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Inertia and change in the constellation of international governmental organizations, 1981–1992

Cheryl Shanks, Harold K. Jacobson, and Jeffrey H. Kaplan

No one expects public institutions to die. Max Weber described bureaucracies as “practically indestructible,” contending that “History shows that wherever bureaucracy gained the upper hand, as in China, Egypt and, to a lesser extent, in the Roman empire and Byzantium, it did not disappear again unless in the course of the total collapse of the supporting culture.”¹ Whereas private organizations, such as charitable institutions and firms, might collapse from apathy or competition, many suppose public bureaucracies to endure indefinitely. An organization’s presence itself creates a constituency, and even if institutions’ creators no longer need them, they would let the institutions slide into obscurity rather than expend resources in a battle to kill them. As Herbert Kaufman pointed out with regard to U.S. bureaucracies, “Even with an extremely low birth rate, a population of immortals would gradually attain immense proportions.”² Once established, a governmental organization should cling like a barnacle to its niche.

If this were true, international governmental organizations (IGOs)—metabureaucracies even further removed from citizens’ calls for accountability and efficiency—should be even more impervious to change. IGOs are those associations established by governments or their representatives that are sufficiently institutionalized to require regular meetings, rules governing decision making, a permanent staff, and a headquarters. From the Congress of Vienna through the 1990s, the population of IGOs has added new members steadily, occasionally plateauing following periodic organizing bursts. In 1981, there were 1,063 IGOs. In 1992, there were 1,147. Since common wisdom holds

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1. Weber 1978, 988, 1401.

2. Kaufman 1976, 1. Kaufman is here characterizing, not advocating, this view.

that organizations do not die, and the scholarship addressing IGOs shares this assumption, one would conclude that countries created 84 new IGOs in this decade.³ In fact, however, hundreds of IGOs were born and died during this period. Five main dimensions of change have transformed the web of IGOs—the organizations themselves and states' memberships in them—over the last decade.

First, although the total number of organizations grew and many new organizations were created, a significant number were formally set aside. Many others in effect vanished. Only two-thirds of the IGOs that existed in 1981 were still active in 1992. Although slightly more IGOs were created than were cast off (84 more), both sets of organizations number in the hundreds. IGOs, like the domestic bureaucracies that Kaufman studied, do have a mortality rate, and it can be surprisingly high.

Second, not governments but other IGOs created a huge proportion of these new organizations. Emanations—second-order IGOs created through actions of other IGOs—and traditionally created IGOs are not always of equal weight, but both connect states through an overlay of institutional rules and a commitment to shared goals; and both indicate the same sort of assumed obligation. For this reason, we make no judgments about IGOs' relative importance. The number of traditional IGOs, those established through formal international treaties, decreased in absolute as well as relative terms, declining from 394 in 1981 to 339 in 1992. Emanations increased from 669 to 808, jumping from 64 percent of the IGO population to more than 70 percent. This increase in emanations accounts for the apparent growth at the aggregate level.

Third, organizations created during this decade do not mirror the characteristics of the older organizations. IGOs can be classified along two dimensions: membership criteria and mandated function. Membership in some organizations is open to all states, whereas others limit membership according to criteria such as geography, historical association, or shared purpose. Some organizations have broad general mandates, while others limit themselves to specific functions. The new organizations allocate membership differently from those that were abandoned; as a result, the distribution of organizations by type changed fundamentally, although the proportions of IGOs dedicated to a variety of functions did not.

Fourth, states have changed their connections to IGOs. While some have increased the number of their IGO memberships, for others, memberships in IGOs actually declined. The result is a growing polarization between powerful countries—dominated by the literate, wealthy, and democratic—that establish and control IGOs and countries whose populations and governments are badly off and increasingly disengaged from international organizations.

3. For examples of studies that incorporate this assumption (but that fail to note the mortality rate of IGOs), see Wallace and Singer 1970; Russett and Starr 1985; Hughes 1993; and Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers 1986.

Fifth, IGOs are no longer found primarily in competitive sets, with each geopolitical bloc having its own institutions. The end of the cold war explains part of this change, accounting for about one-eighth of IGO deaths, but it does not explain the changing distribution of organizations by mode of creation, membership, or function. Developing countries' regional strategies also have largely failed. This factor, combined with the end of the cold war, has meant the elimination of a set of IGOs that existed as an alternative to the West. States' resource capacities now better explain the pattern of countries' memberships in IGOs; in addition, more recently formed IGOs are more likely to have purposes that most countries could share.

In order to understand what these changes mean and who or what drives them, we first must describe what the IGO world looked like in 1981 and in 1992 and then assess possible sources of any changes we see. At issue is who determines which institutions will tie governments and their populations together. One source is the IGO population itself. Like biological populations, organizational populations acquire dynamic properties affecting their development; these are related to, but not entirely dependent on, their environments.⁴ Another possible source of change lies within the group of states that funds and officially directs the IGOs. Following the series of descriptions, we turn to what influences countries' membership levels in IGOs and assess the degree to which changes in membership account for the different number and types of IGOs present in 1981 and 1992. The analysis concludes by considering two distinct but related questions about the relation between states and IGOs: we examine how countries affect the IGO population and how the IGO population in turn affects the choices that countries make about institutionalizing cooperation. The web of international organizations maps areas in which governments are committed to take others' interests into account. Changes in the web of IGOs reflect struggles about what sorts of governmental decisions will be limited in this way and which states will be bound to such limitations. We concentrate solely on whether IGOs and state memberships exist or do not exist. In this way the picture we present below is less a survey of public opinion, which asks what people think, than a census, which asks how many people are alive to form opinions in the first place. Like a census, we do not differentiate between the weak and the strong.

Data collection and coding rules

The Union of International Associations (UIA) tracks IGOs annually, relying on a variety of reporting mechanisms to create the most comprehensive and reliable catalog of the world's international organizations. Our data set de-

4. The organizational ecology literature on which we have depended most heavily includes Hannan and Freeman 1989; Pfeffer 1982; and Scott 1992.

TABLE 1. Comparison of the UIA data set with our own (SJK) data set, by alphabetic code

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Missing ^a	Total
<i>1981</i>									
UIA	1	31	50	255	384	278	40	0	1,039
SJK	1	35	51	267	359	227	28	95	1,063
<i>1992</i>									
UIA	1	34	36	215	719	633	52	0	1,690
SJK	1	35	48	245	440	315	4	59	1,147

^aMissing codes are those for which the Union of International Associations (UIA) did not supply a category between A and G.

Source. UIA data are based on UIA 1982; and 1993.

rives from the UIA's *Yearbook of International Organizations*.⁵ Because the presence or absence of an IGO's necessary characteristics is not always clear—for example, the Group of 7 meets regularly to discuss common problems researched by large staffs but does not have a headquarters—and an organization's autonomy is also at times ambiguous, rather than define and hold to an intricate rule of inclusion, the UIA's policy has been to include “many bodies which may be perceived, according to narrower definitions, as not being fully international or as not being of sufficient significance to merit inclusion. Such bodies are nevertheless included, so as to enable users to make their own evaluation in the light of their own criteria.”⁶ Because the UIA has become more inclusive over the past decade, the number of IGOs it lists in its 1992 yearbook deviates noticeably from our more conservative estimate.

Our rules for inclusion are more restrictive than those of the UIA. This usually results in smaller IGO totals, though for two categories our figures exceed those of the UIA. Information about the IGOs listed in the yearbooks was coded into exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories. An IGO was either traditional or an emanation; allocated membership either universally or by geography or function; and saw its purpose either as general or as primarily political/military, economic, or social. As Table 1 shows, the degree to which our data depart from the comprehensive list offered by the UIA increases as the organizations in question become further removed from the states that establish them. Traditional organizations, those established by governments

5. The four data sets that we created for this analysis have been deposited with the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan 48106–1248. They are entitled “International Governmental Organizations 1981: Memberships and Characteristics,” “International Governmental Organizations 1992: Memberships and Characteristics,” “Countries and Territories 1981: IGO Memberships and Characteristics,” and “Countries and Territories 1992: IGO Memberships and Characteristics.”

6. UIA 1993, viii.

through treaties, have UIA alphabetic codes A through D, and G. Type A organizations are federations of international organizations, of which the only IGO is the United Nations (UN). Type B have “widespread, geographically balanced membership and management.”⁷ Examples include the World Health Organization and Interpol. Type C organizations include countries in more than one geographical area but concentrate their membership in one area. Type D organizations are clearly regional IGOs. The UIA lists type G organizations as “internationally oriented national organizations as well as bilateral intergovernmental bodies.”⁸ We include only bilateral IGOs, thus reducing drastically the number of type G IGOs in our data set. The number of IGOs in this set of classifications departs substantially from the first UIA count only in the case of this last set of organizations. The four that we included are bilateral IGOs, such as the Mano River Union.

