

# **Intergovernmentalism, Bureaucracy, and the Pitfalls of IGOs**

Tana Johnson

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The United Nations and other international inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) span nearly every imaginable policy area, and they are the most visible and formalized elements of contemporary global governance. Debating conditions under which IGOs have any impact (whether good or bad) in their policy areas has occupied researchers for the past 30 years, with international relations scholars continuing to wrestle with how IGOs "matter" in international affairs. Governments and the public, however, generally focus on whether IGOs "work." Here, people's complaints have been so rampant that criticism and calls for reform became "part of daily life" for many inter-governmental organizations.<sup>1</sup> IGOs have been panned as too timid, impecunious, rigid, unrepresentative, slow, cloistered, or unaccountable.

The practical implications of these complaints can be sorted into two non-mutually-exclusive categories. According to one, inter-governmental organizations need to *do more things*. Plagued by rule-boundedness, hierarchy, or some similar malady, IGOs simply do not produce enough *output*. According to the second category of complaints, inter-governmental organizations need to *do things differently*.<sup>2</sup> This even graver critique suggests that due to some deep trait, such as being centralized or non-elected, IGOs cannot be following decent *processes*.

What is the basis for these complaints? Are these pitfalls readily correctable, or do they stem from the very nature of inter-governmental organizations? If they do stem from fundamental features of IGOs, what could balance such problematic features?

In answering these questions, I make novel connections among various literatures, including those pertaining to delegation, pressure groups, and organizational behavior. These literatures span domestic and international politics, as well as rationalism and social constructivism.<sup>3</sup> I argue that the pitfalls outlined above flow directly from IGOs' two-part nature: they are inter-governmental, and they are bureaucratic. As such, an attractive counter-balance lies in civil society groups. So long as they are conscientiously and carefully incorporated within IGOs, civil society groups can deliver a dose of non-governmentalism and networks, both of which could mitigate the pitfalls stemming from the inter-governmental and bureaucratic nature of the United Nations and other conventional global governance structures.

This article's first section discusses inter-governmental organizations – their defining characteristics, the differing questions of whether they matter and whether they work, and the necessity of considering internal features that can affect their output and processes. The second section discusses non-governmental organizations – especially how their defining features fuel excitement over their potential to make IGOs do more things or do things differently. With their networked and non-governmental nature, such groups might be everything that IGOs are not: bold, well resourced, flexible, representative, fast, accessible, and (at least somewhat) accountable to ordinary people. Then the final section describes the push, in the past few decades, to include NGOs in the activities of many inter-governmental organizations.

## **INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The term "IGO" refers to organizations that have three or more governments as members, have been established by agreement among governments or their representatives, and are

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<sup>1</sup> Gutner and Thompson 2010, 228.

<sup>2</sup> This category also encompasses complaints that an IGO should do less, since such complaints are often based on a perception that the IGO operates in a wrong-headed way.

<sup>3</sup> All are crucial for a holistic understanding of organizations. For instance, while rationalistic approaches emphasize efficacy and instrumentality, sociological approaches emphasize legitimacy and bounded rationality.

sufficiently institutionalized to include some sort of centralized administrative apparatus with a permanent staff.<sup>4</sup> Thus, they contain inter-state bodies (e.g., officials from national governments serving on a Ministerial Council) as well as supra-national bodies (e.g., international bureaucrats staffing a Secretariat).<sup>5</sup> The United Nations is a well-known general-purpose IGO that deals with an array of policy issues, and many other IGOs specialize in particular areas such as development, education, energy, environment, finance, health, human rights, labor, migration, peacekeeping, or trade. Like domestic political institutions, inter-governmental organizations are "sources of order and stability in an interactive world that might otherwise appear quite chaotic."<sup>6</sup>

### **Do IGOs "Matter"? Do IGOs "Work"?**

International relations (IR) scholars tend to think about inter-governmental organizations differently than do governments or the public. From the 1980s to today, IR research has earnestly probed why states find it attractive to work through IGOs,<sup>7</sup> why IGOs are designed as they are,<sup>8</sup> under what conditions IGOs can alter governments' behavior,<sup>9</sup> and how an IGO's supra-national bodies can ever diverge from its inter-state ones.<sup>10</sup> In short, international relations scholars tend to ponder whether IGOs "matter" in international affairs.

But government officials and the public have a different concern: whether IGOs "work," somehow enhancing people's wellbeing.<sup>11</sup> Here, international relations scholars have surprisingly little to say. This is partly because the question is tricky to answer – and partly because scholars perceived a need to first establish whether IGOs matter at all, before tackling the thornier issue of how they might matter in negative ways. A decade-old critique still applies: "for all their desirable qualities, [IGOs] also can be inefficient, ineffective, repressive, and unaccountable. International relations scholars, however, have shown little interest in investigating these less savory and more distressing effects."<sup>12</sup>

To be sure, the question of whether IGOs "work" is tough to answer objectively and in a way that credibly traces causality to the inter-governmental organizations being assessed. One complex hurdle is ascertaining what these organizations are ultimately supposed to achieve. In composites such as IGOs, the eventual goal often is in flux, repeatedly debated and negotiated among member-states, and between member-states and Secretariat staff. Think of the International Telecommunication Union (formerly the International Telegraph Union): its aims have morphed dramatically as technology and the organization's membership changed. Even when organizational objectives are uncontested, they may be vague and lofty – as is true with

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<sup>4</sup> Gutner and Thompson 2010, 231.

<sup>5</sup> Tallberg et al. 2016, 1078.

<sup>6</sup> March and Olsen 1989, 53.

<sup>7</sup> e.g., Keohane 1984; Abbott and Snidal 1998.

<sup>8</sup> e.g., Koremenos et al. 2001; Hawkins et al. 2006.

<sup>9</sup> CITES.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Johnson 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Both the realist and liberal traditions in international relations long viewed IGOs as structures, not actors, in world affairs. By assuming that IGOs had no life of their own, scholars also assumed away the possibility that IGOs could in any way defy the interests of states that created them; researchers did not look for divergence and therefore did not find it. Governments and the public, in contrast, have not been stymied by such "theoretical impossibilities."

<sup>12</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 726. Writing more recently, Gutner and Thompson (2010) express a similar complaint about the IR literature's reluctance to investigate IGO performance.

bodies of public administration more generally. The International Labor Organization, for instance, embraces the grand but ambiguous goal of "decent work for all."

Even when organizational objectives are more precise, they may be unachievable, because governments tend to expect inter-governmental organizations to tackle tasks (such as ferreting out nuclear weapons or eradicating HIV/AIDS) that they could not accomplish themselves. As one observer wryly notes about the United Nations: "It is like a doctor, 90 percent of whose patients have terminal cancer when they walk in his door."<sup>13</sup> And even if Secretariat staff face a stable, specific, and attainable goal, their efforts toward that goal are frequently derailed by world events, the setting, bad luck, and other actors – sometimes even their own member-states.

To complicate things further, enhancements to people's wellbeing can flow not just from what inter-governmental organizations do, but what they are. IGOs are "the world's meeting place."<sup>14</sup> They alone blend inter-state bodies with supra-national ones.

Each of the two components makes unique contributions. Collectively, the inter-state bodies within IGOs are matchless in getting a wide variety of governments to talk with each other, on a regular basis, with widely understood standards for behavior. Similarly, the supra-national bodies are peerless in supplying international civil servants who hail from all over the world, devote continuous attention to a particular policy issue, and adopt formal pledges to shun narrow national interests. An inter-governmental organization that did nothing but serve as a stable administrative apparatus and a forum for sustained discourse may nevertheless play an important role in enhancing people's wellbeing, for it symbolizes dialogue, shapes social purpose, and exemplifies multilateralist values.<sup>15</sup>

But IGOs often take on even bigger roles. One set of scholars describes the bureaucrats within them as "the missionaries of our time." They explain: "Armed with a notion of progress, an idea of how to create the better life, and some understanding of the conversion process, many [international bureaucrats] have as their stated purpose a desire to shape state practices by establishing, articulating, and transmitting norms that define what constitutes acceptable and legitimate state behavior."<sup>16</sup> Thus, the process by which an IGO operates can be at least as important as anything it actually produces.

In reacting to these difficulties, international relations scholars again diverge from government officials or the public. To many scholars, questioning whether IGOs enhance people's wellbeing misses the point. International affairs may be more about benefiting governments than about benefiting regular people. Moreover, the fact that an IGO continues to exist, rather than being shunned or eliminated, seems like dispositive evidence that the IGO must be making something better, for someone. Scholars, therefore, often show little interest in organizations' day-to-day operations or impact on people's wellbeing.<sup>17</sup> Instead, research attention regularly shifts back to how and when inter-governmental organizations matter in international politics, writ large.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Toffler 1975, 265.

<sup>14</sup> Reagan, Ronald. September 28, 1981. "Proclamation 4864: United Nations Day 1981." *Public Papers of the President*. Available at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=44310&st=united+nations&st1=> (last accessed July 23, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 702, 703; Toffler 1975, 265. Also see DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Finnemore 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 713.

<sup>17</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 726.

<sup>18</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 703.

