
International Organizations: a Challenge or a Solution for the World Politics?

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Abstract: During the Millenium speech commencement, the former secretary general of the United Nations Kofi Annan, highlighted the importance of the international organizations. He showed that all the challenges of the 21th century cannot be solved without these organizations. The first International Organization (IO) appeared during the 19th century. As the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (1815) or the International Telecommunication Union (1865), most of them was created to deal with specific issues. Then, in order to manage disputes between sovereign states, the Permanent Court of Arbitration was established in 1902. The 19th century assisted to the emergence of many international organizations, symbol of cooperation between countries.

Keywords: International Organizations, world peace, cooperation, integration.

INTRODUCTION

International organizations are defined by the International Law commission as “*organization established by a treaty or other instrument governed by international law and possessing its own international legal personality*”. These organizations are composed by international members or scope. They refer to two main types : they can be Intergovernmental Organization (IGO), so composed by sovereign states who cooperate in some fields (such as the United Nations, the World Bank...), or International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO), which are independent from governments and usually non-profit organizations such as “Medecin sans Frontières”. These organizations can be permanent or temporary, regional or broader.

International organizations are generally perceived as the solution for world politics, defined as the international governance. Indeed, they answer to the pragmatic approach saying that each global problem or international issue should be managed and solved by an international response. Therefore, an international organization can also be considered as “*a body that promotes voluntary cooperation and coordination between or among its members*” (McCormick, 1999, p10). International organizations are, in other words, forums of discuss which gather sovereign countries, who agreed to solve commonly international problems¹.

However, the effectiveness of some of these numerous IO is questioned. There is still lots of conflicts all around the world and many issues cannot be solved by the international organizations. As an example, the FAO underlined it by showing in its 2017 report that hunger in the world increased by 50 million people between 2006 and 2016. In other words, IO lost popular support and lack of legitimacy; moreover, they are highly limited by the states behaviour which perceived these forums as tools to become more influential.

Therefore, we can wonder if the international organizations are still considered as the solution for the world politics or if they constitute challenges?

¹ Troitino, David. "European Identity the European People and the European Union." *Sociology and Anthropology* 1, no. 3 (2013): 135-140.

The effectiveness of international organizations as a solution to solve global problems is questioned². However, it is unquestionable to argue that this cooperation represents one of the best solution to gather world's actors, to establish communication and, therefore, to try to find common answers. Nevertheless, these answers can be counterproductive if it is not taking at the right level.

GLOBAL PROBLEMS SOLVED BY GLOBAL COOPERATION, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS A SOLUTION FOR THE GLOBAL POLITICS

The International organizations are seen as the only way to maintain peace in this globalized world. Indeed, they create an international order and, they are supranational forums where the self-interest of states is supposedly erased to find a common solution.

The international cooperation is considered as the solution for a peaceful and stabilized world. Indeed, based on the reflection of the enlightenment philosophers such as the liberalists Grotius, Kant and Locke, cooperation between sovereign states through international organizations is considered as a way to escape from the state of anarchy described by the realists. Indeed, by sharing common values and concerns, states cooperate to achieve common objectives and interests.³ More concretely, the Mercosur free trade area was created with the goal of overcoming “*the rivalries between the Southern cone of South American states*”.⁴ Through the establishment of Mercosur in 1991, some South American states developed economic and political relationship to avoid conflicts by focusing on what is gathering them, on their economic partnership. In other words, cooperation represents a way to ensure peace.⁵ By the way, this interdependency was highly supported by the President Woodrow Wilson, underlining in its 14-points that cooperation at all the levels is the only way to avoid conflicts. He said that free trade and open agreements between states are required to avoid mistrust and wars.

The United Nations is one of the biggest examples of international cooperation which led to the creation of international rules. The committed states have “*to maintain international peace and security*”, based on this principle, the members of the Security Council can decide sanctions. Indeed, according to the article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, the “*Security Council can take action to maintain or restore international peace and security*” if the principles of the UN Charter are not respected. Moreover, this international organization is creating a legal framework through the resolutions decided into the Security Council by its 5 permanent members. The latter is, for example, responsible of the peacekeeping operations to ensure the creation of the conditions for a sustainable peace. Recently, the Security Council mandated the operation “United Nations missions for justice support in Haiti”, ensuring the deployment of troops in Haïti to end the rebellion and to accompany the establishment of a sustainable peace. Therefore, through international organizations, the states have decided the establishment of an international order.

Additionally, international organizations are forums of discuss and proposals, which gather states for negotiations.