More ambiguity lies in the case of emanations’ autonomous existence, so it is not surprising that here we have selected a more limited set of IGOs than the UIA offered for inspection. Eligible were those that the UIA categorized as type E or type F. The UIA lists organizations as type E if they can “be considered an ‘emanation’ of a particular organization, place, or person.” Indications of this criterion include having another IGO’s name in its title, having been created by a provision in another IGO’s charter, being a joint- or inter-IGO committee, or being an “international centre or institute.” Type F organizations are those of special form, including foundations, funds, news agencies, laboratories, libraries, banks, and courts.⁹ Our coding rule in all cases was to include an organization only if its members were listed as governments. The effect was to eliminate the many organizations whose members are state banks, public libraries, hospitals, or other nongovernmental entities.

Data on organizational deaths are also derived from the UIA yearbook, which indicates in small type which organizations are defunct or inactive. Because the UIA assigns each organization a unique code number (beginning with the alphabetic code described above, followed by a four-digit identity tag), we were able to follow organizations that changed their names from one year to the next. These codes, rather than English alphabetical listings, were our main form of identification.

Since we used the same coding rules (and coders) to create the 1981 and 1992 data sets, bias appears not in interyear comparisons but in our tendency to understate the number and proportion of emanations relative to traditional IGOs. We have not systematically analyzed the borderline organizations we have excluded, but they most probably are not randomly distributed. Instead they are likely to be associated with one or another parent IGO or regional grouping. For example, European Community organizations are unlikely to

7. The definition is quoted from UIA 1981, title page to section B.

8. The type G definition is quoted from *ibid.*, title page to section G.

9. *Ibid.*, title pages to sections E and F, respectively.

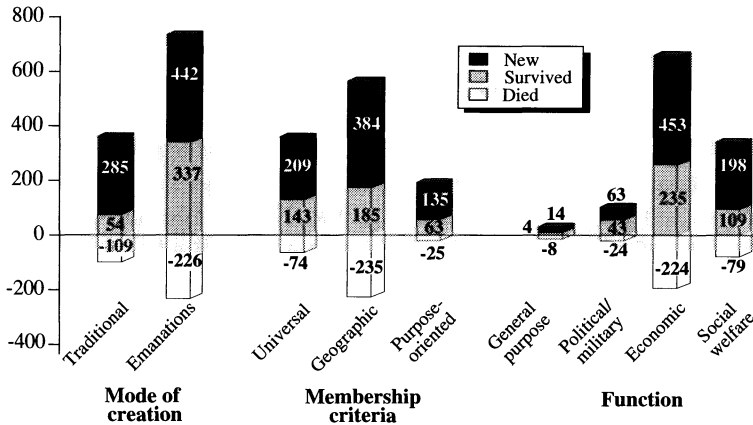


FIGURE 1. *The fate of international governmental organizations by type, 1981–92*

present the UIA with unclear descriptions and so are unlikely to be inaccurately represented in our data set.

Four snapshots of the IGO population

Aggregate change over time within the IGO population, and between states and this population, results from several trends that occur at different rates and sometimes even move in different directions. To understand the dynamics within the population, we must first disentangle the individual trends that produced the aggregate results sketched above. Figure 1 illustrates the fate of IGOs by type from 1981 to 1992. In the figure, the bars above the *x*-axis represent the IGO population in 1992. This includes those IGOs that survived from 1981 and those that were created between 1981 and 1992. The bars below the *x*-axis show those IGOs that ceased activity during the decade. Below, we examine the trends depicted in the figure.

Number and turnover

From the early 1800s until the late 1970s, the number of IGOs increased regularly. For example, from approximately 30 in 1910, the population grew to almost 70 in 1940 and then expanded to the more than 1,000 we saw in 1980. The birthrate peaked in the mid-1970s, remained high until the early 1980s, and has steadily declined since. A declining birthrate itself will not decrease the population but will simply slow its growth; it is in combination with the decade's mortality rate that this slowing birthrate allows overall stability in the size of the IGO population.

Although more IGOs existed in 1992 than in 1981, this stability of the IGO population hides turbulence and fluidity. Of the 1981 population of 1,063 IGOs, only 728 (or 68 percent) survived, while 335 (or 32 percent) died—they either disappeared, were reabsorbed by their parent bodies as committees, or ceased to be active. By 1992, another 391 IGOs had been created (that is, were made autonomous by IGOs or were established by states), bringing the population total back up to 1,147.¹⁰ Given bureaucracies' reputation for permanence, the death rate during this decade is striking. In his study of American federal bureaucracies, Kaufman found that 62 percent of agencies in existence in 1923 were still present in 1973; 38 percent had died.¹¹ Since his study covered half a century, the population of IGOs appears to be more fluid than that of national bureaucracies.

If births and deaths were distributed evenly across population categories, mortality would not affect the balance among types of IGOs. From 1981 to 1992, however, various categories of organizations had different fates. The following sections elaborate the impact of birth- and death rates on the proportions of organizations along three dimensions: mode of creation, membership criteria, and function.

Mode of creation

Most international organizations are no longer created by states. In fact, those that governments establish by treaty have been in the minority since sometime before World War I.¹² Currently, most IGOs are created by other IGOs. The Food and Agriculture Organization, for example, spawned the European Commission on Agriculture as well as about twenty other agencies; the European Commission on Agriculture then created its own spin-off IGOs. In 1992, emanations comprised more than 70 percent of the IGO population; of these, almost 25 percent were third-, fourth-, or fifth-generation IGOs; that is, they were themselves created by emanations or even emanations of emanations. States become members of such organizations by passive assent simply by virtue of their membership in the parent organization.

Traditional organizations are difficult to create but once established, are tenacious; emanations, in contrast, are much easier to create and somewhat easier to kill off. In the 1980s, traditional IGOs died at a lower rate than did emanations (28 versus 34 percent), and traditional IGOs comprised a smaller proportion of newly created organizations than did emanations (14 versus 86 percent). Emanations, at the outset more numerous than traditional organizations (63 versus 37 percent), became an even larger component of the IGO web

10. We have assumed that the 29 IGOs for which no information about creation was available were founded between 1981 and 1992, bringing the number of new IGOs to 420.

11. Kaufman 1976, 34.

12. The UIA did not characterize IGOs as traditional versus emanations before the 1920s. We guess that emanations exceeded traditional IGOs at about the turn of the century.

(70 percent). In statistical terms, these trends are unlikely to be due to chance.¹³ Traditional IGOs had more staying power than did emanations but were relatively rare among the batch of new IGOs. They died at a lower rate than did emanations and were born at about one-fifth the emanation birthrate.¹⁴ Traditional organizations constitute a relatively stable core within the IGO population, while emanations come and go rapidly, comprising a fluid and rapidly enlarging periphery.

The numerical dominance of emanations has consequences for member states. First, since emanations emerge from decisions that IGOs take via their normal decision-making channels rather than through the classic procedures of international treaty making, the most powerful states wield less influence over the evolution of IGOs than they would were all IGOs created by traditional means. Because their assent can be crucial to a treaty's creation, powerful states have greater influence in the treaty-making process than they do within international institutions, where they are subject to procedural rules that can limit their influence. Second, although decisions made within IGOs involve government representatives, they also grant a voice to international administrative staff and nongovernmental organizations, thus giving new and different actors a role. Through a web of emanations a country can represent its interests broadly and become eligible for an array of institutional resources, but individually it has little control over the package of subsidiary agencies to which it belongs and what those agencies do. The United States, for example, argued against the creation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). When that organization was launched anyway, the United States had to decide how best to manage it. Secretariats and representative staffs, often those of the most powerful states, now create new IGOs; home governments then decide whether to refuse membership.

Membership criteria and function

Organizational membership and function are interrelated. All IGOs can be separated into three categories: those whose membership is open to all (i.e., is potentially universal), those that limit membership to countries of a given region (or history), and those that restrict membership to states sharing a narrow purpose. In the universal category are the UN and the agencies that comprise the UN system. The highest-profile regional organizations are the European Union, the Organization of American States, and the Organization of African Unity; the best-known historical associations are those of the Commonwealth and the Francophone countries. Organizations limiting membership to those sharing a purpose include the Organization of Coffee-

13. Comparing the survival rates of 1981 IGOs generates a chi-square of 4.4 ($p = 0.036$); comparing the creation rates by 1992 yields a chi-square of 77.6 ($p = 0.000$).

14. Based on data from UIA 1993, appendix 6, 1668–72.

Exporting Countries and the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. An IGO's membership criteria therefore reflect both what the IGO wants to do and whom it wants to involve or exclude. Functions to which IGOs devote their primary energies fall into four categories: political/military; economic; social welfare and human rights; or general purpose. Some parts of the population are reproducing at high rates while others reproduce at or below replacement levels.

Membership criteria. The distribution of IGOs among the three types of memberships shifted during the 1980s. In 1981, almost 60 percent of IGOs limited membership according to geography, while slightly more than 20 percent were open to all and 15 percent limited membership by purpose. While geographically defined IGOs still comprised the largest category in 1992, constituting 51 percent of the total, both universal and purpose-based IGOs had grown at their expense. Universal organizations accounted for 32 percent of the total and organizations defined by purpose, 18 percent. (Although traditional organizations survived at a higher rate than did emanations, their distribution among these membership categories is similar to that of emanations.) This shift in the balance among membership types is a consequence of two mutually reinforcing trends: survival and birthrate.