Nevertheless, government officials and the public persist with the question of whether IGOs work. To sidestep the challenges of answering objectively based on (problematic) ultimate outcomes, they answer the question subjectively based on the activities that IGOs undertake on the path to ultimate outcomes. Here, the causal chain is more clear-cut: IGOs may not deserve all of the blame or praise for outcomes, but they bear responsibility for the output and process that they contribute to those outcomes. "Output" is the tangible product of an inter-governmental organization, while "process" is the overall mode by which an inter-governmental organization operates.

To government officials and the public, both often seem disappointing. IGOs may have output problems, using appropriate inputs but not producing as much as they could with them. Or they may have process problems, a more severe situation in which the inputs themselves are inappropriate. IGOs might need to do more things – or, they might need to do things differently. One is about mere efficiency; the other is about deeper legitimacy.

At various times, government officials and the public have expressed both concerns about whether IGOs work. For instance, in his first year in office, U.S. President Ronald Reagan placed the efficiency concern at the heart of his interactions with the United Nations. His administration fought a proposal to increase the UN's biennial budget, and Reagan tasked his staff with forcing the United Nations system to "slow budget growth, define priorities, [and] upgrade personnel." The stated goal: "rendering the [UN] system more efficient" in order to help this organizational family actualize "its enormous potential for contributing to the economic and social betterment of the world's peoples."<sup>19</sup> According to the Reagan administration, IGOs need to use their existing wherewithal more efficiently so that they can accomplish more.

However, other critics express concerns with legitimacy, demanding even more fundamental transformations in how IGOs operate. For example, the Bretton Woods Project is a watchdog group, founded in 1995 by several non-governmental organizations in the United Kingdom. It lambasted the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for failing to provide "a global economic system that operates on the primary principles of justice, equity, gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability, with international institutions that are democratic, inclusive, transparent, accountable, and responsive to citizens, especially the poorest and most vulnerable."<sup>20</sup> According to this view, IGOs do not need to produce more – rather, they need to operate differently. For instance, they may need to mend their credibility by standing up to the politically powerful and embracing input from the grassroots.

### **Dual Hazards: Inter-Governmentalism and Bureaucracy**

Together, the two flavors of complaints mean that IGOs get faulted for both inadequate output and deficient processes. The roots of these widely perceived failings lie in the very nature of inter-governmental organizations: they are organizations, and they are inter-governmental. Thus they contain dual hazards. They are vulnerable to the caprices of their governmental members and to the downsides of their bureaucratic form.

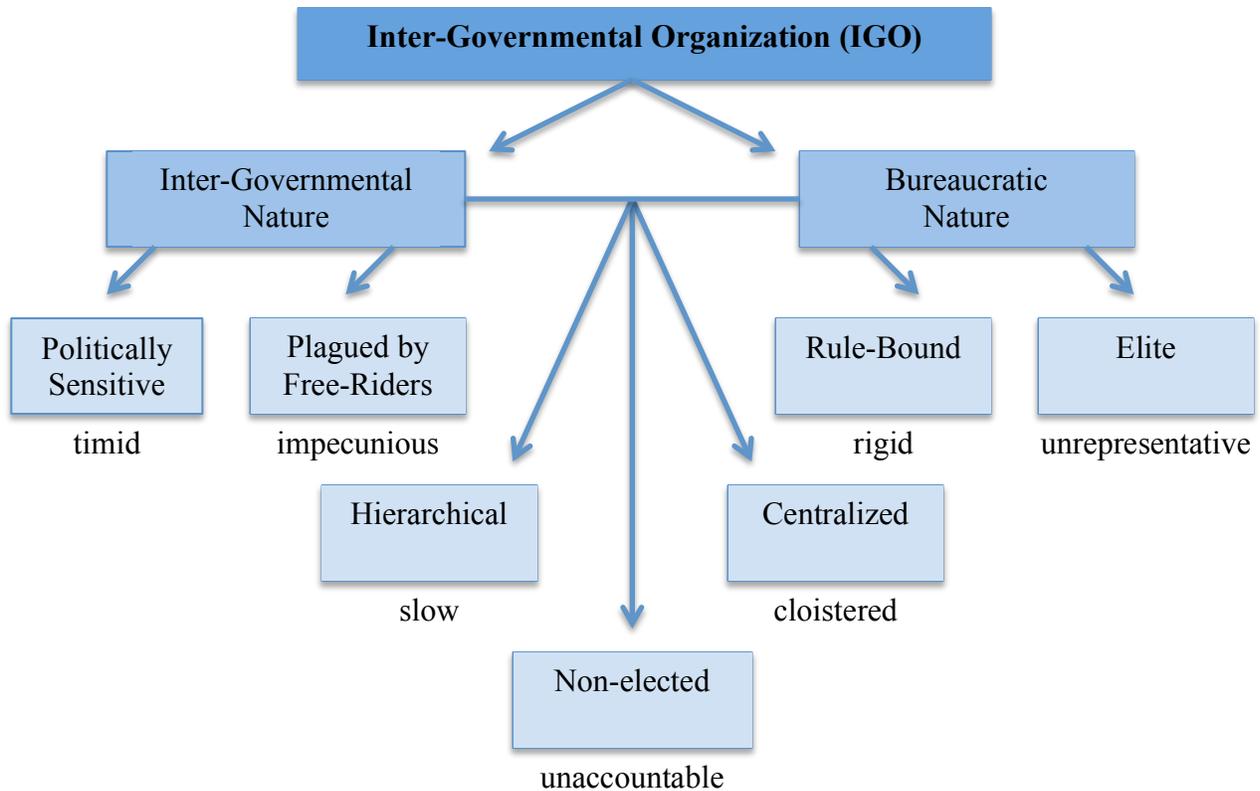
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<sup>19</sup> Reagan, Ronald. February 2, 1983. "Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on United States Participation in the United Nations." *Public Papers of the President*. Available at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=40672&st=united+nations&st1=> (last accessed July 23, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> Bretton Woods Project. 2017. "What Is the Bretton Woods Project?" Available at: <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2017/03/art-537713/> (last accessed August 18, 2017).

Figure 1 summarizes how these two hazards go a long way in explaining prevalent criticisms. As discussed in detail below, IGOs' timidity and impecuniousness flow from the *inter-governmental* hazard. Their rigidity and unrepresentativeness stem from the *bureaucratic* hazard. Meanwhile, their slowness, cloistering, and unaccountability can be traced to interactions between the two hazards.

***Figure 1: The IGO Side***



***The Inter-Governmental Hazard: Making IGOs Timid and Impecunious***

First consider IGOs' inter-governmental nature. Intricate principal-agent relationships exist within each IGO, because explicitly and implicitly, governments represented in the inter-state bodies delegate to international bureaucrats staffing the supra-national bodies.<sup>21</sup> As agents, international bureaucrats can and do feel allegiance to themselves, their organization, or the people their policy area touches. They do not robotically adopt only the interests of their member-states (even assuming those interests could be aggregated in a coherent fashion).<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, international bureaucrats do remain keenly aware that they operate in an environment constrained by their immediate principal: sovereign governments.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Hawkins et al. 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Johnson and Urpelainen 2014.

The sovereignty of governments is a constructed and circular norm. Nation-states spread the idea of sovereignty, and the idea of sovereignty perpetuates the nation-state as the proper basis for the international system.<sup>24</sup> Sovereignty is an "organized hypocrisy" that is intangible, paradoxical, and makes things tough for IGOs.<sup>25</sup> After all, sovereignty deems states equal in a way that willfully ignores massive inequalities in capabilities. States' policies and territory are supposed to be sacrosanct, regardless of their competence in implementing wise policies or their ability to protect their territory.

This places a snare within every IGO. Any organization that operates according to equal decision-making power for each member-state is defying the reality of capabilities. Any organization that uses some sort of weighting is violating the norm of sovereignty.

Furthermore, sovereignty implies that a government can grant power to others without losing any of its own. This conundrum is a key reason why international relations scholars have obsessed over whether IGOs matter. After all, it is hard to see how inter-governmental organizations can bring states to heel, if states confer IGOs' initial authority and simply refuse to submit to that authority. Even after supra-national bodies build their own rational-legal authority or other forms of power, they generally still need to rely on persuasion or duplicity, rather than outright coercion, to alter the behavior of their principals.<sup>26</sup>

And the difficulties do not end there, because the principal in this delegation relationship is complex.<sup>27</sup> At best, it is a collective principal, meaning that it speaks with a single voice after its constituent entities have negotiated a common position among themselves. This common position may be a moving target, with international bureaucrats within IGOs scurrying to keep up as the states within the collective principle repeatedly renegotiate – but at least it is a target. More perplexing (and quite common) are multiple principals: due to unresolved uncertainties among themselves, states convey many separate, conflicting instructions or expectations to IGO personnel. This provides no real target at all.

Government officials also recognize this hazard of inter-governmentalism. For instance, in his 1983 address to the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. President Ronald Reagan delivered a deluge of criticism:

This body was to speak with the voice of moral authority. That was to be its greatest power.... What has happened to the dreams of the UN's founders? What has happened to the spirit which created the United Nations? The answer is clear: Governments got in the way of the dreams of the people. Dreams became issues of East versus West. Hopes became political rhetoric. Progress became a search for power and domination.... The founders of the UN expected that member nations would behave and vote as individuals, after they had weighed the merits of an issue – rather like a great, global town meeting. The emergence of blocs and the polarization of the UN undermine all that this organization initially valued.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Toffler 1975, 267.

