens within bureaucracies it can be argued that ideas inform policies and that actor’s understanding of the world and the formulation of alternative actions are shaped by belief systems, operational codes and cognitive maps. Consensual knowledge may contribute to policy coordination and to more
comprehensive policies. Policy choices are often made by discrete networks of actors, whereas coalitions are built transgovernmentally and transnationally, for instance through members of international secretariats of governmental and non-governmental bodies and the channels through which these act. In the international policy process, epistemic communities play an evolutionary role as a source of policy innovations and a channel by which these innovations diffuse internationally. Hence it is possible to follow this process. The various steps in policy evolution are policy innovation, policy diffusion, policy selection, and persistence of policy innovation (cf. Adler and Haas 1992). Notwithstanding Haas’ traditional remark about bureaucracies, this is an interesting approach because it sheds light on the role of experts in international and national decision making, which was relevant already in the nineteenth century, but also because of its innovative role, which also is parallel to the nineteenth century.

Social constructivism is interesting because of the ideational turn in international relations theory in the 1990s. The crucial claim by Finnemore with regard to the relationship between states and international organisations is that international organisations socialise states to accept new norms, values and perceptions of interest (Finnemore 1996, 5). To explain behaviour of states Finnemore began to draw attention to the mutually constituted character of structures and agents. With regard to structure she examined coordinated system-wide shifts in state behaviour and traced the cause of these shifts to normative claims pushed by an international organisation. With regard to agency she examined how the international organization came to hold these normative views and the mechanisms by which it was able to ‘teach’ those views to states (cf. Finnemore 1996, 25). International decision making was not one of the first priorities in this approach. In general it can be said that it was close to the policy process model, but it can also be noted that the approach became interested in sociological institutionalism. ‘Drawing on long-standing Weberian arguments about bureaucracy and sociological institutionalist approaches to organizational behavior, we [Barnett and Finnemore] argue that the rational-legal authority that IOs embody gives them power independent of the states that created them and channels that power in particular directions’ (Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 699). This makes it possible to consider international organisations as purposive actors. Using Weber’s insights provides them to understand that the ability of international organisations to structure knowledge, gives them sources of power. They are able to classify the world, create categories of actors and action, to fix meanings in the social world, and to articulate and diffuse new norms, principles and actors around the world. They are also interested in dysfunctional behaviour of international organisations. They discerned five features of bureaucracy that might produce pathology, as they call it. These five are the irrationality of rationalisation, universalism, normalisation of deviance, organisational insulation and cultural contestation (Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 719). Although this is still very general, and rather far from decision making, both Weber’s insights in bureaucracies and the interest for functioning and dysfunctioning of international organisations may contribute to a better understanding of what happens within these ‘black boxes’.

Conclusions of the Third Section

1. There are various inroads to understanding decision-making processes within the ‘black box’ of international organisations, including the interplay with its environment.
2. Insights in the processes within international organisations have been best developed in the political process model, in particular by Ernst Haas (based on bureaucracy theories) and by Cox and Jacobson (the influence game). These insights seem to be also relevant for multilevel approaches.
3. Theories of collective goods and public choice are mostly focused on a general level (cooperation) and hardly on what happens within international organisations, although the public choice approach and the principal – actor metaphor seem promising with respect to understanding the character of international bureaucracies.
4. Theories developed within domestic or comparative politics, such as bureaucratic politics and groupthink, have hardly been applied to international organisations. Given the narrowing of the divide between international relations and comparative politics it can be expected that international relations theory will be influenced in this respect.
5. Neo-institutionalism offers a critique of the restricted fields international relations theory is interested in, and in fact offers a research programme which will help to understand what kind of developments take place within bureaucracies and to which forces these bodies are subjected.

6. The approaches which discern processes of learning within national and international organisations (learning, epistemic communities, social constructivism) may add to these insights, but until now they are focused on functions and dysfunctions of international organisations more generally. Their most valuable asset is that they treat bureaucracies in the context of political change rather than in the context of conservatism and narrow self-interest.


