International Organizations and Policy Implementation: Pieces of the Puzzle

Jutta Joachim (University of Hannover) and Bertjan Verbeek (University of Nijmegen)


Correspondence:
Jutta Joachim: j.joachim@ipw.uni-hannover.de
Bertjan Verbeek: b.verbeek@nsm.kun.nl
1. Introduction

The workshop has been designed with the aim of investigating the role of international organizations in the implementation of policies, a subject which, for the most part, has been bracketed from the study of international relations. In particular, we are interested in the part that international organizations play vis-à-vis states in this process, the means they employ to ensure the implementation of policies that had previously been formulated within the institutional framework of an international organization, and their effectiveness.

This research question is the logical follow-up of two previous projects. While the first project, launched at the First Pan European Conference on International Relations in 1995, was aimed at assessing the conditions under which international organizations enjoy a significant degree of agency and autonomy vis-à-vis states, the second project, dating back to the ECPR Joint Sessions in Grenoble in 2001, was concerned with decision-making processes that take place within international organizations. The major conclusions of these first two projects were manifold:

(1) International organizations, or more precisely their bureaucracies, are most likely to enjoy considerable policy autonomy in the relationships with their principals or patrons in situations of information asymmetries, that is, when they possess considerably more information than governments. While it is true that member states can rein in autonomous international bureaucracies because they finance them, they are, nevertheless, reluctant to use the power of the purse. Experience (e.g., the USA withdrawing from ILO) has taught them that abandoning an international organization may leave them with less influence on its policy than staying in.

(2) Policy autonomy of international organizations has been facilitated by the end of the Cold War, globalisation, and democratisation. While the end of the Cold War liberated international organizations from the paralysis caused by superpower rivalry, globalisation instilled a sense of urgency for international cooperation, or, to use a catchier phrase, global governance in many policy areas, with international organizations providing the technical expertise and logistical tools required for the amelioration of pressing international problems. Finally, democratisation enabled international organizations (more than in the past) to form alliances with domestic and other like-minded actors to put pressure on governments. Even if nation-states are still the most relevant players internationally, the developments since the late 1980s have, overall, increased the bargaining advantage of international organizations vis-à-vis member states.

(3) However, the degree of autonomy varies across organizations. The more legalized an international organization is (e.g., the European Union) or the more technical the issue involved, the more autonomy its bureaucracy is likely to possess. By contrast, the more the
issue falls into the remit of ‘high politics’, the less weight an international organization is
going to have. However, studies of NATO (Megens, 1998) and the IAEA (Colijn, 1998)
suggest that even within the parameters of classical security issues, international
bureaucracies enjoy some leverage.

(4) Analysis of decision making within international organizations show that, while principal-
agent theory might be a fruitful starting point for characterizing the relationship between
states and international organizations, it is not that easy to discern the policy objectives of
international bureaucracies. Their preferences seem most pronounced in times of crisis. For
example, when the survival of an international organization is at stake, it will put push for
policies that help to legitimize its continued existence. Or, when the organization’s exclusive
prerogatives are being threatened, it will fight to protect them. Nevertheless, in day-to-day
matters, it is much harder to determine the policy preferences of an international bureaucracy.
They can be either norm-driven or instrumental and reflect the interests of a particular
individual or the compromise of various departments. It is in examining these preferences that
rationalist and constructivist accounts of international organizations should reach out to each
other.

(5) Analysis of decision-making within international organizations also showed that the
influence of international organizations varied across the policy cycle. It seemed greater in
the agenda-setting, implementation and monitoring stage, than in the actual decision stage.
Throughout the policy cycle, however, international organizations appear to possess and
exploit structural advantages, such as the international norm to seek consensus in international
venues or the knowledge that a follow-up meeting was bound to take place within
considerable time, often giving the agenda setting advantage to the international bureaucracy.