<sup>25</sup> Krasner 1999; Finnemore and Jurkovich 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Barnett and Duvall 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Lyne et al. 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Reagan, Ronald. September 26, 1983. "Address Before the 38th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York." *Public Papers of the President*. Available at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=40523&st=united+nations&st1=> (last accessed July 25, 2017).

Ironically, even this lament about politicization is framed in an utterly politicized way, seizing the opportunity to shame rivals of the U.S. in the Soviet Union and the developing world.

Inter-governmental organizations inhabit a deeply politicized space, where state-principals are collective or multiple, and member-states are equal in sovereignty but unequal in capabilities. This messiness of inter-governmentalism offers some tremendous openings for international bureaucrats. They can side with whichever states already have preferences most like theirs. They can win over states that were unsure of what needs to be done. They can let powerful states fight their desired battles against the rest of the membership. They can leverage the vast majority of weaker states to hinder the most powerful members.

However, the playing field is treacherous. State-principals are wary about extensive delegation. Even when they acknowledge their need for agents, they often employ a variety of *ex ante* mechanisms (e.g., an organizational charter specifying what international bureaucrats may and may not do on their own) and *ex post* mechanisms (e.g., cutting financial contributions if international bureaucrats do something they dislike) to keep their agents in line. Therefore, IGO staff must be prudent in exploiting the opportunities offered by inter-governmental disagreements and uncertainties.

They will be vigilantly *sensitive* to member-states, and they will choose their battles carefully. Taken far, this prudence constrains the output they attempt to produce. Soon after taking office, for instance, U.S. President Donald Trump complained that timidity in the United Nations system was making the world more dangerous, because foot-dragging enabled manageable issues to grow into grave issues. In an April 2017 speech, he stated: "The United Nations doesn't like taking on certain problems [such as North Korea].... People have put blindfolds on for decades, and now it's time to solve the problem."<sup>29</sup>

Inter-governmentalism poses another challenge as well. IGOs' policy areas are laden with public goods and common-pool resources such as world peace, clean air, care for refugees, and management of infectious diseases. These help governments as a group even if individual governments do not fully contribute to their provision. What is more, the same is true for inter-governmental organizations themselves: as mentioned, global governance structures can enhance people's wellbeing not only by what they do but what they are. An IGO is a stable administrative apparatus and a forum for sustained dialogue, and often governments can benefit from this even if they skirt their full contributions. The context is ripe for *free-riders*.

In other words, it is difficult to prevent the benefits of IGOs' work and their very existence from being enjoyed by under-contributing governments. This hitch with non-excludability strikes the United Nations and other worldwide organizations particularly hard, because membership is open to any sovereign state. Other IGOs, such as the European Union (EU) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), try to combat free-riding by limiting membership to specific geographic regions or types of states, but that merely reduces the scale of non-excludability without eradicating it.

And unfortunately, non-excludability reverberates, incentivizing further free-riding. When some governments under-contribute to the provision of public goods or common-pool resources, those who wholly contribute re-evaluate their options. Why accept a "sucker's payoff," bearing full costs while those who shirk their fair share nevertheless siphon some of the full benefits? Absent some remarkably disproportionate individual payoff for ensuring the good is provided, it is individually rational to respond with under-contributions of one's own. If each

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<sup>29</sup> Trump, Donald. April 24, 2017. "Remarks at a Working Lunch with United Nations Security Council Ambassadors." Available at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=123808&st=security+council&st1=>

government makes this calculation and strives to undercut others, there are fewer and fewer resources for generating the good itself. Individually rational behavior spawns a collectively irrational outcome in which something that could have benefited the entire group is under-provided – or, in extreme cases, not provided at all. As demonstrated by ongoing refugee flows from Syria, fiscal mismanagement in the Eurozone, and nuclear threats from North Korea, this is hardly a hypothetical problem.

A government can respond with free-riding of its own. It can try to chastise and rehabilitate those who are under-contributing. It can earmark, funneling its contributions toward pet projects or endeavors from which it benefits most.<sup>30</sup> These reactions do not wipe out the difficult-to-exclude nature of inter-governmentalism itself. However, they do make inter-governmental organizations even more precarious – perpetually strapped, fraught with additional infighting, and further constricted in their use of resources. This forces international bureaucrats within IGOs to forego many worthwhile activities, because they simply do not have the means to pursue them all.

In sum, IGOs' inter-governmental nature is one hazard, making them vulnerable to government caprices. Inter-governmental organizations can become *timid*. Supra-national bodies must be hyper-sensitive to inter-state bodies, anticipating and traversing the shifting preferences and uncertainties of both the powerful few and the weaker many among the member-states. IGOs also become *impecunious*. States and international bureaucrats must navigate the privations imposed by free-riding, because inter-governmental organizations are supposed to generate – and be – public goods or common-pool resources.

### ***The Bureaucratic Hazard: Making IGOs Rigid and Unrepresentative***

Besides their inter-governmental nature, a second hazard lies in IGOs' organizational structure, which makes them vulnerable to the downsides of the bureaucratic form. A bureaucracy is a body of non-elected officials, characterized by hierarchical authority, specialization, a division of labor, and adherence to rules. Far from being unique to IGOs, this organizational form is common in national and sub-national governments, religious orders, universities, the private sector, and elsewhere. Wherever they are found, bureaucracies cultivate predictable kinds of values, agendas, and dispositions.<sup>31</sup>

Bureaucracies' ubiquity stems from widespread – and worthwhile – modern governance aims such as stability, fairness, and non-violent resolution of conflict. For instance, hierarchical authority is supposed to clarify the chain of command and the location of responsibility. Specialization facilitates acquisition of expertise. A division of labor enables management of complex tasks. Adherence to rules is an attempt at treating people equally.

However, these potentially commendable characteristics are notorious for becoming warped. Pioneering sociologist Max Weber lauded many aspects of bureaucracies yet famously referred to them as an "iron cage." Constructivist scholarship highlights "pathologies" of the bureaucratic form.<sup>32</sup> And in common parlance, the pejorative term "red tape" evokes how needlessly complex, frustratingly inhibitive, and ultimately useless many ordinary people perceive bureaucracies to be. This ire does not spare IGOs. As discussed in a subsequent

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<sup>30</sup> Graham 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 706.

<sup>32</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999.

section, the hierarchical, centralized, and non-elected features of IGOs interact with their inter-governmental nature to generate particularly severe pitfalls. But even without the added complication of inter-governmentalism, bureaucracies' tendency to be rule-bound and elite creates some handicaps.

Bureaucratized organizations live by rules. Some of their rules come in the form of initial or revised delegation contracts from a principal. Other rules amount to habits and standard operating procedures that fortify over time, cementing into "how things have always been done." And in bureaucracies with regulatory functions, still other rules are guidelines or directives that instruct outside actors on how to behave. Received mandates, internal routines, and outward regulations are quintessential ingredients for bureaucracies' projection of "rational-legal authority."<sup>33</sup> Impersonal rational-legal authority is a stark divergence from non-bureaucratic governance forms, because submission does not hinge on the mightiness or allure of a particular person, such as a monarch.<sup>34</sup>

Ideally, rules also foster stability and predictability. However, doing so comes at the expense of flexibility. By generating "universal rules and categories that are, by design, inattentive to contextual and particularistic concerns," bureaucracies reduce elasticity.<sup>35</sup>

Hence IGOs, like other bureaucratic structures, are *rule-bound*, and that poses serious dangers. Instead of tailoring their responses to whatever new crisis confronts them, they may not respond to the crisis at all. Or, at best, they may react to whichever crisis they wish were confronting – one that fits their existing rules and procedures, because they had prepared for it or surmounted something very similar in the past.<sup>36</sup>

In responding to novelty, a standard bureaucratic response is to find a set of existing routines that can be used.<sup>37</sup> Doing things as they have been done in the past may seem harmless – even sensible, if an IGO previously experienced success with that method. However, rather than serving to boost people's wellbeing, bureaucratic rules run the risk of standing in the way. After all, "not all rules are necessarily good ones, least of all indefinitely."<sup>38</sup> Rules can compromise the extent to which means-end rationality drives organizational behavior, and they can obscure overall missions and larger social goals.<sup>39</sup> Dogmatism with regard to mandates, routines, and regulations could end up rationalizing wrong-headed ends. Or, especially where an IGO's ultimate objective is vague or unattainable, following rules could even become an end in itself.

Beyond rule-boundedness, the bureaucratic form poses another challenge through its *elite* nature. In the first half of the twentieth century, when inter-governmental organizations were still novel, member-states sometimes loaned their own government officials as temporary IGO personnel. People seconded in this manner knew they would soon return to their "real" positions

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<sup>33</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 707.

<sup>34</sup> Gerth and Mills 1978, 299.

<sup>35</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 721.

<sup>36</sup> Beetham 1985, 76. For example, when HIV/AIDS cases were first diagnosed in the early 1980s, bureaucrats at the World Health Organization (WHO) convinced themselves that this did not fall within their global mandate, because the early cases arose in a small set of wealthy and capable states. As cases emerged in even more countries, WHO staff hesitantly got involved but initially attempted to replicate the procedures they had used earlier to stamp out smallpox, a very different disease. Only after some key changes (of heart, as well as personnel) did the WHO bureaucracy launch its vaunted Global Program on AIDS (Johnson 2014, 167-169).