During the 1980s, 84 percent of organizations that restricted their membership by purpose survived as did 74 percent of universal organizations, but only 62 percent of IGOs restricting membership by geography survived. New organizations continued to favor geography, but they did so at a lower rate than in the past. Of the 391 new organizations, less than half were geographically defined, while 37 percent were universal and 16 percent were defined by purpose.¹⁵

This produced an IGO population more evenly distributed across membership categories. Geography has weakened as a basis for institutional collaboration, while shared purpose (whether of inherently limited appeal or not) has strengthened. A common goal has apparently become a stronger force for institutional collaboration than a common border.

Function. In contrast, the distribution according to mandated function barely changed during the decade. In 1981, 64 percent of IGOs were dedicated to economic tasks, with 26 percent engaged in social welfare activities and only 8 percent committed to political and military functions; general-purpose organizations made up 2 percent of the total. Organizations in all categories died at about the same rate, one-third. New organizations also grew at about the same rate across the four categories. The result is a slight change in the distribution by 1992: 61 percent of IGOs were economic, 28 percent social, 10

15. Comparing the survival rates of 1981 IGOs generates a chi-square of 34.4 ($p = 0.000$), while comparing rates of creation by membership generates a chi-square of 7.5 ($p = 0.023$).

percent political, and 2 percent general purpose. The change is without significance statistically, although the lack of decrease in political and military institutions runs counter to post-cold war expectations.

Bloc politics and IGO families

While quite a few IGOs are loners, having no constitutional or historical ties to any other organization, most belong to one of several prominent organizational families. The UN family includes its major organs, its specialized agencies, and their emanations, all with historical and legal ties to the UN; the Atlantic alliance includes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; the regional families include all those IGOs that set membership criteria within continental limits. The African family, for example, includes the Organization for African Unity and its subsidiaries as well as the Economic Community for West African States, and so on. Fourteen major families encompassed 86 percent of IGOs in 1981 and 82 percent in 1992.

Table 2 lists the major IGO families in 1981 and 1992 and traces each family's birth-, death, and survival rates between these two points in time. The classifications are strictly for IGOs, not for states. For example, "Arab" includes the League of Arab States and Islamic cultural organizations as well as regional Middle East IGOs; any given Arab country might belong to none or all of these institutions. In other words, the membership of individual states cannot be deduced from these family patterns.

Table 2 reveals a few important patterns. The two IGO families with notably higher survival rates than others, the Commonwealth and the American IGOs, are those organized around a single powerful state. Both discarded few of their components and replaced them with at least as many. Because these families grew very little, they comprised a slightly smaller proportion of the total IGO population at the end of the decade under study, but they demonstrated an organizational conservatism and tenacity unmatched by other sets of IGOs.

Combining a tenacity close to this with a more energetic approach to organizational change is the UN family. This family's powerful and dramatic increase is another striking change among IGO families during the 1980s. Although it discarded or demoted a quarter of its affiliates in the decade after 1981, it added more than twice this many. As a result, the UN family was one hundred members—one-third—larger by 1991. This increase also boosted the degree to which the UN dominated the IGO population as a whole. Its share of all international governmental organizations climbed from 27 to 35 percent in these eleven years.

Organizations without any family identification comprise not only the next-largest share of the IGO population but also the only other segment to increase. Loner organizations often dedicate themselves to accomplishing narrow tasks. For example, the International Tin Council, established in 1956,

TABLE 2. *Fate of IGOs by family, 1981 to 1992*^a

<i>Family</i>	<i>1981</i>	<i>Died</i> <i>(percentage of 1981 total)</i>	<i>Survived</i>	<i>New</i> <i>(percentage of 1992 total)</i>	<i>1992</i>
Atlantic alliance	26	7 (26.9)	19	5 (20.8)	24
Benelux	4	1 (25.0)	3	0 (0.0)	3
Council of Europe	18	7 (38.9)	11	5 (31.3)	16
European Union	41	10 (24.4)	31	11 (26.2)	42
Nordic Council	63	24 (38.1)	39	13 (25.0)	52
Eastern bloc	56	48 (85.7)	8	1 (11.1)	9
American regional	119	25 (21.0)	94	32 (25.4)	126
Commonweath	30	6 (20.0)	24	6 (20.0)	30
African regional	109	32 (29.4)	77	16 (17.2)	93
Arab regional ^b	87	44 (50.6)	43	34 (44.2)	77
Asian regional	46	19 (41.3)	27	18 (40.0)	45
Nonaligned	6	2 (33.3)	4	3 (42.8)	7
United Nations	282	73 (25.9)	209	173 (45.3)	382
Bretton Woods	15	3 (20.0)	12	3 (20.0)	15
Independent	147	31 (21.1)	116	88 (43.1)	204
Missing data	14	4	10	12	22
Total	1,063	336 (31.6)	727	420 (35.6)	1,147

^aThe death rate from 1981 to 1992 (comparing columns 2 and 3) generates a chi-square of 116.3 ($p = 0.0$); the creation rate to 1992 (comparing columns 3 and 4) generates a chi-square of 56.93 ($p < .001$).

^bThese figures include Islamic cultural and political organizations.

represents government interests in the tin market. Such unaffiliated IGOs numbered 57 more in 1992 than they did in 1981; like the UN, this is a full third larger than earlier, an increase that brings it from 14 to 18 percent of the population. By 1992, the UN and the unaffiliated organizations together accounted for over half of all IGOs.

A final major development among IGO families during this decade is the decreasing number as well as proportion of organizations dedicated to regional integration. Whether this is due to increasing efficiency resulting in consolidation or to apathy and abandonment, the numbers have decreased across the board.

As a set, the Western IGO families have consolidated. By 1992, the total number of organizations linked with the Atlantic alliance, the European Union, and the Council of Europe had contracted less than 4 percent. The organizations that each family shed were replaced with others. In contrast, the Nordic Council family declined by 17 percent prior to the Nordic states' votes on membership in the European Union.

Organizations devoted to sparking and maintaining regional cooperation among developing countries have not fared as well over the past decade. Deep differences in capacity among the regional groupings explain their different fates. The decline in the Asian family of IGOs was almost imperceptible; Asian organizations are more like European IGOs than like those of the developing world. Asian IGOs help to integrate a region with the two largest and most steadily growing developing countries, China and India. The region also contains Indonesia, Pakistan, and the "Four Tigers," as well as Japan. Each of these countries has combined a regional trading strategy with integration into the global system.

By contrast, Africa is home to the poorest and politically least stable countries. From 1980 to 1992, 20 of the 29 African countries for which the World Bank had economic data had negative per capita gross national product (GNP) growth rates, and an additional three were at zero.¹⁶ The African IGO family, at one time the most extensive and ambitious, shed 32 and added only 16 organizations, reducing its total by 15 percent, from 109 to 93.

Political rather than economic problems plague the Arab countries. Many are struggling against severe political and religious challenges that have polarized society. This family of organizations is in turmoil, having lost over half its members in this decade. By 1992 it gained back 34 additional organizations, for a net decrease of 10 percent. Unlike other IGO families, the losses as well as increases were high. Taken together, southern regional IGO families fell from 23 to 19 percent of all IGOs, with the entire drop coming from the African and Arab organizational families.

Most dramatically, the Eastern bloc dis-organized with no intention of resuscitating itself. Over the last two or three years of the decade under study, five out of every six Eastern bloc IGOs had vanished. Alone, this family had constituted 5 percent of all IGOs; by 1992 the remnants accounted for under 1 percent.

The ensemble of changes in the IGO population: summary

The typical international governmental organization in 1992 was, like its predecessor in 1981, either an emanation or geographically based or economic

16. World Bank 1994, 162–63.

in function—or all three. Yet only emanations grew proportionately, while geographical and economic organizations shrank as a percentage of IGOs, due to the collapse of the Eastern bloc and to economic and political disorganization in much of the developing world.

Five snapshots of countries' memberships in IGOs

During the 1980s, not only did the IGO population change but also countries altered their involvements with international organizations. This change is both conceptually and practically distinct from that within the IGO population. Countries can join or leave IGOs without causing organizations' demise or changing the IGO population in any way. Some countries joined many more organizations, while others not only refrained from accepting membership in new IGOs but also disengaged themselves from many of those to which they had belonged.

While dramatic divorces from an international organization, such as the departures of the United Kingdom, the United States, and Singapore from the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization or New Zealand's termination of its connection to the ANZUS alliance, remain rare, countries often alter their connections to IGOs. Countries acquire, and can slough, memberships actively; they can also increase or decrease IGO memberships passively by remaining in an organization that creates its own IGOs or by allowing organizations to which they belong to cease functioning altogether.