In light of the lessons learned from the previous two projects about the conditions under
which an international organization enjoys more or less autonomy and the particularities of
decision-making that takes place within international organizations, it only seems a logical
next step to now focus on the policy implementation stage. Moreover, two general
observations have peaked our interest in the subject. First, there is little theoretically guided
research on the implementation of international agreements. This is rather surprising since
studies in this area could tell us something about the effectiveness of internationally
negotiated norms or rules, and whether commitments that states enter into matter or are
simply cheap talk. Second, there is even less research of the role international organization
play in the implementation process. While studies on norms suggest that international
organizations are important actors (e.g. Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, 1999; Finnemore, 1996),
thus far we only have a rudimentary understanding of how and when exactly they matter, or
what means they have available to get states to follow through on international policies. This
project is aimed at helping to fill this void in the literature.

Rather than offering a full-fledged introduction or overview of the implementation literature,
however, we identify a number of issues regarding policy implementation, which we consider
important and would like to address over the course of what hopefully will be an interesting
and fruitful workshop.
What do we mean by ‘policy implementation’?

2.1 The concept of policy implementation

At the most general level, implementation can be defined as a translation from international agreements into practice through the passage of national legislation, the creation of institutions (both domestic and international) or the enforcement of rules. Furthermore, it constitutes a ‘stage’ in the political or policy process, to be distinguished from agenda setting, conversion (or decision making), and feedback. Beyond this rather broad consensus regarding implementation, however, uncertainty prevails. For example, when does implementation start and when does it end (Ingram, 1990: 463)? While some scholars argue that implementation begins after the adoption of a policy, others caution against such a perspective. Given that policy objectives are often (deliberately) vaguely defined, it can be difficult to identify a clear cut-off point. Also, there is little agreement on when implementation ends: Some posit that implementation ends before the routinization of procedures adopted in response to international policies sets in (Schneider, 1982: 716). By contrast, others reject such parameters since it deprives students of implementation to assess the effectiveness of international agreements (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983).

Another complication is the notion that in the real world we may not be able to divide the policy cycle into clearly separate phases (Kingdon, 1995). From Kingdon’s perspective, agenda-setting, decision-making and implementation occur simultaneously: only when policy entrepreneurs seize a window of opportunity and ‘connect’ the parallel streams of different problem definitions and different conceptions of solutions. For our purposes, this may be a salient aspect, considering the nature of conference diplomacy, which involves annual or bi-annual conferences conducted by intergovernmental organizations or their subcommittees. While it might be true that these (bi-)annual meetings can help international organization to monitor the implementation of previously agreed upon objectives, they also can turn into another round of decision-making involving a subtle, yet distinct re-negotiation of the original agreement. In this case, implementation, agenda setting and decision making become difficult to dissect.

Statement for discussion 1: Policy implementation is an empirically distinguishable phase in the policy cycle. This is also the case for policies formulated by international organizations.

2.2 Policy implementation in the traditional International Relations literature

Conceptual issues are compounded by the fact that implementation has been the Cinderella of the International Relations discipline. Traditional security studies, for example, have focused on decisions of individual states rather than on the implementation of their policies. To the extent that Foreign Policy Analysis has taken up the issue, it has done so only in passing. Very few textbooks on International Relations or Foreign Policy Analysis dedicate explicit attention to the issue of implementation. Most remarks on implementation are made in the context of Allison’s models II and III (Allison and Zelikow, 1999), indicating that policy implementation may affect the perception of a threat, such as the discovery of the Soviet missiles, may alter the stakes during a crisis, as was the case with the deployment of American missiles in Turkey, or may lead to policy disasters such as the aborted American mission to rescue American diplomats held hostage in Tehran in 1980. Therefore, models II and III might be useful theoretical avenues to study implementation presuming that we can
identify branches of international organizations (or networks of national and international bureaucracies) heavily engaged in implementation.

Implicit remarks on implementation can also be found in the crisis decision-making literature, such as the literature on “groupthink.” These works explain so-called ‘policy fiascos’ in terms of deficient decision-making. Nevertheless, such analyses do not discuss policy implementation per se. Instead, they are interested in the causal link between decision-making and policy failure.