<sup>37</sup> March and Olsen 1989, 34.

<sup>38</sup> March and Olsen 1989, 54.

<sup>39</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 718.

in the home country, and predictably, even while employed in IGOs they placed national interests over supra-national ones. Since the 1950s, secondment has declined greatly, mirroring an increasingly formalized international civil service code that resembles the job security and other provisions of domestic civil service codes.<sup>40</sup> The reformed system demands allegiance to the organization. In the United Nations, for instance, each staff member vows to act in accordance with "the interests of the United Nations only" and reject instructions from "any Government or other source external to the Organization."<sup>41</sup>

Thus, a formalized international civil service draws people who believe that domestic institutions must relinquish issues to international ones.<sup>42</sup> International bureaucrats generally promote multilateralism and favor supra-national interests. This is a cosmopolitan view – and one that is not embraced by vast swaths of the public all around the world.

Civil service expectations and cosmopolitan attitudes are not the only things making these bureaucracies elite. The level, source, and nature of employees' education also contribute. Although they hail from rich and poor countries alike, IGO staff members tend to be well educated, and many were trained in a relatively small pool of top universities in Europe or North America. Moreover, the international bureaucrats in a given organization often hail from just a few professions that could be relevant to their policy area. Traditionally, physicians dominate the World Health Organization, economists dominate the International Monetary Fund, and lawyers dominate the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights. Siloing and socialization within particular professions further detach international bureaucrats from ordinary people.

Beyond commonalities in their backgrounds, working in a bureaucracy often makes people even more similar to one another – and different from the general population. After all, a key feature of bureaucracies is specialized knowledge and experience that other actors cannot immediately attain.<sup>43</sup> In IGOs, staff members amass technical or scientific knowledge that is needed to define a particular policy issue as well as administrative or diplomatic knowledge that is needed to address it.<sup>44</sup> This is common in bureaucracies: rather than gaining wide and generic knowledge, they tend to pursue deep knowledge in a particular topic. Trading breadth for depth is a key innovation over other alternative governance structures.

All of these forms of eliteness narrow international bureaucracies. The people within them do not represent the full diversity of people around the world, and they may even be estranged from prevalent attitudes in their country of origin. International bureaucrats place supra-national interests over national ones. They are well educated, often in similar professions and institutions of higher learning. They also cultivate specialized knowledge and experiences working within specific policy areas. Indeed:

Professional training does more than impart technical knowledge. It actively seeks to shape the normative orientation and worldviews of those who are trained....

Bureaucracies, by their very nature, concentrate professionals inside organizations, and

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<sup>40</sup> Weiss 1982; de Cooker 2005.

<sup>41</sup> "UN Document ST/SGB/2014/2: Staff Regulations." Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=ST/SGB/2014/2](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=ST/SGB/2014/2). (last accessed August 11, 2017).

<sup>42</sup> Johnson 2016, 723.

<sup>43</sup> Gerth and Mills 1978, 299. The world's most powerful states may be able to rival international bureaucrats' expertise, but powerful states are a minority of the overall population. Moreover, even for powerful states, actually attaining all of the expertise that IGO staff possess would deflate the gains from delegating to them in the first place.

<sup>44</sup> Bauer 2006, 31.

concentrations of people with the same expertise or professional training can create an organizational worldview distinct from the larger environment.<sup>45</sup>

Such distinctiveness and eliteness in bureaucracies is predictable, sometimes even desirable. But it has a downside: just as rules can eclipse goals, bureaucracies' eliteness can limit their field of vision.<sup>46</sup>

In summary, then, the fact that IGOs are formal organizations is a second hazard. It makes them vulnerable to the disadvantages of bureaucratic structures. Inter-governmental organizations become *rigid*: roped to a bevy of rules amassed by both the principals in their inter-state bodies and the agents in their supra-national ones, it is easy to swap means for ends, default to how things have "always" been done, and prove unable to cope with developments that defy existing rules and expectations. IGOs also become *unrepresentative*: despite often-broad missions, they are populated by elites who are remarkably similar in terms of cosmopolitanism, education, professionalization, and cultivation of deep expertise. Both unrepresentativeness and rigidity are constitutive, produced by the rules and specialization that distinguish bureaucratic structures from other governance forms.

### ***The Combination of Hazards: Making IGOs Slow, Cloistered, and Unaccountable***

On its own, IGOs' bureaucratic nature can produce rigidity and unrepresentativeness, but it also teams with IGOs' inter-governmental nature to produce additional problematic features. For one thing, bureaucracies are *hierarchical*: they contain a series of levels, each reporting to the one directly above it. As with many aspects of bureaucracy, this distribution of authority and responsibility is born of worthwhile aims, but in practice it often falters.

To see why, first consider hierarchies from the bottom. There, someone has an idea. He sends it up the ladder, first winning over the people in his level, then pitching the idea to the people in the next level, and so forth. At each juncture he must convince his audience that the idea will be appealing to the organization's upper levels, but also not harmful to the turf and interests of these lower levels. This is difficult, and any level can snuff the idea – perhaps with a direct refusal, perhaps with indecision or procrastination. Whether an idea has prevailed in two levels or ten, it dies if any rung opts not to forward it to the next. Surmounting multiple decision points takes time, and often, compromises. Many ideas will not make it to the top; those that do will probably arrive in greatly altered form.

From his struggle, the staff member who initiated the idea at the bottom of the hierarchy learns at least two lessons. First, trying to get an idea adopted within a hierarchy is time-consuming. Second, it makes sense to save oneself time by anticipating how higher rungs will react, and ditching any ideas that do not stand a strong chance of climbing every rung. He now knows why hierarchies tend to be sluggish, not only in adopting ideas but also in generating them.

Nor are hierarchies fast when viewed from the top. Say the boss herself has an idea. Often, she will need to pitch it down the rungs – if not for formal vetting, then at least for implementation. However, it is difficult to mobilize distant levels. In addition, lower rungs may resist any ideas that they have not initiated and painstakingly scrutinized, and their resistance

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<sup>45</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 722, 723.

<sup>46</sup> Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 718.

may take active or passive forms. Given the complexity of the multi-level structure and the length of the delegation chain, the boss may not even be able to pinpoint where or why her idea is stalling. She, too, learns that bureaucracies may be sluggish. Edicts from above do not promptly animate hierarchies, and even if lower rungs cannot refuse outright, they have many means of delaying or modifying implementation.

Unfortunately, inter-governmentalism exacerbates IGOs' problems with pace by adding more layers to the hierarchical complexities that already exist within the bureaucracy. Bottom-up and top-down initiatives alike now have even more levels to clear. Moreover, instead of placing a unitary decision-maker – such as an individual person serving as Director-General – at the top of the hierarchy, inter-governmentalism inserts a compound state-principal. Regardless of whether this takes the form of a collective principal that must reach agreement among its constituent states, or multiple principals that act separately, placing bureaucrats "under" states delays decision-making and implementation even more.

Thus, IGOs are not known for their swiftness. Working from the top down is as arduous as working from the bottom up, and positioning a group of member-states at the apex of an already bulky hierarchy makes things harder. Many initiatives will be derailed. What eventually gets through may be severely diluted or disfigured.

The ladder-like structure of IGOs is closely related to another common feature of bureaucracies: ladders converging at a particular site. Bureaucracies are an answer to complex environments, and therefore bureaucracies are unlikely to contain just one ladder. But they are also an attempt to make complex environments more manageable, and therefore they absorb or dismantle competing sites of ultimate authority. This results in multiple ladders, rising to a single authority.

That single authority will have a physical location. For a bureaucracy such as the United States military, it is the Pentagon in northern Virginia. For the Catholic Church, it is Vatican City. For Toyota Corporation, it is a small town outside of Nagoya, Japan. The pattern: bureaucracies tend toward *centralization*.

Even though IGOs serve regional or even global constituencies, they too have central sites, where their supra-national bodies can be permanently housed and their inter-state bodies can regularly convene. Consider the World Bank, a far-flung IGO with projects and satellite offices throughout the world. Ultimately, those outposts link back to the organization's headquarters in Washington, D.C. As with bureaucracies more generally, a single central site serves as a focal point for internal activities.

Yet it presents challenges, too. The more geographically dispersed an IGO's activities are, the more difficult it becomes to find a central location that is equally accessible to all stakeholders. Consequently, the headquarters may be more tightly linked to some field offices and projects than others.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, it may attract "one-stop shopping" by formal pressure groups but have little connection to the general public, who physically or psychologically find it to be a world away. Such concern about IGOs being grossly out of touch is obvious in the following criticism of the United Nations:

The UN does not see itself as one chip or one component, in a growing transnational network, but as an independent unit... It does not seem to understand that it cannot function effectively until it is connected up with, or wired into, other parts of the

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<sup>47</sup> Many IGOs maintain satellite offices while their organizational core remains at headquarters. However, some IGOs, such as the World Trade Organization, have no other locations at all.

transnational network. And because it isolates itself from the rest of the network, it has no roots among ordinary people, no basis or constituency, or direct contacts with the everyday organizations and groups through which most of the work of the world actually gets done.<sup>48</sup>

Hardly unique to the UN, this sort of criticism hits IGOs more generally.