Number and turnover

Statistics on membership present a paradox. The number of traditional organizations declined and emanations grew, but, on average, memberships in traditional organizations actually rose, from 33.4 per country in 1981 to 44.2 in 1992. This is true even while overall memberships declined by 12 percent, from 199.5 to 187.9 per country. Fewer traditional organizations each had more members, and more emanations each had fewer members.

Memberships in IGOs changed during this decade for various categories of states, defined by simple economic and political characteristics.¹⁷ Literacy, too, should be related to a country's propensity to join IGOs. Literacy rates directly measure the proportion of the population that has reached a threshold level allowing it knowledge of state policy and thus potential access to the political system. According to some variants of functionalist theory, an activist population helps to drive governments toward membership in IGOs. Literacy can, moreover, be a proxy for educational socialization and hence for the distribu-

17. Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers 1986.

tion of values within a country. We examine literacy first and then assess the influence of economic and political characteristics.

Literacy

We can examine the relation between literacy and the level of (and change in) IGO memberships by dividing established states into three categories, defined modally with respect to their levels of adult literacy: high (approximately the top 20 percent of states), low (approximately the bottom 20 percent of states), and medium (the 60 percent of states in the middle).¹⁸ The top 26 states clustered above the 99 percent level for adult literacy, while the lowest 34 states had literacy levels ranging from 18 to 49 percent. The majority of states, the 102 countries that make up the intermediate category, had literacy levels of 50 to 98 percent. In 1992, the average state's literacy level was 71.5 percent.

Literacy affects IGO memberships only at the highest level. States with the most literate populations held memberships in 254.3 IGOs; states with moderate levels, 200.1 IGOs; and states with the lowest levels, 201.0 IGOs. More impressively, between 1981 and 1992 the average IGO memberships of states in the highest category increased by 18.6, while those of states in the medium and lowest categories decreased by 3.3 and 5.7, respectively.

Aggregate and per capita income

Countries were grouped into income categories by both their aggregate and their per capita gross domestic product (GDP). With respect to each dimension, we again divided states into three categories: high and low, defined as the upper and lower 20 percent, respectively; and medium, defined as the middle 60 percent. Table 3 shows the average number of IGO memberships for states in our six categories. Column (1) shows states classified by their 1981 ranking. Columns (2) through (4) show states classified by their 1992 rankings. As can be seen from columns (1) and (4), in both years states in the higher-income categories had more IGO memberships than those in the lower categories, and they increased their average number of memberships. States in the lower categories had fewer memberships in both years, and these states decreased their average number of memberships during the decade. Column (2), which lists the average number of IGO memberships in 1992 and in 1981 held by the same states, demonstrates that these changes are not artifacts of states moving among the three categories or of the merger and birth of states. Column (3)

18. When the number of countries in the top 20 and bottom 20 percent do not match, this is because a large number of states clump at an identical level. For example, if ten countries were at 99 percent literacy and thirty countries were at 98 percent literacy, a line separating 98 percent countries into different categories would be pointless. The line has therefore been set as close to the 20 percent figure as possible without arbitrarily dividing states. This is true for income and freedom levels as well as for literacy.

TABLE 3. Mean level of intergovernmental organization (IGO) membership by income category in 1981 and 1992

	(1) 1981 mean of all states (N)	(2) 1992 mean of established states ^a (N)	(3) 1992 mean of new states (N)	(4) 1992 mean of all states (N)
<i>Aggregate GDP</i>				
High	251.5 (26) ^b	1992: 283.8 1981: 251.6 (24)	204.0 (1)	280.6 (25)
Medium	220.0 (106)	1992: 207.2 1981: 214.5 (119)	76.8 (12)	195.3 (131)
Low	158.9 (26)	1992: 114.1 1981: 110.1 (16)	85.7 (3)	109.6 (19)
<i>GDP per capita</i>				
High	259.3 (24)	1992: 291.9 1981: 270.3 (23)	—	291.9 (23)
Medium	210.8 (111)	1992: 198.5 1981: 200.0 (110)	86.4 (16)	184.0 (124)
Low	190.4 (23)	1992: 189.5 1981: 203.6 (27)	—	189.5 (27)

^a1981 membership information provides a way to determine how much of the difference between the 1981 and 1992 figures is due to the population change in each category as states' income changed and how much to individual states adding or dropping their IGO memberships. The 1981 figure is for the states that were in a given category in 1992.

Sources. Gross domestic product (GDP) categories are based on absolute figures in *World Almanac and Book of Facts* for 1982 and 1993 (New York: Ballantine, 1981 and 1992, respectively). We defined high and low modally, as the endmost (approximately) 20 percent, and medium as the middle 60 percent.

lists the average number of IGO memberships in 1992 of states created between 1981 and 1992.

Between 1981 and 1992, states with the largest aggregate GDP and the highest per capita GDP became more enmeshed in the IGO network, while those with a smaller aggregate GDP and lower per capita GDP drifted toward the network's periphery. Although countries in the different income categories behaved differently with respect to their total IGO memberships, they were fairly similar in their relationships to traditional IGOs, with states in each category increasing their average memberships in them. The numbers reported in Table 3 include this increase, so the decreases are entirely within the population of emanations. The pattern of change by per capita income category is, however, the same for traditional and emanating IGOs.

TABLE 4. Mean level of state memberships in intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) by level of political and civil freedom in 1981 and 1992^a

	(1) 1981 mean of all states (N)	(2) 1992 mean of established states ^b (N)	(3) 1992 mean of new states (N)	(4) 1992 mean of all states (N)
<i>Level of openness</i>				
Free	220.8 (54)	1992: 228.7 1981: 220.6 (66)	99.3 (8)	214.7 (74)
Partly	205.0 (47)	1992: 202.1 1981: 202.2 (59)	46.3 (13)	174.0 (72)
Unfree	199.9 (60)	1992: 188.7 1981: 193.2 (33)	41.2 (5)	169.3 (38)
<i>Change in openness</i>				
Improve	—	1992: 187.9 1981: 199.2 (44)	47.2 (15)	152.2 (59)
No change	—	1992: 221.1 1981: 216.4 (99)	51.9 (7)	210.0 (106)
Worsen	—	1992: 214.6 1981: 206.4 (44)	160.0 (1)	211.0 (15)

^aNumbers of old and new states do not add across categories because some states unified and others switched categories. When the numbers add to less than the number of sovereign countries (172 in 1981 and 186 in 1992), this is due to missing data.

^b1981 membership information provides a way to determine how much of the difference between 1981 and 1992 is due to a shift in the population of states in each category as states' freedom categories changed, and how much to individual states adding or dropping their IGO memberships. The 1981 figure is for the states that were in a given category in 1992.

Sources. The classification of degrees of freedom and descriptions of each state's level of openness are from Freedom House's annual survey, *Freedom at Issue* (January/February) 1982 and 1993.

Democracy and democratization

Freedom House describes itself as "a nonpartisan national organization devoted to the strengthening of free societies."¹⁹ It classifies states as "free," "partly free," and "unfree," providing a convenient mechanism for examining the relationship between political openness and IGO memberships. Columns (1) and (4) in Table 4 show average number of IGO memberships for states in each category in 1981 and 1992. Column (2) shows the 1981 average for states that were still in existence in 1992, and column (3), the average for new states.

19. Freedom House, New York, N.Y.

In both years free states belonged on average to more IGOs than those that were partly free or unfree. Controlling for the dampening effect that new states have on the average, free and partly free states belonged to more IGOs and unfree states to fewer than they had a decade earlier. By 1992, unfree states held significantly fewer IGO memberships than those in the other two categories. Since some states switched categories, these data do not allow us to draw conclusions about any single state's memberships.

The distribution across categories for traditional IGOs is consistent with what we see for all IGOs, though the differences among free, partly free, and unfree states' memberships in traditional organizations are more pronounced. Not shown in the table is free countries' extraordinary propensity to join traditional IGOs. The new, free countries joined traditional IGOs at three times the rate of other countries, although older countries' memberships in all IGOs was higher by an order of two. The difference indicates the buffer effect that emanations have on all states' memberships.

Given that free countries have higher IGO membership levels, one might expect democratizing countries to increase their IGO memberships. The table divides states into three categories: those that became more democratic, such as Brazil and Czechoslovakia; those that remained what they were, whether democratic or not, such as France and Cambodia; and those that became less democratic, such as Colombia and India. (The set of countries considered here excludes those that became independent during the 1980s and hence have no clear starting point.) Democratizing entails moving to a higher Freedom House category and therefore captures only major changes. In 1981, those that were to become clearly more democratic belonged to an average of 199.2 IGOs; this declined to 187.9 by 1992. Those whose status did not change belonged to 216.4 IGOs in 1981 and 221.1 in 1992. Countries that worsened throughout this decade started with an average of 206.4 memberships but by 1992 belonged on average to 214.6. Democratization decreased membership by 11.2 percent; states whose status did not change increased their memberships by 3.4 percent. Those whose status worsened increased memberships by 8.3 percent. This pattern holds whether considering traditional IGOs or emanations. The lower portion of Table 4 outlines the relation between democratization and change in IGO memberships.