In the IR literature, regime theory has paid attention to implementation when discussing the durability and effectiveness of international regimes (Krasner, 1983). Drawing on this literature, the concepts of cheating and compliance might prove useful to analyse policy implementation through international organizations. Unfortunately, however, there is one drawback. While originally developed as an analytical framework to investigate the role of international organizations as actors in their own right, regime theory has developed into a research programme that focuses on rational, utility maximizing states ‘making the best’ of an anarchical environment and reaching effective cooperation against all odds. From this neo-utilitarian perspective (Ruggie, 1998), international organizations are not interested actors in their own right. Though organizations might be part of regimes, which serve several functions in promoting compliance (monitoring, information exchange, reduction of transaction costs), they are instruments of states and not expected to act decisively on their own. Only the small current in international regime theory, which Krasner labelled ‘Grotian’ at the time (Krasner, 1983), allows for the possibility of significant behaviour by international organizations.  

**Statement for discussion 2:** Traditional approaches to international relations and foreign policy have neglected the issue of policy implementation and, hence, offer little insight.

### 2.3 How do we approach policy implementation by international organizations?

For the purpose of this workshop, it is important to make the following distinctions. First, the implementation stage starts after a policy has been adopted in the institutional context of an international organization (e.g., at the end of an international conference or during an international organization’s General Assembly meeting). While the respective policy can demand from member states to act in a particular way, it also can entrust the implementation process or parts of it to an international organization. Not surprising, it is the latter we are interested in. In this respect, an international organization can either be an actor directed towards affecting the implementation of polices by member states, or be an actor in its own right.

Second, research on the role of international organizations in implementation is complicated by the fact that the translation of international agreements into action at the domestic level is part of an institutionalized process of international policymaking. Consequently, international policies might be reformulated while implementation occurs. That is, governments may decide to change a policy adopted at “t₁” at a follow-up conference at “t₂”. Interruptions such as these are likely to change the dynamics of the implementation process, shortening not only the time international organizations and states will have to reach a certain agreed upon goal, but also affecting their calculations of how to use or proceed with implementation.
Finally, implementation is distinct from compliance of international agreements? Defining compliance as a state of conformity or identity between an actor’s behaviour and a specified rule, Raustiala and Slaughter (2001: 539; see also Fisher, 1981 or Mitchell, 1994) identify two major differences. First, studies on compliance are generally interested in the motives of states for adhering to or violating an international rule or norm. Second, implementation of international agreements requires action on the part of governments. By contrast, compliance may not require any such effort. While implementation generally leads to compliance, it is not a necessary condition for it.

(3) The Role of International Organizations in Policy Implementation:

Since we are interested in international organizations in the implementation process, we need to specify more clearly (1) what role these organizations might play and (2) what instruments they have at their disposal to influence implementation. Regarding the former, international organizations can either play a direct or an indirect role in the translation of international commitments into national policies. That is, they can assist states in the implementation process by offering guidance and advice (e.g., the multilateral surveillance process of the OECD), or they can be in charge of the entire process or parts of it (e.g., UNO’s transitional government in Cambodia). Both, presumably, hold more or less potential for autonomous action. Based on the empirical evidence from the studies conducted by the workshop participants, we are interested in determining when and under what conditions international organizations are likely to be directly involved in the implementation process and when and under what conditions they are apt to simply assist states.

Statement for discussion 3: International organizations may either assist states in the implementation or be in charge of implementation.

With respect to the tools that international organizations have at their disposal to ensure the implementation of policies, environmental studies have stressed the role of expertise (e.g. Haas, 1992). Since special agencies or organizations have more time to devote to particular issues or have been established to address a particular issue, they tend to possess more information than most states. These knowledge asymmetries can give organizations an edge in the implementation process getting states to do what they might otherwise be reluctant to do. In addition, international organizations can also influence implementation through monitoring. In fact, sometimes they are just established for this purpose (e.g. the Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women). Monitoring can take different forms. States might be required to deliver regular reports on the progress they are making toward accomplishing internationally agreed upon goals. Furthermore, international organizations may call on non-governmental organizations to provide information whether states are honouring their international agreements. Finally, monitoring might also involve more direct action, with staff of an international organization or agency conducting missions to countries which are party to an international treaty (e.g. the International Atomic Energy Agency, the High Commissioner for Refugees, or the UN Rapporteur on Violence Against Women).