² Norris, Pippa, *Global Governance and Cosmopolitan Citizens*, in Nye, J. S., & Donahue, J. D. (Eds.). (2000). *Governance in a globalizing world*. Brookings Institution Press. 155–77.

³ Jackson, R., Sørensen, G., & Møller, J. (2019). *Introduction to international relations: theories and approaches*. Oxford University Press, USA.

⁴ Mattheis, F., & Wunderlich, U. (2017). Regional actorness and interregional relations: ASEAN, the EU and Mercosur. *Journal of european integration*, 39(6), 723-738.

⁵ Gallarotti, G. M. (1991). The limits of international organization: Systematic failure in the management of international relations. *International Organization*, 45(2), 183-220.

Thanks to international organizations, technical cooperation can be created between their members and other actors, ensuring the provision of intellectual and material sources. It is, by the way, one of the commitments written in the United Nation Charter "*The Purposes of the United Nations are: (...) To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.*" (Charter of the United Nations, Article 1). As an example, the European Union and the United Nations have established a platform in order to intensify cooperation and coordination for an effective resolution of the shared issues. It ensures a better coherence for some missions mainly for police and military actions, for the best effectiveness.⁶ These forums of discuss are therefore necessary to ensure the coherence of different missions and the establishment of coordinate actions over police and military missions for example.

International organizations can be perceived as solutions to overcome the states toward a global approach, probably more suitable for the international/globalized issues.

Indeed, due to the process of globalization, a high level of interdependency and strong international ties between different actors have been created. This interdependency is pushing the states to coordinate more their actions with the other actors, in order to propose a coherent approach on some global issues: it ensures "*collective responses*" based on "*mutual accountability*".⁷ F.Cameron qualifies this cooperation as an "*effective multilateralism*".

The international organizations are actors of the international scene. They are, often, the only solution to solve global problems. Therefore, states must try to find global responses rather than protect first their national interests in a short term view, strategy more suitable to manage one common issue. As Gallarotti mentioned, "*to be effective, several actions must be taken together, in the right order*". As an example, the World Bank is composed by 189 member countries, which have developed this partnership in order to fight poverty and underdevelopment. It ensures loans for poorest countries and work for the reconstruction and the development of developing countries. Another example can be provided with the framework realized by the United Nations in order to find common solutions to the climate change, and reinforce the commitment of the actors in this way. The Paris Agreement represents the futuristic guide to avoid environmental disasters and show the willingness of some states to protect the well-being of the humanity through a collective commitment in the ecologic field (see. The Paris Agreement, United Nations Framework on Climate Change). These examples underlined that international organizations, through the cooperation between its members, can take some responsibilities that single states cannot assume alone.

Since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the principle of non-interference in the sovereign state has been reinforced. Indeed, states are sovereign in their borders and over their population, they benefit from the principle of unconditional state sovereignty. Therefore, in general, interferences are not allowed into sovereign states by the international law.

However, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), part of what we call international organizations, are interesting instruments which can overcome the state's sovereignty. Indeed, NGOs overcome this principle since they have conditioned the principle of non-interference to the international human law.⁸ As an example, in developing countries, the NGOs can intervene urgently in case of major natural disaster (example of Haïti in 2010). Therefore, if one population is under threat and if the state cannot protect it, NGOs can intervene⁹.

⁶ Cameron, F. (2005). *The EU and international organisations: partners in crisis management*. EPC Issue Paper, 41, 21, 2005, 17-18.

⁷ Ruggie, J. G. (1975). International responses to technology: concepts and trends. *International organization*, 29(3), 557-583.

⁸ Thomas, D. C. (2001). International NGO's, State Sovereignty, and Democratic Values. *Chi. J. Int'l L.*, 2, 389.

⁹ Troitiño, David Ramiro, Tanel Kerikmäe, and Archil Chochia, eds. *Brexit: History, Reasoning and Perspectives*. Springer, 2018.

Moreover, the United Nations created the measure of last resort “Principle of Responsibility to protect” or “RtoP” during the 2005 World Summit. This principle is based on the assumption that sovereign states must protect their populations from mass atrocity crimes and human rights violations. This principle expands this responsibility to international organizations, civil society and the private sector. However, the intervention must be justified by some criteria such as the just cause or the last resort.¹⁰ International organizations can intervene, under criteria, beyond the sovereignty of states ensuring a humanized approach of the world.