Contrary to liberal expectations, democratizing countries reduced their memberships—but contrary to the assumptions underlying the liberal view, many of the IGOs to which these countries had been committed were elite alliances rather than institutions tying together populations. Of the 44 states that became more democratic, 16 were involved in one way or another in the former Eastern bloc. For the rest, democratization in the short run indicated fundamental instability. During the transition when countries must concentrate on their internal problems, IGOs may not be of central concern. Among the more established countries that moved toward democracy, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, and

TABLE 5. *Polarization of memberships in intergovernmental organizations, 1981 to 1982*

<i>Enthusiasts</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Dropouts</i>	<i>Change</i>
St. Kitts and Nevis (1983)	+135	Cambodia	-76
Spain	+104	Albania	-74
France	+80	Mongolia	-70
Egypt	+68	Laos	-63
South Korea	+66	Romania	-59
Lithuania (1990)	+61	Afghanistan	-48
China	+53	Singapore	-43
Japan	+51	Vietnam	-33
Switzerland	+51	South Africa	-30
Portugal	+46	Myanmar	-30

Uruguay, an increase in IGO memberships accompanied the transition. Russia and several of the former Soviet republics also moved quickly to join IGOs. Worsening states, which should have experienced instability similar to that of the democratizing countries, also joined IGOs.

Because we have not made judgments about which IGOs serve the populations' goals and which have only elite support, we are unable to do more than speculate about reasons for this increasing membership. Apparently, nondemocratic countries that join IGOs do so when IGO goals coincide with those of the regime; when they no longer do, the government sheds its membership by withdrawing or, more likely, by refusing money and personnel. Democratization has meant the ability to shed memberships in bloc alliances, to distance one's country from those IGOs that had upheld an unpopular order. Some states may have deferred the decision to join alternative organizations, thus explaining lost memberships.

Pariahs and the powerful

To this point we have considered countries as if the number of IGOs to which they belonged were susceptible only to their capacities and wills. In fact, countries are pressured into and out of joining international organizations by allies and enemies. Tables 5 and 6 illustrate this most clearly. Table 5 lists the most and least involved countries by the extent of change in their IGO memberships; Table 6 lists countries by the number of IGOs to which each belongs.

The ten countries that dropped out of the most IGOs isolated themselves or were isolated by others. Among these ten are countries that are or were engaged in frighteningly successful or harshly unsuccessful attempts to impose an ideologically or racially pure social order on a predominantly rural agricultural population. The end of the cold war created pariahs of the

TABLE 6. *Gap between intergovernmental organization (IGO) membership among countries in 1992^a*

<i>Most integrated</i>	<i>No. of IGO memberships</i>	<i>Least integrated</i>	<i>No. of IGO memberships</i>
France	441	Taiwan	14
United Kingdom	396	Liechtenstein	81
Germany	392	North Korea	100
Netherlands	375	Maldives	125
Denmark	373	Mozambique	146
Italy	371	Angola	147
Spain	360	Nepal	147
Belgium	351	Swaziland	156
Sweden	344	Israel	159
Norway	340	Rwanda	166

^aNone of the countries is either very tiny or very new.

communist states that did not follow the others in reform. Indigenous communist ruling parties such as the Khmer Rouge steadily disengaged from the IGO web throughout the 1980s, as they sought to distance themselves both from the West and from the reformers of the old Eastern bloc. Some countries sustained by the East–West rivalry have in addition been thrown into domestic turmoil and find themselves unable to maintain connections to IGOs.

Some of the countries that withdrew from international organizations chose to do so, while others were pushed to withdraw. If not so consumed by war or famine that they were incapable of formulating any policy toward IGOs, they were excluded from the system—boycotted unilaterally or sanctioned through the UN. Their reduced memberships signal both their failure to support IGOs and IGOs' failure to work for them. In early 1994, Freedom House noted “a new polarization” between the free regimes and those repressive regimes that withdrew from international networks prior to 1992.²⁰

States that increased their memberships during the 1980s were typically either the most powerful or those pointedly seeking inclusion in international society.²¹ These memberships were votes in favor of the IGOs and what they represent. The gaps are somewhat wider for traditional memberships (not indicated in Table 5) than for emanations, so we can hypothesize both that the better off a country is, the more likely it is to acquiesce in organizational extensions and the more likely it is to take action to tie its fate, in some institutional area, to that of others.

The second part of Table 5 presents a familiar pattern. Those states that have the densest connections with IGOs are all in Western Europe, where the

20. Karatnycky 1994.

21. This obviously excludes the newly independent, which, since they had no memberships before, automatically increased their participation at a high rate.

Westphalian system began. They are all prosperous and democratic. None has a population of more than one hundred million. Least involved in the IGO web are states that have for one reason or another suffered the opprobrium of the international community (Israel, North Korea, Taiwan); five African states that are newer and economically and politically troubled (Angola, the Maldives, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Swaziland); an isolated Asian state (Nepal); and a European principality (Liechtenstein). Were this polarization to continue for another decade, IGOs would institutionalize differences among states' capacities to sustain life as well as to defend or even to articulate particular visions of political, economic, and social order.

The ensemble of changes in memberships: summary

These data on literacy, on aggregate and per capita income, and on freedom together suggest a developing polarization between the industrial democracies and the worst-off countries. By 1992, the Western democratic and relatively rich countries with highly literate populations had increased their involvement with a variety of IGOs, while poor and unfree countries, whose populations were barely literate, and some of which were immersed in chronic civil wars, dropped out of the IGO network. During the 1980s, while the IGO population shifted toward emanations and away from geographical organizations, differences among states' connections with these institutions widened.

Balancing the factors that explain IGO membership

Three types of influences largely determine the number of IGOs to which a country belongs. The first set of factors, already discussed, includes characteristics commonly thought to be sources of state power and affluence, such as a skilled and literate population, broad economic capacity, and political openness. It also includes the number of years a state has been independent, which ought to predict its membership level, since the newer a state, the less opportunity it has had to join IGOs. However, these measures are related and might be capturing indirectly the same phenomena. To estimate their relative contributions, we have used multiple regression analysis. (We have not reported results for any variable with missing data.) Two other main influences, government type and region, have deeper historical roots and help to capture the profound influence of cultural and historical context on a government's decisions.²²

Table 7 reports the ordinary least squares regression results. The first column's results describe the relative importance of aggregate and per capita GDP; level and change in freedom; literacy; and years since independence in

22. March and Olsen 1989.

TABLE 7. *Factors explaining states' memberships in international governmental organizations, 1992: results of ordinary least squares regression analysis^a*

	Equation (1)	Equation (2)	Equation (3)	Equation (4)
Constant	252.8** (23.7)	-345.4** (109.7)	15.8 (61.4)	-579.0** (117.8)
1992 GDP ^b	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
1992 GDP per capita ^c	0.004** (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.003 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
1992 level of freedom ^d	17.9** (7.9)	11.3 (8.6)	19.6* (7.9)	11.7 (8.6)
Change in freedom 1981-92 ^e	-29.5** (9.0)	-19.7* (8.8)	-35.5** (8.6)*	-27.2** (9.3)
Years since independence ^f	0.35** (0.06)	0.25** (0.05)	0.31** (0.06)	0.20** (0.05)
1992 literacy ^g	-91.3* (23.5)	-34.1 (24.2)	-78.8* (29.2)	-41.0 (28.3)
<i>Government type, 1981</i>				
Newly chaotic countries (<i>n</i> = 14)	—	Base = 0 ^h	—	Base = 0
Communist (<i>n</i> = 17)	—	76.9** (21.0)	—	86.5** (20.1)
Dictatorship (<i>n</i> = 59)	—	105.4** (19.8)	—	106.6* (19.3)
Unstable democracy (<i>n</i> = 16)	—	95.8** (22.2)	—	98.4 (22.0)
One-party democracy (<i>n</i> = 29)	—	77.0** (19.5)	—	91.5** (19.8)
Multiparty democracy (<i>n</i> = 34)	—	115.6* (21.7)	—	119.8** (21.3)
<i>Region</i>				
Africa (<i>n</i> = 45)	—	—	47.9** (15.7)	36.7* (14.8)
Americas (<i>n</i> = 33)	—	—	54.1* (14.9)	47.0* (14.1)
Asia (<i>n</i> = 37)	—	—	Base = 0	Base = 0
Europe (<i>n</i> = 35)	—	—	47.5** (17.3)	64.5** (16.6)
Middle East (<i>n</i> = 19)	—	—	53.8** (17.9)	40.5* (17.2)
<i>N</i>	169	169	169	169
<i>R</i> ²	0.42	0.53	0.44	0.58

**p* < 0.05.

***p* < 0.01.

^aStandard errors are reported in parentheses below each coefficient.

^bIn millions of U.S. dollars.

^cIn U.S. dollars.

^dOrdinal 1, 2, 3.

^eOrdinal 1(-), 2(0), 3(+).

^fIn years.

^gIn percentages.