Apart from these positive measures, international organizations might be authorized to punish states which are breaching international agreements and forgoing implementation. The ability to materially sanction states, which fail to follow through on international agreements, is rather rare and, as of yet, a prerogative enjoyed only by the European Court of Justice, and, in
some policy areas, the European Commission. While the panels of the World Trade Organization can authorize individual states to take temporary sanctions against trading partners which do not comply with WTO rules, the WTO does not punish states as such. Being created by states to serve states, most organizations do not possess, however, such effective means of retribution. Instead, the weapons most commonly used by international organizations appear to be “shaming and blaming” or the formation of coalitions with like-minded domestic or transnational actors to pressure states to translate internationally agreed upon policies into action at the national level.

While expertise, monitoring, shaming or coalition formation are the most known tools available to international organizations to influence the implementation process, the empirical studies conducted in connection with this workshop might reveal that there are other less obvious ones, and tell us more when these tools are being used or how effective they are.

Statement for discussion 4: The only weapons international organizations may possess to ensure policy implementation are monitoring and subsequently shaming.

So far we have bracketed the motivations of international organization from our discussion. Rather, we assumed that they are interested in seeing the agreed upon policy implemented. But, of course, that may not be at all the case. To begin, international bureaucracies might be unhappy with the agreed upon international policy. After all, decisions taken at the international level are most likely to reflect the preferences of member states. Hence, international bureaucracies might try and use the implementation phase to unofficially shape policies to bring them closer in line with own policy preferences. Or, they may use the implementation phase to affect the policy preferences of the member states in order to redirect policies officially at a later conference venue. Obviously, if this is the case we run into the analytical difficulty signalled above, that decision making, agenda setting and implementation may not be easily distinguishable in the real world. Our starting point is therefore that research implementation needs to be cognizant of the policy preference of an international organization.

Statement for discussion 5: International bureaucracies are motivated by a mixture of material and ideational motives. The former will carry more weight in situations where the budget, tasks and number of personnel might be at stake; the latter will be salient in day to day policy situations.

(4) Theories of International Relations

Liberal, realist, pluralist and constructivist approaches to the study of international relations might be the most promising in developing a set of initial competing hypothesis about the role of international organizations and conditions under which implementation can be more or less successful.

4.1 Liberalism

Liberal approaches conceive of international organizations in a functional manner, assuming that they facilitate cooperation among states, by reducing transaction-costs and by providing rules that make it safe to pool parts of their sovereignty. More specifically, liberal scholars
stress the role of domestic institutions and interest groups to explain states’ behaviour in international organizations (e.g. Moravscik, 1997).

Applied to international organizations and implementation, liberal approaches would suggest that international organizations are agents, rather than actors in their own right, that assist states in the translation of international commitments into national policies. Furthermore, we would expect policy implementation to be facilitated or hampered by domestic groups. On the one hand, interest groups at the domestic level can function as whistle blowers, signalling to an international organization when implementation goes awry. On the other hand, domestic groups might obstruct implementation when they are opposed to international policies. Finally, liberalism would suggest that implementation depends on the nature of domestic institutions. As Green Cowles, Risse and Caporaso (2001) have argued in the context of the European Union, the receptiveness or rather willingness of governments to follow through on their commitments is dependent on the fit between the supranationally agreed upon policy and the nature of domestic institutions.

**Statement for discussion 6:** International organizations are agents of states in the implementation process and implementation is contingent on domestic institutions and groups.

Although realism may still contribute to explaining (non-) compliance (see below), it may not be sufficient to focus on the state as a unitary actor. In highly legalized international policy areas states have to deal with domestic legal actors. The domestic legal system allows other interested actors to use juridical procedures to affect the state’s implementation of internationally agreed-upon policies. Highly legalized policy areas are thus likely to display a larger impact of domestic actors.