Being interested in theoretical inroads into decision-making within international organisations, I was also interested in what we actually know about these processes. Hence, I decided to scan the journal *International Organization* for the years 1970-200 and to make a list of articles, which include what I call case studies. This can be helpful when attempting to find out more about approaches and actual findings on international organisations. It is a first scanning, and as such meant as a helpful tool. It is not yet a base for quantitative exercises. There are two sub-sections: Conference diplomacy and the International organisation, followed by subcategories, for Conference diplomacy: agenda setting, the influence game and bargaining, voting in the UN, voting in the EU, informal agreements, implementation and feedback, and dispute settlement; and for the International organisation: organisation theory, the international secretariat, the secretary-general and leadership, attitude change in the UN, attitude change in the EU, and domestic bureaucracies and foreign policy. Titles will be mentioned only once. When a title is mentioned under Conference diplomacy, this might also refer to what happens within organisations (for instance, agenda setting in the EU), because this sub-section follows the policy cycle. The second sub-sections deals with institutions, rather than the policy process.

A. Conference diplomacy

On decision making in conference diplomacy in general see: (Kaufmann 1996, chapter 2: a general view) and (Muldoon Jr., Fagot Aviel et al. 1999).

- **Agenda setting**
  - (Krause and Nye 1975) discuss the latent roles of international (economic) organisations as those of arena, instrument, and actor.
  - (Pollack 1997) discusses the functions that member state principals delegate to supranational agents, the autonomy of agents in carrying out their functions, and agents’ ability to set the agenda for the member governments. European Community.

- **The influence game and bargaining**
  - (Loevald 1975) seeks to establish how the technological and economic capabilities of member nations condition the manner and style of negotiation of national objectives, and the growth of attitudes and expectations with regard to such a regime. Negotiations in the UN General Assembly’s Seabed Committee.
  - (Brenner 1973) discusses how an established IO, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission adapts its organisational format and purposes to newly defined tasks; the role of experts at the various stages of policy formation is discussed. Refers to the Stockholm Conference.
  - (Miles 1977) describes the policy process, the group structure (regional groupings as the basic units) and the effects of the decision process in the Seabed Committee and the UN conference on the law of the sea III from a regime perspective.
  - (Hopmann 1978) discusses asymmetrical outcomes in negotiations in CSCE from a synthesis of literature from formal game theory, structural-manipulative approaches, social psychology, and the study of political influence; two factors: unequal costs to the negotiators from the failure to agree, and unequal resources available to employ in bargaining or influence attempts.
  - (Codding Jr. 1981) based on Cox and Jacobson’s framework; analyses the ITU’s World Administration Radio Conference (WARC 79).
(Wagner 1988) applies modern bargaining theory in order to show that asymmetrical economic interdependence does not imply that one bargainer will be able to exercise political influence over another. Refers to trade. Mostly theoretical.

(Downs, Rocke et al. 1998) show why states that desire to create a multilateral organisation or agreement might be attracted to a strategy that involves admitting potential members sequentially based on their preferences. Data from EU and twenty environmental multinationals.

(Schoppa 1999) borrows from social psychology in order to identify several ways in which coercive bargaining outcomes tend to vary, depending on the social context in which they take place; refers to US-Japan economic bargaining.

- **Voting in the United Nations**
  - (Vincent 1972) applies attribute theory to the UN General Assembly voting patterns (1968, 1969)
  - (Rai 1972) discusses the relationship between foreign policy and voting in the UN General Assembly.
  - (Nelson 1974) attacks Campbell’s thesis that in 1944-1945 American policy toward the formation of the UN underwent a change from a universalistic concept of security to a narrower nationalistic peace programme.
  - (Campbell 1974) reacts to (Nelson 1974).
  - (Newcombe, Young et al. 1977) test 22 weighted voting formulae in sessions of the UN General Assembly.
  - (Kim and Russet 1996) use voting alignments on issues that have figured in UN General Assembly debates to identify and analyse preferences among member states.
  - (Voeten 2000) applies nominate scaling to analyse a database of Cold War and post-Cold War roll call votes in the UN General Assembly; investigates the dimensionality and stability of global conflicts as well as substantive content of the voting alignments that have replaced the Cold War East – West dimension.