Required to maintain peace between international actors and to solve global problems, the international organizations gained importance in this globalized world. Indeed, as Hurd (2012) wrote, “*as interdependence increases, the importance of international organizations increases with it*”. However, they are not the solution to the all-world politics and can become the core challenges of the 21st century.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, THE SOURCE OF NEW CHALLENGES

International organizations are, obviously, not the perfect solution to drive world politics. Indeed, they can be very ineffective because of the prominence of states and be the source of new problems.

International intergovernmental organizations are based on cooperation. Therefore, all the members need to agree on the decisions.

In other words, international organizations are, obviously, not independent from states. They can be considered as a ring to show their state’s power and influence over the world. It ensures the domination of some powerful actors and their ideologies.

Because international organizations are the sum of these sovereign states mainly, they are often ineffective and reflect the self-interests of the states. First of all, trying to find a common solution supported by all the member states is a hard task. Also, as Mearsheimer said, IO have limited power toward powerful states because they represent the distribution of power in the world. Therefore, they represent a way for states to take advantages from others thanks to alliances mainly. This idea is well illustrated by the example of NATO: this regional and military organization was created to ensure the balance of power regarding USSR¹¹. Therefore, in this competitive and anarchic world, these IO can bring peace by maintaining the balance of power.¹² Therefore, according to Chuck Hagel, “*Alliances and IO should be understood as opportunities for leadership and a means to expand our influence not as constraints on our power*”. Indeed, as the realist mentioned, IGOs are mainly ways to create alliances and to serve the national interests of each countries. In other words, “*Great powers usually benefit from the existing order and have an interest in maintaining it*”.

In other words, by creating alliances, the most powerful state can influence the decisions of the rest, and therefore, ensuring its prominence by driving indirectly the world politics.

Moreover, even if some decisions are taken, the states remain sovereign. Indeed, it means that they are not obliged to apply some decisions taken by one international organization. Therefore, when sanctions are decided, states can do not apply them or withdraw from the organization. In other words, the enforcement and the respect of the international law does not exist quite often, mainly when the sanctions are decided against a powerful country such as Russia or the USA. As an

¹⁰ Evans, G. (2006). From Humanitarian Intervention to the Responsibility to Protect. *Wisconsin International Law Journal*, 3 (2), 710.

¹¹ Hanrieder, T. (2012). Hurd, Ian. International Organizations: Politics, Law, Practice. *PVS Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 53(1), 153-154.

¹² Mearsheimer, J. J. (1995). A realist reply. *International Security*, 20(1), 82-93.

example, by this military intervention in Crimea, Russia broke the international principle of inviolability of frontiers. Therefore, some international sanctions were imposed to Russia during the Crimean crisis. However, Russia decided to impose counter-sanctions against other countries such as the USA and continued the annexation of this Ukrainian region. Another example is the sanctions decided against North Korea to push the Kim regime to denuclearize the peninsula¹³. However, these sanctions damaged considerably the economy and therefore the people, rather than creating a pressure toward denuclearization. Accordingly, international sanctions are often ineffective if the states do not want to respect the international law. These examples highlight that sovereign states are the most powerful actor of the international relations as supported by the realist viewpoint. Therefore, the international relations are obviously anarchic and the international law is not relevant because it is created by states to serve their own national objective of security and power.¹⁴

International organizations are not the solution to each global problem. Indeed, sometimes, by trying to solve one problem thanks to cooperation, other problems can appear.

IO can deteriorate some situations they wanted firstly to solve. In other words, IO can become counterproductive and create new challenges. It is mainly the case of the economic and financial organizations, often more suitable for strong economies. Indeed, when states in financial difficulties ask help from the International Monetary Funds (IMF), the latter can offer loans conditioned to the implementation of economic policies such as the reduction of government borrowing or some structural adjustments as the privatisation or deregulation of the national market. However, by following this economic model, the IMF imposes unadapt policies to weak economies. As an example, the IMF loaned \$40 billion to stabilize the currencies of some Asian countries during the Asian crisis in 1997. The counterparty was the implementation of a series of "structural adjustment package" (SAP) which were supposed to reduce the government spending and deficit by increasing the interest rates and suppress lots of jobs (South Korea had to destroy 50% of the jobs in the bank sector according to Naomi Klein). In other words, the exigencies of the IMF destroyed a part of the state's incomes and increased the financial instability with the withdrawal of investors¹⁵. These unadapt policies deteriorated the economic crisis and its consequences.