**Statement for discussion 7:** Highly legalized policy areas are likely to allow for a larger role for domestic actors.

A transnational approach to policy implementation would point to the impact of domestic and transnational actors on state behaviour long before the issue of legalization had been raised. Pluralism would point to the context of domestic politics that states have to deal with when (not) implementing international policies. This context could enable international organizations to affect implementation policies. International organizations strike coalitions with like-minded organizations in order to try and influence a government’s policies. The extent to which such ‘versed boomerang’ effects are successful partly depends on the institutional characteristics of the political system in which such domestic actors operate. The ‘second image reversed’ literature roughly makes a distinction between ‘state-dominated’ and ‘society-dominated’ institutional contexts (Gourevitch, 1986, pp. 61-63; Ikenberry et al., 1988, pp. 7-14). In the former state actors (e.g., departments) dominate policy making, while in the latter the state acts as a transmission belt for the demands of societal actors. Recently, scholars have added polarity between actors as an important institutional characteristic in order to explain the weight individual domestic actors can carry (Van der Vleuten 2001). The more an international policy area is legalized, such as the European Union, the more the impact of domestic actors is anchored. Unfortunately, many studies in this field of ‘state-centred’ versus ‘society-centred’, in their quest for parsimony, prefer to characterize countries in terms of either/or. In reality, however, different policy domains may display different degrees of state/society-centeredness. It is not clear at forehand whether an international
organization seeking to affect implementation might profit from state rather than society centeredness of a policy domain: an international organization might as well profit from powerful departmental allies in a state-centred system as from weighty societal actors in a society-centred system.

**Statement for discussion 8:** In state centred domestic policy arenas international organizations will ally with like-minded Ministries in order to affect policy implementation in the direction of their desire. In society centred domestic policy arenas international organizations will ally with like-minded societal actors (pressure groups; social movements) in order to affect policy implementation in the direction of their desire. Again, the more legalized the international policy arena is, the greater scope for domestic actors, thus the greater scope for impact by international organizations.

Until now, we have discussed domestic institutions as ‘filters’ between international policies and policy implementation by national governments. Nevertheless, domestic institutions can also be subject to change as a result of international policies. As a matter of fact, recent studies of Europeanisation investigate exactly this question. Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999) argue that European polices might affect national institutions in three ways. First, by demanding explicit institutional change (such as in the case of monopolies, e.g. in television networks). Second, by changing domestic opportunity structures. Third, indirectly, by affecting domestic beliefs and expectation. The first mechanism might be applicable to highly legalized international policy domains, such as the European Court on Human Rights which has chastened the Luxembourg state for its effective blurring of executive and juridical branches of government or, possibly, the International Labour Organization with its treaty-like regulations. The second mechanism seems promising for international organizations, especially if they can engage in distributive activities and can affect domestic public debate through its monitoring and shaming activities. The third mechanism seems the weakest, yet we should not underestimate the socializing effect of OECD visits to national bureaucracies (and vice versa) (Marcussen, 2004), or of ECJ receiving national lawyers in Luxembourg.

4.2 Constructivism

In contrast to liberal approaches, constructivist scholars conceive of international organizations as independent actors, which play an important role in the diffusion of international norms and in teaching states which behaviour is appropriate and which is not (Finnemore 1996; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

Defining institutions much broader, proponents of constructivism would suggest that organizational rules, norms or culture can stifle or facilitate the implementation. Drawing on Max Weber and Hanna Arendt, Michael Barnett (2001), for example, shows that the culture of neutrality and historical lessons prevented the UN from deploying further troops in Rwanda despite information that genocide was occurring. That case also shows that intra-organizational dynamics may hold a clue to account for implementation processes. The radically different perspectives held by the UN forces on the spot, headed by General Dallaire, and the Peacekeeping Department at the UN headquarters in New York, do suggest that we, while analyzing implementation by international organizations, should not conceive of an international organization as a unitary actor pursuing the same goal. A similar observation could be made for the relationship between UNPROFOR and UN headquarters during the Bosnian conflict.
Interestingly, both examples indicate that implementation by international organizations might be a relevant subject even in security studies. States that have delegated security tasks to international organizations will have an interest in monitoring and controlling the international organization’s activities. However, given the principal-agent nature of their relationship, international organizations are likely to be able to carve out some leeway. Examples which come to mind are UNO’s transition administration in Cambodia or Namibia, the European Union’s governing of the city of Mostar, and possibly even NATO’s de facto administration of Kosovo. Sometimes states would even be quite happy not to be involved in security conflicts themselves, but rather to leave matters (and responsibility, and the blame) with an international organization (such as UNPROFOR).