- **Voting in the European Union**
  - (Lodge and Herman 1980) discuss EEC decision making in the Economic and Social Committee.
  - (Hosli 1993) discusses the admission of European Free Trade Association states to the European Community: effects on voting power in the European Community Council of Ministers
  - (Garrett and Tsebelis 1996) offer a critique of the power index approach to EU decision making (such as used by Hosli) and discuss the impact of policy preferences on likely coalitional behaviour in the Council of Ministers.
  - (Golub 1999) using comprehensive data for the period 1974-1995 he shows that decision making in the 1970s was anything but paralysed, that the impact of the Luxembourg Compromise has been greatly overstated, that institutional reforms actually encumbered rather than eased the EC legislative process, and that institutional effects are mediated by the underlying distribution of member state preferences.
  - (Meunier 2000) discusses the fact that EU member states must first reach a common bargaining position among themselves and later defend that position with a ‘single voice’ at the international table.
  - (Jupille 1999) discusses the shift within the EU from unanimity to qualified majority voting and its effects on European bargaining positions and international outcomes and analyses the international effects of changes in EU decision-making rules with a simple spatial model; two cases that span the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty.

- **Informal agreements**
  - (Lipson 1991) discusses why some international agreements are informal; informal agreements can accommodate restrictions; these are common tools for international cooperation and states use them frequently to pursue national goals by international agreement.
Implementation and feedback

➤ (Fearon 1998) using a game model, he shows that if states must bargain to determine the deal to be enforced, the shadow of the future cuts two ways. A high expectation of continued interactions may make enforcing the agreement easier, but it can also give states an incentive to bargain harder, delaying agreement in hopes of getting a better deal; trade and arms control negotiations.

➤ (Drezner 2000) shows that when multilateral economic sanctions fail, their failure is due to enforcement, not bargaining problems. Whithout the support of an international organisation, cooperating states backslide from promises of cooperation.

Dispute settlement in general and more specific

➤ (Goldstein, Kahler et al. 2000) argue that international legalisation is a form of institutionalisation characterised by three dimensions: obligation, precision and delegation.

➤ (Abbott and Snidal 2000) examine why states, firms and activists seek different types of legalised arrangements to solve political and substantive problems; hard legalisation is precise, legally binding obligations with appropriate third-party delegation; soft legalisation combines reduced precision, less stringent obligation and weaker delegation.

➤ (Keohane, Moravcsik et al. 2000) discuss two ideal types of third-party dispute resolution; under interstate d.r. states closely control selection of, access to, and compliance with international courts and tribunals; under transnational d.r. individuals and NGOs have significant influence over selection, access and implementation.

➤ (Kahler 2000) three important consequences: its effects on compliance with international agreements, its impact on the evolution of international norms, and the conditions under which it will harden and spread.

➤ (Alter 1998) develops a general hypothesis of the autonomy of the European Court of Justice, focusing on how differing time horizons of political and judicial actors, support for the Court within the national judiciaries, and decision-making rules at the supranational level limit the member states’ ability to control the Court.

➤ (Abbott 2000) examines the trend toward using hard legal instruments in international trade governance and explains this trend in the context of NAFTA; compares NAFTA, EU and APEC’ legalisation models.

➤ (Kahler 2000) His examination of ASEAN, APEC and ARF confirms a regional process of institution building without legalization.

➤ (McCall Smith 2000) analyses more than sixty post-1957 regional trade pacts. In contrast to accounts that emphasise the transaction costs of collective action or the functional requirements of deep integration, he found that the level of legalism in each agreement is strongly related to the level of economic asymmetry, in interaction with the proposed depth of liberalisation, among member countries.