Additionally, the success of the International organizations encouraged the creation of many of them. Numerous organizations were created and some, specialized in the same fields. This situation can become counterproductive if they lack cooperation and coordination.¹⁶ The absence of a proper coordination can create a competition between them, and therefore the fall of the actions decided.

To avoid this problem, the IO are supposed to cooperate as mentioned for example in the article 1 of the Charter of the UN. Actions must be harmonized, coordinated to provide "*appropriate arrangements for effective cooperation with other intergovernmental organisations (...)*" as mentioned in the article 5 of the agreement establishing the World Trade Organization. Nevertheless, even if some International organizations have established a strong cooperation, each of them has its own rules, objectives and different members. The lack of common standards can create negative or counterproductive effects instead of solving one issue.

Therefore, it is necessary to measure the implication of each International organization in some issues. Their intervention can create new problems or reinforce others. International organizations

¹³ Panikar, Marina M., and David R. Troitino. "Winston Churchill on European Integration." *VOPROSY ISTORII* 11 (2018): 85-96.

¹⁴ Pease, K. K. S. (2015). *International organizations*. Routledge.

¹⁵ Radelet, S., Sachs, J. D., Cooper, R. N., & Bosworth, B. P. (1998). The East Asian financial crisis: diagnosis, remedies, prospects. *Brookings papers on Economic activity*, 1998(1), 1-90.

¹⁶ Klabbers, J. (2017). Transforming institutions: autonomous international organisations in institutional theory. *Cambridge International Law Journal*, 6(2), 105-121.

must coordinate their efforts in order to ensure effectiveness and avoid negative effects of unadapted interventions. In other words, Gallarotti advises to take into consideration the “*optimal scope and level of multilateral management*” for the best effectiveness.

International organizations are often perceived as the more suitable solution to global problems. Therefore, states can be discouraged to intervene in their own countries in order to solve national issues. Indeed, IO can be considered as substitutes for national answer to problems, some states can, therefore, wait for the intervention of the IO and do not try to solve the situation with long-term solutions. Thus, IO should try to reduce this dependency and encourage states to assume their responsibilities over its territory and its population as much as it can. Also, the state is in general supposed to take decisions more adapted to its country to solve some issues. However, sometimes, IO “*causes or exacerbates problems by offering solutions that have unpredictable and destabilizing effects*”. As an example, the military intervention in Libya in 2011 caused lots of damages such as the fostering of violence, the failure of the state and the strengthening of terrorist groups in the region.¹⁷ The intervention deteriorated the already complicated solutions. In other words, Peter Single recommended applying at the global level the principle of subsidiarity applied in the European Union. This principle was as well recommended by the FAO in 1996, supporting that “*each nation must adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security*”. This principle of subsidiarity reminded by the FAO, ensure a suitable form of government for the world, by guaranteeing that each decision will be taken as close as possible at an adapted level.

Finally, the lack of accountability is one of the disadvantages of IO. The latter, considered as the solution for global issues in the 1990s, received popular support or a passive acceptance of their interventions. However, regarding some failures in the resolution some global problems a social contestation over IO is rising. It is based on the perception that people have of the IO: this perception depends on the well management of the cross border issue and of the contribution given to the IO. The people seems to look for a biggest space for public debate such as underlined during the World Social Forum showed¹⁸ Indeed, some IO suffer from a democratic deficit.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the debate was focus on the relevance of the international organizations, if they are considered as a solution for the world politics, or more as a challenge.

International organizations are perceived as best the solution to answer the challenges of this globalized and interdependent world. Indeed, IO are composing by sovereign states or independent members which agreed to solve some globalized problems based on cooperation. Indeed, by having more common answers and interests states are more willing to take common decisions. These international organizations understood as intergovernmental organizations or NGOs are necessary in this globalized world to humanize some situations by correcting the problems caused by geopolitical strategies or economic liberalism. However, as mentioned, IO are often not effective enough and can be the source of new challenges. Quite often, challenges appear because the states

¹⁷ Kuperman, A. J. (2015). Obama's Libya debacle: how a well-meaning intervention ended in failure. *Foreign Affairs*, 94(2), 66-77.

¹⁸ Dellmuth, L. M., & Tallberg, J. (2015). The social legitimacy of international organisations: Interest representation, institutional performance, and confidence extrapolation in the United Nations. *Review of International Studies*, 41(3), 451-475.

who composed those organizations try to take advantages from the situation they have to solve or, because the level of decision is not suitable enough to the situation.

In other words, as Hurd (2012) said, the IO are the solution for global politics and, at the same time, the cause of new problems.

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