**Statement for discussion 9:** International organizations are actors in their own right. Implementation of international policies is contingent on the rules, norms, or institutional cultures that prevail both in the international organization and at the domestic level.

### 4.3 Realism

Realist approaches to policy implementation would emphasize the cost-benefit calculations of states in judging whether full implementation of internationally agreed upon policies would be rational. This calculation could be based on any of the following factors: (a) The danger non-implementation would do to a state’s credibility, and thus power position. Would non-implementation reduce the possibility of reaching profitable agreements in the same international setting in the near future? Would it reduce that possibility in other relevant international arenas? (b) The opportunity to undo in implementation what had to be granted during international negotiations. Indeed, it is argued that within the European Union the implementation phase could be ‘the last stronghold of national control’ (From and Stava 1993). (c) The implications of compliance for the relative power position of the state (Grieco, 1990). The freedom of maneuver for a state that does not perceive to have an interest in correct policy implementation may be offset by the extent to which the international policy domain is characterized by legalization (Abbott et al. 2000). The more implementation is rooted in obligation, precision and delegation, the more difficult it is to simply obstruct implementation. This is especially true for (certain policy domains) of the European Union and the Council of Europe (Human Rights Treaty), where states’ behavior is under scrutiny of domestic law and where control over implementation has been delegated to supranational and national actors protected under domestic law.

**Statement for discussion 10:** States that are dissatisfied with the internationally agreed upon policy will, at best, use the implementation phase to undo the respective agreement, and, at the very least, weaken its impact.

### (5) Further Insights from Public Administration and the European Integration Literature?

Since implementation has been a neglected subject in international relations, insights from public administration or European integration studies might be useful in developing further and more specific hypotheses about the role of international organizations in the implementation process. In general, however, the implementation literature is public administration is characterised by relatively little theoretical development. Most empirical
studies are more concerned with the effectiveness of policies, defined in terms of meeting informally or formally formulated objectives. Moreover, due to the singularity and contingency of the findings, scholars have called for abandoning the search for an implementation theory (for an overview, see Knill, 2001: 17-19). Nevertheless, some of the findings might prove useful for studying international organizations in policy implementation.

a) The greater the number of veto points within an organization, the more likely it is that implementation will be stifled. Consider the IMF or the World Bank. Although often accused of simply imposing dexterity on recipient states, IMF and World bank have to reach formal agreement with the recipient state’s government or having to strike deals with major stakeholders occupying de facto decision points (such as the army and the civil service). More generally, this proposition links up with the second image reversed literature arguing that the nature of state-society relations affects likely implementation of international policies.

b) The more ambiguously a policy is defined, the more room for autonomy might exist on the part of the implementers: In international relations, policies can be expected to be general rather than specific given the substantively weak consensus orientation. Hence, implementation can work in two directions: If states are the implementers they can exploit vagueness of international policies, obstructing, for example, the implementation process (assumed they dislike the policies). If, however, an international organization is entrusted with the implementation of international policies, the absence of a clear mandate both substantively as well as procedurally can enhance the discretion of the respective organization. Hence, implementation entails a certain paradox: While states tend to prefer international policies that leave them flexibility and room to manoeuvre, such policies, in turn, increase the discretion of international organizations.