B. The International Organisation

 Organisation theory

➤ (Schmitter 1971) discusses organisational development: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance and tension management; various organisations

➤ (Duffy 1972) outlines propositions on organisational growth and goal structure and test them against the ILO.

➤ (McLaren 1980) discusses socio-economic coordination within the UN system.

➤ (Steele 1985) discusses the reform of UN economic and social institutions, in the years 1975-1977 (failure) and renewed attempts in the 1980s.

➤ (Ness and Brechin 1988) various organisations are discussed in an attempt to bridge the gap between the study of international organisations and the sociology of organisations.

➤ (Yarbrough and Yarbrough 1990) discuss the new economics of organization; various economic IOs.

 The international secretariat
(Bhattacharya 1976) argues that sustained institutionalised pressure exerted through the UNCTAD secretariat did make a difference in influencing the policy outcome on the generalised system of preferences.

- The secretary-general and leadership

- (Knight 1970) goes into the fact that there is little systematic explanation of the behaviour of the UN Secretary-General.

- (Hoole 1976) discusses the appointment of executive heads in UN treaty-based organisations; the emphasis involved in their selection has changed over time.

- (Meyers 1976) discusses the Secretary-General of a regional organisation (OAU); four-part framework: legal-institutionalised authority; material and non-material resources, effects of splits between members; personal qualities and beliefs.

- (Young 1991) discusses the nature of institutional bargaining as a springboard for pinpointing the role of leadership and for differentiating three forms of leadership: structural, entrepreneurial and intellectual; various organisations

- (Moravcsik 1999) discusses the general conclusion that informal leadership by high officials of international organisations (supranational leadership) decisively influences the outcomes of multilateral negotiations. Derives and tests explicit hypotheses from general theories of political entrepreneurship against the five most important EC negotiations.

- Attitude change in the United Nations

- (Wolf 1973) finds evidence that while socialisation processes produce some attitude change toward the adoption of an ‘internationalist outlook’, the likelihood and nature of attitude change is also significantly affected by conflict processes within the organisation; refers to the UN system.

- (Ernst 1978) discusses attitudes of diplomats at the United Nations: the effects of organizational participation on the evaluation of the organization. Two hypotheses: the longer a person serves an organisation, the more favourable his attitude toward the organisation becomes, and a person who has played a formal role in the organisation is likely to have a more favourable attitude toward the organisation than a person who has served only as a national diplomat.

- (Peck 1979) discusses the socialization of permanent representatives in the UN based on 47 interviews conducted in the permanent missions in 1972; summarises systematic studies by Riggs.

- Attitude change in the European Union

- (Scheinman and Feld 1972) addresses the question of the value of national civil servants of the EEC member states in the integration process. Socialisation either through secondment or interpenetration appears to progress only haltingly.

- (Mennis and Sauvant 1975) discusses describing and explaining support for regional integration in an investigation of German business elite attitudes toward the European Community; uses the concept of external interest as opposed to Inglehart’s concept of values.

- (Michelmann 1978) discusses the multinational staffing and organisational functioning in the EC Commission.

- Domestic bureaucracies and foreign policy

- (Hopkins 1976) argues that in some areas US government agencies play key management roles rather than international organisations.

- (Katzenstein 1976) discusses international relations and domestic structures, in particular foreign economic policies and advanced industrial states. He argues that foreign economic policy can be understood only if domestic factors are systematically included in the analysis of problems of the international economy.

- (Katzenstein 1977) examines theories of foreign policy (international approaches and bureaucratic politics) and regards the domestic structure of the nation-state a critical intervening variable without which the interrelationship between international interdependence and political strategies cannot be understood.
(Katzenstein 1977) discusses six advanced industrial states in the international economy and distinctive elements of domestic structure.

References