IGOs' inter-governmental nature aggravates the situation. For governments, hosting a headquarters site involves prestige and informal opportunities for disproportionate influence. Therefore numerous states compete to be the central physical location of inter-governmental organizations. Even states that are not viable competitors for hosting IGOs are similar to pressure groups in relishing "one-stop shopping": they support placing IGOs' central sites in places where states already maintain missions, embassies, or other diplomatic outposts. As a result, a handful of locations have emerged as concentrations of IGO headquarters. For instance, the European Union is a regional organization that consciously distributes its institutions across member-states. Yet the institutions deemed most important are doled out to the member-states deemed most important, and much of the overall governing apparatus is concentrated in Brussels, Belgium.

For global IGOs, the issue is even more acute. The primary site is Switzerland, which has become the hub for multiple policy areas. Geneva hosts the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and many others. Another hotspot is the United States: the United Nations' headquarters is in New York, and the headquarters of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are in Washington D.C. Other global IGOs are scattered among a short-list of cities (e.g., Bonn, Montreal, Paris, Rome), mostly in wealthy Western countries.

However, the majority of the world's population does not live in these cities and does not share their cosmopolitan worldview. Thus, as one critic urges, "we need to re-examine our faith in centralization," for it is not necessarily the best way to arrange international affairs.<sup>49</sup> When people with cosmopolitan inclinations are congregating in a handful of cosmopolitan places, this further distances them from much of the population they purport to serve.

Beyond being centralized and hierarchical, bureaucracies contain a final challenging feature: whether at the sub-national, national, or international level, they are *non-elected*. In part this is practical, because holding periodic elections for thousands of bureaucratic posts would be a heavy burden on voters' time and attention. But another reason is aspirational, because the absence of elections protects bureaucracies against the reactive short-term thinking that infects elected officials. Freed from electoral whims and pandering to voters, bureaucrats possess space to consider long-term goals and consequences, build institutional know-how, and proactively do things that are worthwhile but lacking widespread public support.

Making long-term plans, cultivating capabilities, and undertaking painful-but-necessary ventures are commendable – but galling. After all, if politicians and the public acted this way naturally and consistently, there would be little need to delegate such tasks to bureaucracies. A vicious cycle exists, wherein bureaucrats are non-elected as protection on a collision course, but they remain on the collision course because they are non-elected. Put bluntly, by design they

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<sup>48</sup> Toffler 1977, 266.

<sup>49</sup> Toffler 1975, 261.

annoy people and are buffered against the people they annoy. Thus they repeatedly clash with politicians and the public, for they do irritating things (ideally, for the greater good) and are not easily removed from their posts.

Once again, inter-governmentalism makes this bureaucratic hazard even more severe. IGOs contain a particularly treacherous collision course, because non-elected international bureaucrats contend with sovereign states. Officials within a sovereign state can easily become annoyed with any actor that exhorts them to disregard short-term national interests or take actions that are domestically unpopular. And yet, supra-national bodies serve sets of states, not individual states. Consequently, when irked with IGOs, even the most powerful individual member-states face unsatisfying options. They cannot unilaterally disband an organization if some of the other states still support it; they cannot singly withdraw without forsaking membership benefits. They may be able to discipline international bureaucracies by cutting funding or changing personnel, but IGOs' increasingly diversified resource streams and their civil service protections blunt both of those tools.<sup>50</sup> Thus even if the irritating things bureaucrats do are not for the greater good, it is difficult to make supra-national bodies fully answerable to states.

Without elections, it is also difficult to make supra-national bodies answerable to the general population. Organizations such as the EU or the OECD, where membership is limited to democratic states, could tenuously claim to be accountable to governments that ultimately are accountable to voters. But in most IGOs, which contain non-democratic member-states, that fragile claim would not hold at all.

Moreover, governments display mixed feelings about addressing the non-elected nature of international bureaucrats. Many non-democratic states are hostile to any intimation of making inter-governmental organizations more accountable to the public, since such moves would highlight their own weak legitimacy or accountability mechanisms at the domestic level. Such intimations even worry some democratic states, because giving the public a say over IGO activities would be cumbersome and would erode states' roles as go-betweens.

All of these challenges stem from the combination of IGOs' two main features. Inter-governmentalism intensifies the hazards of bureaucracy. IGOs are often *slow*: ideas must wend up and down many levels to be adopted and implemented, and meanwhile that entire bureaucratic hierarchy sits beneath a compound state-principal who burns additional time by negotiating a single shared position or proceeding with a jumble of positions. IGOs are also *cloistered*: they are centralized structures in which multiple chains of command converge, and they tend to be located in a small handful of wealthy cosmopolitan Western cities that are physically and psychologically distant from ordinary people. Perhaps most worrisome, IGOs seem *unaccountable*: the public does not directly elect them, many of their member-governments are not directly elected either, and their jostling assortments of member-states discipline them only intermittently and imperfectly.

### **IGOs' Seven Pitfalls: Problems with Output or Processes**

Figure 1 aggregates this discussion. Naturally, IGOs are both bureaucratic and inter-governmental, for they are formal organizations that serve states. But both core characteristics pose hazards. IGOs' inter-governmental nature makes them politically sensitive and hit by free-

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<sup>50</sup> Johnson 2014.

riders, which puts them at risk of becoming timid and impecunious. IGOs' bureaucratic nature makes them rule-bound and elite, which easily shades into being rigid and unrepresentative. Meanwhile, the interplay of inter-governmentalism with bureaucracy makes IGOs hierarchical, centralized, and non-elected – which in turn fuels impressions that they are slow, cloistered, and unaccountable.<sup>51</sup> Although idiosyncratic challenges may vex individual organizations, these seven pitfalls stemming from bureaucracy and inter-governmentalism challenge all IGOs, risking output problems or process problems.

Output comes in two main forms: directives or projects. Broad general-purpose IGOs such as the United Nations may pursue both types, but many IGOs focus on one or the other. For instance, the International Labor Organization and the World Trade Organization are more like regulatory bodies, issuing directives about states' policies in employment and trade, respectively. In contrast, the United Nations Development Program and the World Health Organization are more like administrative bodies, managing projects related to economic development and health, respectively.

IGOs' inter-governmental and bureaucratic nature can impede their output, resulting in a low number of directives or projects. However, problems with process are even more severe. Rather than requiring less wasteful use of inputs, solving process problems would require transformations in the inputs themselves. It is a call for improving legitimacy, not just efficiency. Inter-governmental organizations with problematic processes do not need to do more things – they need to do things differently.

Thus, an expedient way to distinguish between an output problem and a process problem is by asking, *Could this be alleviated if the organization kept its existing process but tweaked its efficiency, or would this be alleviated only if the organization abandoned its current way of doing things?* By this criterion, IGOs' impecuniousness, timidity, slowness, and rigidity are relatively manageable issues with output. Impecuniousness and timidity waste potential inputs in the form of material and ideational resources, while slowness and rigidity waste inputs in the form of time and effort. Hence, if an organization uses material resources, proposals, time, or effort more efficiently, it will be poised to produce more output. Efficiency requires challenging-but-feasible tweaks: get stakeholders to pay up, and get international bureaucrats to step up, speed up, and loosen up.

In contrast, IGOs' unrepresentativeness, cloistering, and unaccountability are tougher issues about process. Regardless of how many projects an organization administers or how many policy regulations it promulgates, those projects and regulations will be suspect so long as the organizations behind them seem narrow, inaccessible, and imperious. This common suspicion appears on the blog *Open Democracy*, for example, where one opinion piece charged:

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<sup>51</sup> For the IGO pitfalls that are relevant for understanding their outreach to non-governmental organizations, IGOs' inter-governmental nature exacerbates issues that arise from their bureaucratic nature. However, that does not mean that these two things always reinforce each other. Consider the political sensitivity flowing from IGOs' inter-governmental nature and the eliteness (in particular, expertise and specialization) flowing from their bureaucratic nature. As one set of scholars points out: "Expertise presumes a process by which alternative theories are evaluated systematically against available data within a framework shared by 'reasonable' (i.e., well-trained) people in order to rank ideas in terms of their plausibility. Politics presumes a process by which alternative policies are compared on the basis of the political resources of the people supporting them, in order to rank programs in terms of their acceptability. On the surface, one process attempts to reduce subjectivity through standardized procedures designed to assure verifiable knowledge; the other attempts to organize subjectivity through a set of bargains designed to assure social stability. One process seeks data; the other seeks allies" (March and Olsen 1989, 30). Given their mix of bureaucracy and inter-governmentalism, IGOs must balance their need for both data and allies.

[With their activities, IGOs] signal that leaders of these organizations are divorced from the realities that ordinary people face and do not use organizational resources to serve the organizational mission.... This undermines the legitimacy of such organizations, raises questions about their abilities and motivations to help solve global problems, and creates an impression that these organizations serve as clubs of the well connected.<sup>52</sup>

According to views like this, an IGO cannot "work" in enhancing people's wellbeing if people perceive that its very mode of operating is a snub to their aspiration for diverse, accessible, and accountable global governance processes. This points to a need for overhauls of IGO processes, in pursuit of legitimacy – and not just tweaks of IGO output, in pursuit of efficiency.