c) The public administration literature suggests that the type of policy matters with respect to implementation: For example, distributive policies are easier to implement than re-distributive policies since they are more consensual and less conflictual. At the same time, implementation in technical domains is likely to enhance the influence of involved bureaucracies since they often possess the necessary expertise and knowledge. By contrast, normative issues complicate implementation through involved controversies. For example, the elimination of female genital mutilation agreed upon in international agreements has been subject to conflict with African countries arguing that it is a cultural or religious practice.

d) Availability of resources is necessary condition. This often is a problem in IR. Take the example of peacekeeping operations. Although during the late 1980s and 1990s many peacekeeping operations were decided on in the context of the United Nations, and although many member states pledged to contribute, UN peace keepers often arrived with much fewer resources than agreed upon, such as in the case of the UN mission to Rwanda (Barnett, 2001)

Statement for discussion 11: The role of international organizations is contingent on the number of veto points in the organization, the nature of the policy, and the resources available.
What are interesting research designs?

One major challenge is to come up with theoretically relevant research designs. This challenge, of course, is related to what we consider relevant research questions. One way to approach this problem is by trying to focus on most likely/least likely designs (Eckstein, 1975). These are geared to account for situations which at face value seem inexplicable. In the context of our workshop, we would be looking, on the one hand, at situations where international organizations are not expected to have a significant impact, but find that they, in fact, do. For example, realism would lead us to expect that states closely monitor international organizations. Yet, we find international organizations to carve out policy discretion over the course of the implementation process. Possible cases include the EU administration of the Bosnian town of Mostar, the OCSE’s oversight activities in Bosnia-Hercegovina and Macedonia, and the inspection tours of IAEA in Iraq in the period preceding the 2003 war against Iraq. On the other hand, we would be looking for cases in which we would expect international organizations to have a high impact, but find the contrary. Examples of this would be, the interest policies of the European Central Bank and the attempts by the Euro11 member states to affect the ECB’s policies.

Obviously, these research designs fit research projects seeking to determine the extent of policy autonomy international organizations enjoy in situations in which implementation has been delegated to them. If we are, however, interested in domestic (institutional) change due to the implementation of internationally agreed-upon policies, we would be looking for policy areas where we would expect much resistance to change. In these cases, electorally (or otherwise) powerful actors might be opposed to the implementation of international policies because their privileged position might be at stake. Furthermore, if we are interested in explaining differences in implementation through variation in institutional contexts (and/or polarity) of domestic policy arenas, we should be looking for cases that are comparable to the independent variable (expected impact of international policy), and other relevant variables (such as economic structure), but differ in institutional context. These type of research questions can, thus, be best approached, adopting the most similar/most different design of comparative case studies (Pennings et al., 1999).

Statement for discussion 12: Relevant research questions are:

(a) Under what conditions and in what policy areas can international organizations enjoy a significant degree of policy autonomy in the implementation phase?
(b) Under what conditions and in what policy areas can national governments undo in the implementation phase what has been agreed upon internationally previously?
(c) To what extent are such conditions affected by (i) the degree of legalization of an international policy area (ii) the degree of state-centeredness of domestic policy arenas?
(d) To what extent and under what conditions will implementation of internationally agreed-upon policies lead to domestic institutional changes?

Statement for discussion 13: Investigating such research questions requires the adoption of a most likely/least likely design and a framework of comparative case studies following the most different/most similar design.
References


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1 These projects have so far resulted in two volumes, *Autonomous Policymaking by International Organizations* (London: Routledge, 1998) and *Decision Making within International Organizations* (London: Routledge, 2004) both edited by Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek. Since 2002 Jutta Joachim has joined the project’s team.

2 We are only aware of Clarke and White’s textbook on Foreign Policy Analysis (1989) which contains a very vague, general chapter by Clarke and Smith on foreign policy implementation (pp. 163-184).

3 As a matter of fact, the regime studies in the ‘Grotian’ tradition foreshadow many constructivist arguments in a remarkable way, including preference formation, the role of reputation, and empowerment.

4 This problem might, of course, be approached from constructivist as well as rationalist perspectives.
Keck and Sikkink (1998) reserved the term ‘boomerang’ for domestic actors, lacking domestic weight, trying to affect their national governments via international policymaking.