^hFor an explanation of bases, see the text.

predicting the number of IGOs to which countries belong. Per capita GDP, level of freedom, change in freedom, and the number of years a country has been independent emerge as strong predictors, while literacy also has a significant effect. The measure of overall power, GDP, drops away as an independent predictor; other measures cancel out what it contributed. Together, these variables account for more than two-fifths of the variance among countries' IGO membership levels.

Both literacy and democratization matter in predicting states' membership levels, but in a way opposite what one would expect. States whose populations are uneducated, and those moving away from democracy, belong to more IGOs on average than do their literate and democratizing peers. As noted earlier, since democratization indicates a change in the holders of power, it signals a move from one foreign policy agenda to another. Memberships could go down as the new power holders detach themselves from their predecessors' institutional ties. We can speculate that literacy measures popular access to information and to political institutions; like democratization, increasing literacy follows broad social reforms that are tied to regime change and can signal a shift from one set of social goals to another. Dictatorships depend on thwarting participation; when they begin to fail, the ties they forged to other countries and to IGOs also falter.

Basic measures of power and of political and civil rights capture important influences on countries' propensities to belong to IGOs. Institutional and historical characteristics constitute additional influences. We divided countries into six groups according to their government structures: communist one-party states; noncommunist dictatorships, which include military and other undemocratic rule; unstable democracies, which include countries that tilt regularly between elections and coups; one-party democracies, which comprise open electoral democracies in which the same party is victorious at least 90 percent of the time; two- or multiparty democracies, in which party control regularly changes; and the newly chaotic countries—those emerging from subjugation to independence, though of what sort is not yet clear.

Government structure's importance to IGO memberships lies mainly in three areas. First, domestic institutions reflect the direction of social influence: from the bottom up in democracies and from the top down in dictatorships, with variants in between. In this way, a government structure can amplify or mute a population's, or a regime's, attitude toward IGOs. Second, some institutional types are more stable than others. Communist countries are more stable than their former relations, the newly chaotic countries; this is also true of dictatorships when compared with unstable democracies, and of one-party when compared with multiparty democracies. Since predictability is thought to be both a prerequisite for IGO membership and a consequence of it, the more stable countries should belong to more IGOs than their peers. Third, government structure reflects both ideology and the degree to which a particular sort of ideology pervades a country's politics. Since many of the

post-World War II institutions were associated with the West, those countries opposed to the Western system and whose government institutions reflect this ought to belong to fewer IGOs than do the other countries. Column (2) in Table 6 lists the results of a statistical analysis in which government structure is added to the power variables.

Government structure significantly affects the likelihood that countries belong to many IGOs, even when the other economic and political indicators are taken into account. Because they had the lowest IGO membership level, the newly chaotic countries were set equal to zero as a way to provide a base from which to gauge other groups' membership levels. Relative to these countries, communist countries and one-party democracies belonged to an additional 76.9 and 77.0 IGOs, respectively, and unstable democracies to an additional 95.8. Dictatorships had 105.4 and multiparty democracies 115.6 more memberships.

In the case of all six categories of countries, these figures represent additional memberships, everything else being equal. That is, if two countries had been independent the same number of years and had identical GDPs, per capita GDPs, literacy levels, and the like, the fact that one was a two-party democracy and the other was a dictatorship would by itself explain a membership gap of 10.2 IGOs. Adding information about government type changes the relative weight of the other variables, indicating that government type is independent of per capita GDP, years since independence, and even democratization but that it is tied to level of freedom and literacy. Adding information about government type increases the predictive power of the regression equation, bringing the explained variance to more than half.

How much weight ought to be given to government type cannot be known reliably until a potentially confounding factor is separated. For historical reasons, government types vary across regions. Geography presents countries with a *fait accompli*, determining their neighbors and their resources. Government type can vary over the long run. The spread of commerce and development—as well as capitalism, imperial conquest, and invasion—mean that geography can serve as a proxy for government institutions, for culture, and for economic base as well as provide information about cultural and geographical distance from other countries. If where a country is determines what it is, location would subsume in importance those characteristics that a country could control, such as economic performance or electoral patterns. Since most IGOs are regional, location also can indicate how often a country will be invited to join IGOs. For these reasons, geography ought to be substituted for, and then added to, the variables describing government type.

When the five main geographical regions are substituted for the six government types, the explanatory power of the regression equation falls almost to the same level as that of the original equation but does so by replacing the initially significant aggregate variables rather than by failing to capture anything. For historical reasons, government type, GDP, and social affluence

vary across regions. Column (3) in Table 6 indicates the results of this statistical analysis. Asia, which contains the countries with the lowest average number of IGO memberships, is set as base. Just as government type eliminated level of freedom as a significant factor, geographical region eliminates per capita GDP as a significant factor. Where a country is located predicts the degree to which it has institutionalized its connections to others, even when all other characteristics are held constant.

To understand the factors that contribute to a country's propensity to join IGOs, all of these variables have been analyzed simultaneously. Column (4) of Table 6 lists the results of doing this. Most important, the table demonstrates that when both government type and region are added to the basic equation in column (1), they increase the equation's explanatory power 16 percent. Aggregate GDP becomes a significant factor, while per capita GDP, level of freedom, and literacy drop out. This suggests that our earlier speculations are true: namely, states with a vast amount of power, made possible by minimal popular participation, join IGOs at a high rate. Government type captures level of freedom, while region eliminates the effects of per capita GDP. Almost three-fifths of the variation among countries' membership levels in IGOs can be explained the following way: a country's base membership level depends on its location and government type. An Asian one-party democracy, for example, would hold 77 memberships, while a multiparty European democracy would hold 163. Once these are taken into account, aggregate GDP, age, and instability due to democratization provide important information about whether such a base should be raised or lowered.

This approach to predicting the number of IGOs to which a country belongs asks the question, What is the consequence of being (for example) African, or being communist, for IGO membership? A separate sort of question is, For African (or communist) countries, what sort of factors influence membership levels? The first question deals with the importance of region, the second with influences within a particular region. To answer the second question, it is appropriate to perform regressions using each subset of countries separately. By examining the motives that affect the propensity of states with particular government types or in particular regions alone to join IGOs, one can sort the factors affecting different types of countries. Below we discuss the results of regressions, each of which takes as its population countries of the same government type or the same region. Because the numbers in some of the categories are small, these results should be taken as suggestive.

The IGO memberships of the 17 countries that remained communist and of the 14 newly chaotic countries are not systematically related to any of the above variables. For the other four categories, different factors account for each group's IGO memberships. For the 59 dictatorships, the only factor to be significant is aggregate GDP; i.e., the larger a dictatorship's GDP, the more IGO memberships it will hold. Age is a significant factor for the countries in the other three categories. Democratization is significant for the 16 unstable

democracies—countries moving toward democracy drop out of IGOs—and both age and literacy matter for the 29 one-party democracies.

The effects of region parallel government type. None of the factors in the basic regression equation helps to explain the 19 Middle Eastern states' memberships. Age makes a significant difference for the 37 Asian and 33 American states. African states in transition to democracy disengage from IGOs. This is true as well in Europe, where aggregate GDP and level of freedom are also significant. The greater a European state's GDP and the more democratic it is, the higher will be its level of IGO memberships.

If countries were similarly motivated, all would respond to a declining economy or an upsurge in political participation or the benefits of geographical contiguity in the same way. Instead, different constellations of forces motivate different groups of states. It is not only that the rich behave differently from the poor or that the powerful behave differently from the powerless but that the dominant, stable states have a set of motivations wholly different from those of the weak and unstable. Groups of states seem to be operating in different worlds and according to different logics.

Explanations and implications

Although no theory at hand is sufficient to explain the changes that we see, two theoretical perspectives illuminate parts of the puzzle. From them we can begin to piece together an understanding of what propels change in the IGO web. Functionalism, like international relations theory generally, views states as units of analysis. Because functionalism offers an explanation of what motivates states to join and maintain international organizations, we can apply it to changes in states' connections to IGOs. Government type, income level, and ideology, all are embedded in the functionalist explanation of why states pursue interdependence. Functionalism helps to illuminate why some countries have thrown themselves into the IGO web while others have been extricating themselves from it. After reviewing functionalism's contributions, we examine another perspective, organizational ecology, that addresses change within an organizational population.

Functionalism

Functionalist theory treats two important aspects of the relationship between states and IGOs, one of which directly relates to the question of membership. Classical functionalists argue that governments join international organizations as a way to provide their constituencies with the goods they demand but that the government on its own cannot provide. (Because neofunctionalism addresses how IGOs grow stronger, it does not apply to the question of increases and decreases in states' memberships.) David Mitrany

contends that advances in communications and transportation technologies lead to two developments that, when combined, pressure governments to cooperate with each other.²³ As technology develops, goods can be produced most efficiently by relying on specialization and trade and by taking advantage of economies of scale. National borders become too small for the optimal organization of production, and this stalls growth. At the same time, technology fosters links among greater numbers of people. People have access to each other and to markets; they also have access to their governments. The result is more people pressuring the government to raise living standards, which can come about only through transnationalizing production and markets. In order to stay in power, a government must help industries to transcend national barriers. This requires cooperating with other governments. By helping them to accomplish this, IGOs serve as lifeboats for national political elites.