### **NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

These seven pitfalls are constitutive, flowing from the dual hazards of inter-governmentalism and bureaucracy. IGOs' inter-governmental nature certainly serves states' interest in being the fundamental units of governance, but in today's world nation-states are arguably "too small to cope with transnational realities" and "too big to deal effectively with many subnational problems."<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, IGOs' bureaucratic nature is a conventional response to complex situations, but it is not necessarily the only viable arrangement for dealing with international affairs. Output and processes suffer.

Therefore, it is natural to wonder whether both their output and their processes would improve if the two parts of IGOs' nature were diluted. What if inter-governmental organizations could be rebalanced by fusing them with their antithesis? How about NGOs, which present themselves as embodiments of global civil society?

### **Dual Safeguards: Non-Governmentalism and Networks**

After all, while IGOs are inter-governmental and bureaucratic, NGOs are characterized as non-governmental and networked. If the characterizations are accurate, this makes them mirror-opposites of inter-governmental organizations. As Figure 2 summarizes, these two "safeguards" go a long way in explaining prevalent enthusiasm about NGOs and their prospects for making global governance structures work.

NGOs' *non-governmental* nature is expected to make them bold and well resourced. Their *networked* nature is expected to make them flexible and representative. And the interactions of their non-governmental and networked features is expected to make them fast, accessible, and (at least somewhat) accountable to ordinary people.

### **The Non-Governmental Safeguard: Making IGOs Bold and Well-Resourced**

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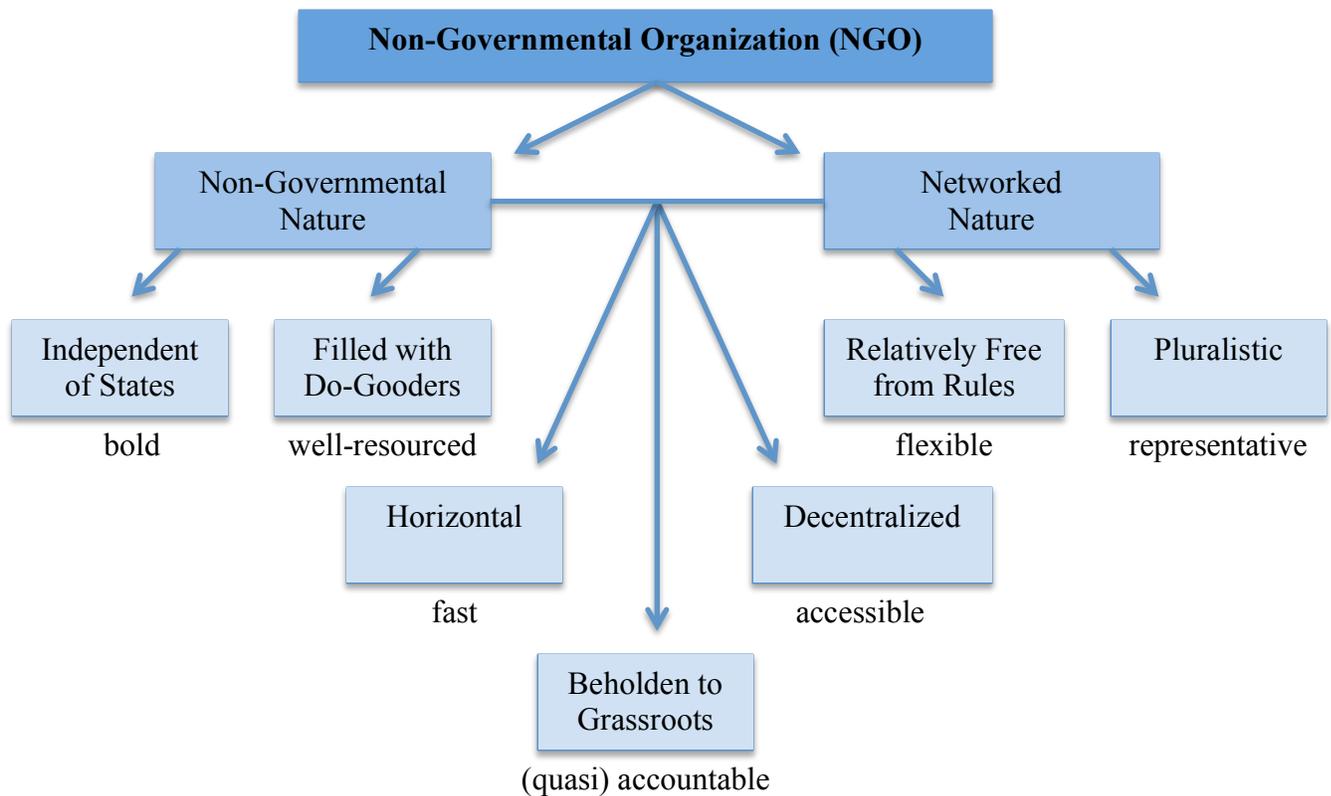
<sup>52</sup> Prakash, Aseem, and Nives Dolšak. June 9, 2017. "International Organizations and the Crisis of Legitimacy." *Open Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/openglobalrights/aseem-prakash-nives-dol-ak/international-organizations-and-crisis-of-legitimacy> (last accessed July 23, 2017).

<sup>53</sup> Toffler 1975, 268.

First consider NGOs' non-governmental nature. Like other segments of the broader "civil society," non-governmental organizations try to shape the governance of social life, but they do so while occupying spaces other than political parties or public office.<sup>54</sup> Thus, NGOs are simultaneously policy-minded and *independent of states*: they operate outside of governments but with an eye toward affecting governmental behavior. This contrasts with IGOs, which can never be truly outside of governments, since by definition inter-state bodies are one of their main parts.

Thus, in more ways than IGOs can, non-governmental organizations have opportunities to operate as pressure groups. Although NGOs and their proponents sometimes resist the pressure group label, it fits. Non-governmental organizations indeed are collections of people who make policy-related demands on governmental entities.<sup>55</sup>

**Figure 2: The NGO Antithesis?**



<sup>54</sup> Scholte 2004, 214.

<sup>55</sup> Baumgartner and Leech 1998, xxii. This definition fits with other work in policy studies, where pressure groups are identified by their aim/function (Jordan et al. 2004, 200-201). Note that for present purposes, the debate about whether individual corporations or government departments can also be characterized as pressure groups is not relevant. Here, the claim is simply that NGOs are pressure groups – but that does not mean all pressure groups must be NGOs, nor does it interfere with efforts to employ broader terms such as “policy participant” (Jordan et al. 2004, 205-210) or “advocate” (Baumgartner et al. 2009) to cover individual corporations or government departments as well.

Sometimes they make demands directly.<sup>56</sup> Other times, by providing services or information to the public, they make demands more obliquely.<sup>57</sup> But regardless of whether a non-governmental organization is known more for delivering particular services or for promoting particular positions, its actions and aspirations stem from a seed of dissatisfaction that indirectly or directly pressures public policy. What NGOs undertake themselves – or what they push governments and inter-governmental organizations to do – are things that governments and IGOs refuse to do, do not do enough of, or have been incapable of doing.<sup>58</sup> Hence NGOs are pressure groups because of what they do concerning public policy, regardless of whether they relish being labeled with this term, and regardless of whether applying pressure is their sole or primary aim.<sup>59</sup>

Although they are undeniably policy-minded, non-governmental organizations benefit from their dissociation from the governments they are pressuring. In contrast to international bureaucrats, whose IGOs are formal agents of states and whose supra-national bodies must function alongside inter-state ones, the people working within NGOs have greater leeway. They still must pay attention to their members and donors; but often their members and donors accept, even encourage, exerting strong pressure on states. Therefore NGOs can and do draw attention to governments' shortcomings, undertake things that governments dislike, condemn governments that flout expectations, and boomerang past governments that stand in their way.<sup>60</sup> As a result, the NGO population has acquired a reputation for creativity and courage.

Their non-governmental nature facilitates not only their daring, but also their mustering of resources. Most obviously, if non-governmental organizations receive no funding from states, then states cannot employ one of their favorite tactics: threatening to cut off funding to entities that irritate them. This is a prevalent tactic because, whereas authoritarian regimes may entertain even more overt means of repression, both authoritarian and democratic regimes find it acceptable to tinker with resource streams. Such tinkering is a common way to chasten or starve IGOs, but NGOs can protect themselves from it by raising all of their money through non-state sources such as membership dues and philanthropic foundations.

Moreover, some research suggests that non-governmental organizations will be less riddled with free-riding than are inter-governmental organizations. IGOs are saddled with the paradox of sovereignty, in which states with very different capabilities are nevertheless supposed to be treated as equals, with none being forced to do what it does not agree to do. In addition, IGOs are tasked with offering public goods or common-pool resources, which are difficult to exclude from those who do not fully contribute. Their member-states are protective of their own sovereignty and competitive with one another, often following an instrumental logic that emphasizes self-serving interests. And as sovereign entities, states cannot easily be pushed to do otherwise. Thus, in inter-governmental organizations, free-riding is a serious threat.

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<sup>56</sup> Political scientists sometimes refer to "advocacy" and "service" groups, but other terms convey similar meanings. *The Economist*, for instance, refers to "campaigner" NGOs that promote issues deemed important by their members, and "helper" NGOs that deliver relief (*The Economist* 2000, 25).

<sup>57</sup> And in practice, distinctions between influencing governments and affecting public attitudes are often blurred (Willetts 1982, 182).

<sup>58</sup> White 1951, viii; Najam 2000, 380.

<sup>59</sup> Willetts 1982, 1-2; Willetts 1996a, 2. In addition to serving political aims, applying pressure can serve other functions (Knoke 1990). Lobbying, for instance, may help "organizational maintenance by developing political and technical expertise, gathering information, sustaining political networks, or enhancing public visibility vis-à-vis key constituencies.... Thus while much lobbying could easily be viewed as ineffective in terms of shaping policy outcomes, this may under-estimate the usefulness of the lobby effort" (Beyers et al. 2008, 1115).

<sup>60</sup> Keck and Sikkink 1998.

NGOs face a rosier situation. Although they too work to deliver public goods or common-pool resources, they are more distanced from the rivalries and sovereignty concerns of states. With this distancing, they need not operate solely according to an instrumental logic of interests and cost-benefit analyses. Instead, they can pursue a principled logic of altruism and values.<sup>61</sup>

In fact, observers regularly comment on the selflessness and intrinsic motivation of NGO personnel. Thus while inter-governmental organizations contend with free-riders among states, non-governmental organizations revel in do-gooders. Research from individual organizations, discrete policy-making junctures, and specific policy issues suggests that non-governmental organizations are *filled with do-gooders*: for instance, many NGOs are able to rely on volunteers or below-market-wage workers.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the “psychological pay” of making direct and meaningful contributions to society makes up for remuneration that is smaller than what people could obtain in private-sector or public-sector posts. Whatever the reason, many NGOs seem to run on strong individual commitments.<sup>63</sup>

When the demand to contribute comes from within individuals, resources get a boost in two ways. First, people give more. They do not scrimp on offering their money, time, connections, effort, ideas, and other resources – and they do not ease off when they see that others are contributing similarly. Second, people take less. They want the payoff from their contributions to accrue far beyond themselves.

This holds the potential to muster an array of material and non-material resources that are not easily matched by public-sector or private-sector entities. For instance, as one proponent points out:

[NGO influence is] achieved by building expertise in areas diplomats tend to ignore and by revealing information economic interests tend to withhold.... [I]t is influence gained from speaking when others will not speak, from espousing something more than narrow self-interest, from sacrificing personal gain for broader goals, from giving voice to those who otherwise do not have it.<sup>64</sup>

In other words, non-governmental organizations benefit from attracting a significant proportion of political entrepreneurs.<sup>65</sup> Rather than shirking on their contributions, political entrepreneurs are so eager to see particular goods, services, or changes that they will contribute even more than their “fair” share to bring them to fruition. Thus while inter-governmental organizations contend with free-riders among states, non-governmental organizations seem to be awash in do-gooders.

In these ways, NGOs' non-governmental nature is a safeguard, protecting them from government caprices. Whether focusing on service-delivery or advocacy, non-governmental organizations can be *bold*, addressing problems or raising awareness in ways that other entities will not, or cannot. Compared to IGOs, they are more independent from states and operate more explicitly as pressure groups. Non-governmental organizations are also relatively *well*

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<sup>61</sup> Sikkink 1993, 412; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 1. Also see Trumbull 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Risse 2010. NGO employees are not subject to the same checks-and-balances that shareholders can impose on private firms, and therefore NGOs must be particularly mindful about attracting managers who are committed to an organization's cause. Below-market wages are one way to prompt self-sorting among candidates (Handy and Katz 1998, 259).

<sup>63</sup> Boli and Thomas 1997, 180.

<sup>64</sup> Princen 1994, 41-42.

<sup>65</sup> Olson 1965.

*resourced*. They deliver types of expertise and other resources that governmental and business entities do not tend to cultivate, and they also may benefit from a deeper bench of political entrepreneurs who surmount some of the free-riding and conventional collective-action problems that plague sovereign states.

### **The Networked Safeguard: Making NGOs Flexible and Representative**

Safeguards lie not only in NGOs' non-governmental nature but also in their networked nature. Networks are distinct from the discrete exchanges of markets or the administrative fiat of governments.<sup>66</sup> They host "voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange."<sup>67</sup> They are webs of links and nodes, rather than one-time transactions or formal bureaucratic structures.<sup>68</sup> Like markets, networks can connect a variety of different actors; like governments, networks can host repeated interactions that cultivate familiarity.<sup>69</sup> However, networks may sidestep both the ephemerality of markets' one-time transactions and the staidness of governments' bureaucratic structures.<sup>70</sup> As such, they hold a particular appeal.

One part of the appeal is the relative *freedom from rules*. Although individual NGOs may be subject to external rules imposed by the countries in which they operate, or informal norms within their peer group, NGO networks themselves contain few formal rules. After all, the networks are voluntary, informal, and undulating – hardly hospitable to strict requirements about what participants can and cannot do.

This sharply contrasts with bureaucratic inter-governmental organizations. There, as discussed above, rules come in at least three forms. IGOs craft regulations to guide the behavior of outside actors. They develop in-house routines over time. And they receive initial and updated delegation contracts from member-states.

For NGOs, each of these sources of internal rules is dampened. Routines certainly may develop within an NGO over time, but the mutability of actors moving in and out of parts of the broader network impede the formation of a myth of "how things have always been done" across groups of NGOs. Non-governmental organizations sometimes assist with regulatory functions, but such functions are often taken on voluntarily by fluid sets of NGOs, not imposed on a particular NGO by outside forces. Non-governmental organizations regularly develop mission statements, but those are hardly as intensive as the stipulations that IGO-agents receive from their state-principals – which makes sense, since NGO networks speak for their members but generally were not created by them. The actors and circumstances that load IGOs with rules are curtailed within the networked context of NGOs.

Being relatively free of rules, NGOs can reposition nimbly, gliding in and out of partnerships, undertakings, and areas of the world. Thousands of organizations and millions of individuals engage in continually shifting relationships with one another.<sup>71</sup> In short, these networks are "lighter on their feet" than bureaucracies are.<sup>72</sup> This arms the NGO population with an elasticity that IGOs may admire but can rarely match.

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<sup>66</sup> Powell 1990, 303.

<sup>67</sup> Keck and Sikkink 1998, 8.

<sup>68</sup> Hafner-Burton et al. 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Trumbull 2012.

<sup>70</sup> Slaughter 2017.

<sup>71</sup> Toffler 1975, 264.

<sup>72</sup> Powell 1990, 303.

The networked nature of non-governmental organizations also means that a *pluralistic* segment of civil society can find places within the webs of links and nodes. When pluralism works as hoped, access to policymaking is widespread, and both mainstream and narrow societal concerns have opportunities to organize and make their voices heard. With such diversity, even the most marginalized people have a presence in the network.

Pluralism is an undeniably competitive system, in which only the finest ideas and groups are supposed to rise to the top. But to go further than those who possess the most intimidating resources or who shout most loudly, the system needs to be open, making entry possible for a broad variety of groups. An insight from American politics also applies to the international realm:

[I]n the absence of any overt barriers to mobilization.... each mobilization could set off a counter-mobilization by those with different views, and the end result would be a set of [pressure] groups accurately reflecting the needs and desires of the population.<sup>73</sup>

In other words, ideas and groups can be "kicked out" later as the system identifies those that are infeasible or undesirable – but for pluralism to work, they should not be "kept out" and denied the opportunity to compete in the first place.

Non-governmental organizations are pivotal in making that happen. Many NGOs take pride in standing up for regular people. They cultivate a reputation as a third sector, distinguishing themselves from the ostensibly greedy private sector and the seemingly indifferent or repressive public sector.<sup>74</sup> As one practitioner eloquently acknowledges, NGOs appear to be guardians of the common man against a host of threats: vulgar corporations, untrustworthy governments, and cumbersome IGO bureaucracies.<sup>75</sup>

Indeed, non-governmental organizations are very careful to underscore their ability to represent people that corporations, governments, and IGOs do not. For instance, in conjunction with the Millennium Summit held under the United Nations' auspices in 2000, coalitions of NGOs released several documents listing demands. Employing a "language of entitlement," these coalitions asserted that they were the embodiment of global civil society and therefore possessed the right to hold greater policymaking roles within inter-governmental organizations.<sup>76</sup> They – along with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who was pushing states to adopt the Millennium Development Goals his staff had crafted – also challenged governments' tight grip over IGOs. Repeatedly, Annan and the NGOs emphasized that the UN Charter opens with the phrase "We, the Peoples," not "We, the States."<sup>77</sup>

Drawn from civil society, NGOs are vehicles for communicating an array of societal concerns at the international level. In the competitive context of pluralism, they are key components in ensuring that a plethora of policy views will contend with one another. Without non-governmental organizations, this pluralistic system would contain far less diversity among the competing groups, and ordinary people would have far less of a voice.

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<sup>73</sup> Baumgartner and Leech 1998, 54-55; Truman 1951.

<sup>74</sup> Ottaway 2001, 270.

<sup>75</sup> Clark 1991, 52-53.

<sup>76</sup> Ottaway 2001, 279, 292.