To a classical functionalist, pressure to perform economically propels governments into IGOs. A functionalist would, therefore, expect countries whose populations already have reached a high standard of living to belong to more organizations than those whose populations have not begun to reap the benefits of the home market. Per capita income and literacy levels would predict IGO membership, with some threshold figure below which a country would belong to very few. Government type would also predict IGO membership, as some institutional forms are designed to amplify popular desires and others to mute them. Electoral democracies should belong to the most IGOs, military dictatorships to the least.

Because economic desires motivate countries, IGOs should devote themselves to economic tasks. States should organize around standardization, trade rules, infrastructure creation, and perhaps research and development. The more technical or economic the task, the more likely that states would institutionalize cooperation on it. Once a task has been synchronized effectively, an organization could be abandoned. The IGO population would consolidate as it moved on to harder tasks. Organizational death would be a sign of success, just as organizational creation was a sign of intent.

Many of the patterns we saw can be explained by reference to such processes. Clearly, the wealthiest states belong to more organizations than do the poorer, the democracies to more than the dictatorships, and those moving from democracy or keeping still to more than those moving toward it. Many of the snapshots of memberships displayed earlier would not surprise a functionalist. Nor would many of the changes; for example, the richest countries did increase their IGO memberships while others saw their memberships drop. A functionalist would also argue that we should not be surprised that the end of the cold war resulted in the former Eastern bloc countries clamoring for membership, since they were well-off, with high literacy rates and access to communications

23. Mitrany 1966.

technology. This would signal the end of a temporary and inefficient obsession with ideology.

Also as functionalists would expect, more than three-fifths of all IGOs devoted themselves to economic tasks. Organizations committed to a specific purpose increased their share of the IGO population, indicating a growth in cooperation on narrower, more technical matters. Emanations, moreover, which indicate increasing organizational complexity, suggest a functional intensification and specialization. Finally, regionalism has no special place in functionalist theory; no reason besides transportation costs would lead contiguous countries to cooperate more than those at a distance. For this reason, the decreasing proportion of geographical IGOs is consistent with functionalist expectations, while the increasing number of universal-membership organizations might signal broader acceptance of liberal norms.

States without wealthy, literate, and participatory populations, however, not only join IGOs but serve at times as their linchpins. Brazil, India, Mexico, and Turkey are all in the top 20 percent in terms of IGO memberships, along with Canada, Spain, Switzerland, and others of the industrialized West. China, too, is in this quintile, as is Japan. The intensive joiners are as likely to be states with great aggregate wealth but low per capita income as they are to be those with the wealthiest citizens. Since functionalism locates government motives at the level of citizen wealth, it cannot account for the equal propensity of governments whose economies have not yet produced great individual wealth to join IGOs. That powerful states lacking pressure from their citizens also join IGOs suggests that governments are more than conduits translating citizen preferences into foreign policy, as functionalism assumes.

Organizational ecology

Organizational ecology takes private and public organizations—unions, shops, universities, charitable institutions, and the like—as the center of study. Organizations operate in an environment composed of similar organizations; dissimilar or hostile ones, such as regulatory agencies and competitors; and an organization's membership or constituency. Clientele influence organizations, but they develop a character and perhaps goals of their own. This refusal to reduce an organization to its constituent parts distinguishes organizational ecology from the perspectives central to international relations theory.

In arguing that students of international organizations should pay greater attention to organizational sociology, Gayl Ness and Steven Brechen note that whereas conventionally, "The organizations of the international scene are . . . seen merely as creatures of the dominant actors, with little initiative, power, or effectiveness," in the sociological view organizations "are not simple mechanical tools obediently doing the work of their creators. They are live collectivities interacting with their environments, and they contain members who seek to use the organization for their own ends, often struggling with others over the

content and allocation of the product. These dynamics produce a distinctive organizational character over time.”²⁴ Organizations act in part according to an internal and external logic that is independent of their creators and develop personalities and unique strategies for interacting with their environments.

Organizations compete directly, each trying to maintain a hold on key economic and political resources. Others, to survive, forgo mass competition and stake out a niche for themselves.²⁵ Different types of organizations face different sorts of threats. The more general organizations will be threatened by the growing efficiency of those with which they compete or by a general reduction in the resource base that supports all of these organizations. Specialized organizations, by contrast, are unaffected by other organizations’ efficiency and can be protected from financial drought if they provide a service that is or can be successfully characterized as essential. Their main threat is intellectual or political rather than financial; they are more vulnerable to their constituency changing its mind and altering its goals than to a short-term loss of money.

General organizations are less efficient, though more flexible, than specialized ones.²⁶ Organizational ecology anticipates that generalized institutions will have higher survival rates than specialized ones during times of environmental uncertainty. Because they are more flexible, a generalized organization will be able to meet new demands, whereas a more specialized organization is likely to find tasks newly asked of it beyond its capabilities. Organizations need not just a large but also a stable supply of support.

One way of becoming general is to master a variety of specialties. Organizations can maximize their flexibility by fashioning an assortment of specialized subsidiaries. Organizational ecology labels these “loosely coupled organizations”; the looseness “allows portions of the organization to persist and evolve independently of other parts.”²⁷ Each part can test whether the new environment will be hospitable and to whom. Larger organizations have the financial and administrative resources to conduct such tests and to absorb the costs of failure necessary to locate areas of success.

Many of the changes within the IGO population during the 1980s are consistent with organizational ecology’s expectations. First, the simple fact of death and birth in the organizational population both is consistent with organizational ecology and runs counter to the view that organizations once created might adapt themselves indefinitely but do not die. At the same time, organizational ecology expects that older organizations, which have proved their seaworthiness, will survive at higher rates, with most of the deaths coming from the younger, untested IGO population. As a consequence, the population

24. Ness and Brechen 1988, 246–47.

25. Pfeffer 1982, 180–83.

26. *Ibid.*, 182.

27. Aldrich 1979, 83.

will age. Indeed, the average age of IGOs did increase, from 18.4 years in 1981 to 25.4 years in 1992.

Even if the new organizations in important ways mimic the old, the volume of births and deaths tells us that many organizations do not adapt. The institution as institution has to be abandoned. At the level of individual organizations, adapting to external change involves creating emanations. At the level of the organizational population, deaths are an important mechanism of adaptation. Individual deaths demonstrate, paradoxically, the ability of a population to adapt to changes in its environment.

New organizations within the IGO population resembled neither the abandoned nor the surviving organizations. They were more likely to be emanations and, moreover, emanations of universal-membership organizations. The largest organizations spun off subsidiary agencies, giving them a way to hedge their bets. The trend away from geographically limited IGOs and toward those having potential for universal membership is consistent with the notion that times of uncertainty favor general, flexible organizations. The increase in the proportion of organizations defining their membership by purpose is likewise consistent with that notion. Task-specific IGOs with a niche shield themselves from uncertainty by perfecting the service they provide.

Taken together, these changes are consistent with those that organizational ecology expects in reaction to an unstable, though resource-rich, environment. Insofar as the 1980s were both unstable—witnessing a decisive shift in the distribution of power among states—and resource-rich—marking a period of extraordinary growth among the already wealthy states—organizational ecology's tools help illuminate trends in the IGO population during this period.

Alone, however, its explanatory capacities are insufficient. First, organizational ecology's expectations are not entirely fulfilled. Organizational ecology leads one to expect that organizations' purposes would have changed, perhaps even more than membership rules. This is not borne out in the 1980s. Organizations have adapted by manipulating membership criteria rather than by redefining their functions.

Of course, organizational ecology cannot be brought to bear on areas that it does not attempt to address, such as change in the behavior of its constituents. For this reason, it cannot be applied to the broad changes in countries' involvement with IGOs. From the ecological perspective, states are important to IGOs as components of the environment, especially as providers of resources, but they are not the object of study. Organizational ecology provides no way to explain why a particular actor in the environment would increase or shut off its support for particular institutions. Functionalism complements organizational ecology in this way, offering hypotheses about such motives.

Spinning the web: sources of change

States clearly pursue membership in international institutions before they have exhausted the benefits they can reap from their home markets. To gain

political influence is the most obvious motive for doing so. Large and small states seek alliances, some of which become permanent features of the organizational landscape. NATO, for example, is more than a rapid response force with a complex command structure; it has research facilities, multiple offices, a large staff, and an executive to handle its intricate routine. Countries seek intellectual or normative alliances as well as military ones. As a way to gain domestic legitimacy, to pressure another country to change, or to gain respect and power internationally, governments propose and IGOs adopt resolutions and conventions in which are proclaimed standards for state and individual behavior.²⁸ Many norms acquire their own organizations. Machinery to monitor progress under the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, for instance, achieved autonomous status.

At any point in time, the activities of IGOs as well as of citizens will affect a country's membership strategy. As Robert Keohane demonstrated, the convenience and predictability of an IGO's way of accomplishing some task argue for continuing to rely on that IGO.²⁹ Even if an alternative structure would be more efficient, the cost of dismantling the old organization and establishing the new discourages such overhauls. Institutional stability can have both economic and political benefits, imposing costs on anything more than an incremental move toward efficiency.

But more than money is involved. IGOs at a minimum register member countries' belief that a particular sort of cooperation not only is beneficial but ought to be made permanent. At a maximum, when they succeed, international organizations both provide the benefits for which they were designed and act as magnets, drawing nonmembers toward their own beliefs about how best to act internationally. International organizations always say something about how some countries want the international system to function. Sometimes they do so powerfully enough that their prophecies become self-fulfilling.

In fact, organizations would be failures if they did not permanently affect their environments. Continuing to support an organization means at least accepting, and maybe approving, the values on which it is based. Negotiations over the composition of the UN Security Council, conflict over the World Bank's goals and voting rules, worry over whether to consider Turkey European—all of these are political rather than simply financial questions, and they resonate widely. Even the World Trade Organization is more than "just" an economic organization, as it is the standard-bearer for the liberal trading system and all that that implies.

Organizational ecology and functionalism each provide part, but only part, of the answer to the central issue: who determines which institutions will tie governments, and their populations, together. Organizational ecology points out that organizations' internal structures, constitutions, and mandates affect

28. Claude 1966.

29. Keohane 1984.

their capacities to survive and explains why the organizations themselves make most of the life and death decisions that so dramatically transform the IGO population. Functionalism helps to explain why it is the rich, free states—those that are presumably least in need of outside help—that not only are engaged in massive cooperative efforts but also are so eager to institutionalize these efforts, effectively circumscribing their own future options.

A full explanation must also take into account motives and perceptions usually associated with realist analysis, such as the intangible geopolitical costs and benefits of IGO entanglement, which derive from the fundamentally political nature of international “cooperative” networks. IGOs play an important role as partial codifications of “the rules,” as manifestations of the political culture that dominant states want to transmit and that member states must at least accept. Only when this is fully taken into account does the temptation that IGOs present to elites of countries whose people are poor and unmobilized become clear. Acknowledging this also helps to explain why these countries are apparently more susceptible than functionally driven countries to dropping out of the web.

The microcosm of the 1980s

Unlike the periods after World Wars I and II or following decolonization, the period following the end of the cold war has not seen states articulating new goals or establishing institutions better suited to a new distribution of power. In fact, the cold war’s end has strengthened, not weakened, the organizations associated with the resolution of World War II. Voting and membership rules amplify the voice of the dominant countries in the UN and Bretton Woods institutions, and insofar as specialized IGOs rely on the resources of their members to accomplish organizational goals, the powerful have more sway.

The cold war’s end had a politically but not statistically important impact on the IGO population for three reasons. First, IGOs whose *raison d’être* was the East–West conflict constituted a very small portion of the IGO population. As noted, the Eastern bloc at its peak represented only 5 percent of the total. Second, the IGOs that were dependent on the cold war were no different, in cross-section, than the ones that were not; this is true even when considering whether the IGO was devoted to military, social, or economic activities. Their failure therefore did not disadvantage any one category. Third, the presence of alternative organizations allowed countries that shed Eastern bloc memberships to move toward the world that the central, powerful states created. Rather than create new organizations, as happened at the conclusion of other wars, countries have joined existing IGOs.

The UN system and the Bretton Woods organizations have drawn new members, which as yet show little sign of dissent from the organizations’ implicit values and explicit goals. These IGOs arguably helped to fight and/or

to end the cold war; they definitely provided a safety net for the newly independent Eastern bloc countries, making available a highly developed set of rules and resources with which these countries could integrate themselves into the international system. The International Atomic Energy Agency, for example, guided Kazakhstan's decision to disarm and provided a framework within which to organize weapons disposal and to discuss compensation. It is difficult to imagine a non-IGO world in which any newly independent and fairly poor country could be convinced that such a decision was sane, let alone beneficial.

As important, countries that once staunchly proclaimed their nonaligned/Third World status turned toward these central institutions and away from independent regional efforts. Whether enthusiastically or reluctantly, many poorer and troubled states chose to abandon the go-it-alone strategy begun in the 1960s and 1970s and to throw in their lot with the powerful. This phenomenon should not be overstated—many geographical organizations remain, and some are growing stronger—yet the decision to turn toward universal efforts must be seen as significant. Values other than independence from the dominant military, economic, and cultural centers have become more important to many developing countries. In addition, these two shifts mean that the number of IGOs to which a state belongs depends more on material resources than on ideological convictions. With a greater consensus on the rules, countries are separated by their power to succeed within the rules.

These changes were made possible by this IGO population, but they also affected it. A move toward consensus on institutions eliminated duplication both among sets of IGOs and within IGO families. Such streamlining makes it possible to use saved energy for new tasks. Emanations result from IGOs having more decision-making authority as well as more resources to devote to specialized projects. It is convergence—or acquiescence—on the dimension of values that has thrown into sharp relief the importance that relative wealth or poverty has in determining countries' abilities to participate in IGOs.

By the end of the 1980s, the number of IGOs had stabilized while many countries' memberships declined, indicating that, for some countries, involvement leveled or reversed after reaching a ceiling. The IGO population might finally have come to a point at which it can grow marginally only if the resources devoted to international institutions grow substantially. Institutional death indicates that member states are unwilling or unable to continue cooperation in some area; this can be a general refusal to engage with others on the issue or a narrower renunciation of a particular organization's goals and methods. It also might indicate that countries have reached saturation points beyond which they find additional memberships pointless or too expensive for the returns they promise.

Countries' involvements in IGOs might continue to diverge, even were the poorer countries' economies to grow at a faster rate than the rich. Since the powerful countries are all wealthy in aggregate terms, they set the limits of IGO

growth. If a country's resource level is low, its economy would have had at least to triple each decade to fund the number of IGOs that it could join. A country with a hundred thousand people having an average income of U.S.\$1,000 could perhaps afford one ambassador to the United States, one to the Vatican, and one to the UN. It could not send two hundred representatives to the IGOs that suddenly sought its support in the 1960s and 1970s, nor could it send money in lieu of ambassadors, even if it supported the IGOs' goals.

The institutions that died at the highest rate in the 1980s were those central to the cold war or to furthering developing countries' goals. The Arab organizations, which accounted for much of the 1970s expansion, failed at a high rate, as did the other regional organizations that sprang up after decolonization. Rather than imply geopolitical doom, the regional differences in IGO deaths might partly be due to their earlier overrepresentation in IGO births. Bursts of enthusiasm for IGOs that erupt after independence or sudden wealth might become more tempered after decades have indicated what life will be like for the new states. Like a technical correction in the stock market, the population of IGOs might adjust to a common interpretation of what the market will bear.

While states in this sense can fail IGOs, the IGOs can also fail states. Adrian Karatnycky argued that "the decline in freedom can . . . be attributed in part to the failure of the democratic nations to promote a new, compelling international structure to create stability, economic growth and respect for human rights."³⁰ IGOs exert influence on states through their programs, but also—and perhaps most important—they represent to the international community the extent of normative consensus and the degree of its implementation.

The potential to alienate countries carries with it the potential to integrate them. Although IGOs reflect countries' polarization, they also can mute its effect. If countries' well-being continues to diverge, then international organizations can provide the few lifelines available to them. International organizations can provide information and other resources enabling countries to achieve welfare goals and can help to boost them into the order in which the better-off states live. They can in that way provide an institutional connection able to prevent reversals.

Conclusion

Anticipating the future based on these trends would be justified if the 1980s had been similar to previous decades, but it was not. Third World debt, a massive bipolar defense buildup, the disintegration of the Eastern bloc—all unique events—had noticeable effects on the connections between states and IGOs, as did periodic events such as a wave of independence and democratiza-

30. Karatnycky 1994, p. 4.

tion, European unification, and bitter proxy wars. Even using the entire period from 1900 to 1980 would have failed to predict what actually happened in the 1980s. A prediction based on changes up to 1980 would have estimated the 1992 population at triple its true size, with most organizations created and funded by the same Third World countries that disengaged from regional IGOs in the 1980s.

What is certain is that change within the IGO population, and between states and the organizations to which they belong, has multiple and complicated causes with roots both within the IGO population and within states. IGOs are neither autonomous nor immune from state policies. In turn, states, even powerful states, do not dictate change in the numbers and types of institutions organizing international cooperation. On one hand we have the IGOs themselves, which tend toward a task-oriented universalism consistent with what one might expect from an organizational population that was self-propelled rather than from a population sensitive to countries' changing goals. On the other we have the states, whose different capabilities and government structures prompt them in different directions, even when they are faced with similar circumstances. IGOs have institutionalized the growing polarization between wealthy, liberal countries and those facing chronic problems of poverty and repression. Whether the quality of life in the world's countries continues to diverge or begins to improve, the population of international organizations will continue to define as well as to serve states' goals.

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