<sup>77</sup> United Nations. 2000. "We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century." Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/We\\_The\\_Peoples.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/We_The_Peoples.pdf) (last accessed July 31, 2017).

To sum up, then, NGOs' networked nature produces ostensible advantages vis-à-vis IGOs' bureaucratic nature. Along with non-governmentalism, the network acts as a second safeguard, preventing the rigidity and unrepresentativeness that plague IGOs. Non-governmental organizations can be *flexible*: being far less rule-bound, they are freer to work on what they want, where they want, with whomever they want. The networks they inhabit give them elasticity and ample opportunities nimbly shift among partnerships, undertakings, and areas of the world. NGOs also can be *representative*: they not only espouse diverse views but also speak for societal segments that tend to be marginalized by governments, IGOs, or corporations. They can champion the wellbeing of ordinary people in ways that transcend national borders or economic interests.

### **The Combination of Safeguards: Making NGOs Fast, Accessible, and (Semi) Accountable**

Alone, the networked side of their nature can make NGOs flexible and representative. Meanwhile, the non-governmental side of their nature can make them bold and well resourced. Combined, however, NGOs' dual nature promises three other attractive and closely related features.

First, non-governmental networks are touted as *horizontal*.<sup>78</sup> In contrast to IGO hierarchies, there is neither a formal ladder of veto-points to climb, nor an overarching set of state-principals to satisfy. After all, while hierarchies attempt to steer all actors onto a single pre-determined route, networks leave actors free to use whichever route is most expedient at a given time.

Multiple possible routes are the essence of a network. Whether the destination is partnerships, undertakings, or areas of the world to serve, actors can explore several routes – either successively or simultaneously – to figure out which takes them furthest, at the greatest speed. The more complex the network, the less likely that an individual node can stymy movement and the more likely that some possible route can be found from point A to point B. In order to act, a hierarchy would need to mobilize all of its levels, but a network would need to mobilize only some of its nodes.

As a result, non-governmental networks are credited with being *fast*. They do not force all actors to use the same route. They do not presume that the appropriate route from last time will be most appropriate again. They do not contain a lot of a veto points. They do not await governmental approval. They do not require mobilization of every single node. And upon completion of whatever mobilized them, they are ready to be used again, for some different purpose.

Given how non-governmental networks function, it is easy to see why they are credited with a second important and related feature: *decentralization*. Just as networks do not contain ladders, they do not operate under a single overarching authority. True, some nodes may host more connections than others and therefore may take on informal gate-keeping roles.<sup>79</sup> Yet even those nodes do not possess the active and passive veto power that rungs on a hierarchical ladder would have. Moreover, often there are at least a handful of densely connected nodes, and they can counter any single node that attempts to gain control over a network.

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<sup>78</sup> Keck and Sikkink 1998, 8.

<sup>79</sup> Carpenter 2014.

Networks are decentralized not only in terms of authority but also in terms of location. Since not every node needs to be mobilized in order for a network to act, networks do not need to be concentrated in a single physical location. Indeed, they should not be, because that would impede their long reach and their continual reconfigurations.

With diffused pockets of authority and dispersed physical locations, non-governmental networks also enjoy a reputation for being *accessible* to a greater swath of the general population. Places such as the United States, France, and the United Kingdom are home to – and perhaps shape the cultures of – numerous non-governmental organizations.<sup>80</sup> However, while civil society groups do tend to be particularly robust in liberal Western democracies, there is no single location that hosts a preponderance of NGOs in the same way that Geneva hosts a preponderance of global IGOs. Today, homegrown NGOs now exist in most countries of the world. Hence compared to inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations are far less physically and psychologically removed from ordinary people.

NGOs try to capitalize on this to claim a third feature, being *beholden to the grassroots*. The grassroots are the masses: the hardest to reach, but arguably most fundamental, components of global civil society. Global civil society, in turn, is "that dimension of transnational collective life in which citizens organize themselves – outside their identity with a particular state or their role as a producer or consumer – to advance shared agendas and coordinate political activities throughout the world."<sup>81</sup>

Undeniably, non-governmental organizations try to link to the masses, but it is unclear that they are truly beholden to them. Absolute measures and relative measures would diverge. Though arguably more beholden than other actors are, often the ties to the grassroots are unidirectional.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, non-governmental organizations hyped the length of their membership rosters to substantiate their ability to convey "world public opinion."<sup>82</sup> However, closer inspection revealed that instead of being truly global, the bulk of the membership rosters usually were drawn from the robust civil societies of a handful of European countries such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.<sup>83</sup> Subsequently, NGOs tried to publicize how people's involvement in transnational social movements has increased in multiple regions of the world. But while researchers confirm that activity has grown in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the former Soviet region, they also note that those areas still lag far behind Western Europe and North America.<sup>84</sup> NGOs changed tack, admitting that while they may lack universal membership or mobilization, they nevertheless espouse universal values. However, skeptics struck here too, pointing out that non-governmental organizations could be mistaking hegemonic norms for voluntary universal ones.<sup>85</sup>

Recently, innovations in communication technology have made it affordable even for small NGOs to use website reports, video conferencing, and other means to show ordinary people how they operate. Yet here too, the communication tends to be one way. As one scholar sums up:

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<sup>80</sup> Stroup 2012.

<sup>81</sup> Wapner 2002, 204.

<sup>82</sup> Davies 2012, 419.

<sup>83</sup> Pickard 1956, 13.

<sup>84</sup> Smith and Wiest 2005, 622-623.

<sup>85</sup> Prakash and Gugerty 2010a, 16.

At best, the organizations have tended to have no more than loose oversight in a board (often composed largely of friends, who are in some cases paid), periodic elections of officers (with low rates of participation and sometimes dubious procedures), occasional general meetings (with sparse attendance), minimalist reports of activities (that few people read), and summary financial records (which often conceal as much as they reveal).<sup>86</sup>

Absolute measures do not support NGOs' claims of being beholden to the grassroots.

Relative measures fare better. True, the global masses have no real mechanism by which they are recognized as the ultimate authority and can hold NGOs responsible for any actions taken in their name.<sup>87</sup> Yet the global masses have no such mechanism versus states, inter-governmental organizations, or corporations either. And in opinion polls, ordinary people around the world regularly say that NGOs outshine other actors in doing what is right for the global public. For instance, even in traditionally NGO-wary countries such as China, in various years the public's trust in non-governmental organizations exceeds their trust in the private or public sectors.<sup>88</sup> Among Americans in a 2010 survey, 70 percent trusted non-profit organizations more than government or business "to address some of the most pressing issues of our time."<sup>89</sup>

Attributing the public's trust to a specific mechanism within non-governmental organizations is difficult, because there is no formal accountability mechanism. Like the leaders of corporations, inter-governmental organizations, and many states, NGO leaders are not popularly elected. The public does not vote to put them in their posts and does not vote to remove them. But for some reason, the global masses often do indicate greater comfort with non-governmental organizations than with these other actors.

Thus, NGOs can be credited with being at least *quasi-accountable* vis-à-vis the public. After all, accountability may be broader than being formally held responsible by external forces. Perhaps it also exists wherever an actor takes responsibility for itself and genuinely attempts to enhance the wellbeing of others, even if those other actors have no apparatus for rewarding or punishing it for doing so.<sup>90</sup> Compared to IGOs, NGOs seem to be given more of the benefit-of-the-doubt in this regard.

### ***NGOs' Seven Saving Graces: Potential Solutions for Output or Processes***

That makes sense given the bigger picture, as juxtaposed in Figures 1 and 2. IGOs' inter-governmental, bureaucratic structure produces unrepresentativeness, cloistering – and finally, an impression of unaccountability to the public. In contrast, NGOs' non-governmental, networked configuration results in more representativeness, accessibility, and quasi-accountability. Just as IGOs' pitfalls are an entwined package stemming from dual hazards within their very nature, NGOs' saving graces seem to be an interlaced set stemming from dual safeguards within their very nature.

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<sup>86</sup> Scholte 2004, 230-231.

<sup>87</sup> Edwards and Hulme 1996, 967.

<sup>88</sup> Edelman. 2016. Trust Barometer. Available at: <https://www.edelman.com/insights/intellectual-property/2016-edelman-trust-barometer/> (last accessed August 13, 2017).

<sup>89</sup> *The Economist* 2010, 70.

<sup>90</sup> Ebrahim 2005, 58, 59.

Both types of actors are unelected. However, the public appears to pardon this more readily for pluralistic, decentralized NGOs than for elite, centralized IGOs. NGOs do things differently, and there is a payoff in terms of legitimacy. By being more representative, accessible, and quasi-accountable to ordinary people, non-governmental organizations seem to have found a way to transcend some of the thorny process-related problems that bedevil inter-governmental organizations. Instead of being a snub to people's aspiration for diverse, welcoming, and responsible global governance, they look like progress toward it.

At the same time, NGOs also appear to be conquering the more-manageable problems related to output and efficiency. Inter-governmental organizations are hierarchical, rule-bound, politically sensitive, and plagued by free-riders. The resulting pitfalls – being slow, rigid, timid, and impecunious – undermine their output. NGOs hold the promise of being able to do more things, for they appear to be horizontal, relatively free from rules, independent of states, and filled with do-gooders. This helps them to be fast, flexible, bold, and well resourced. In global affairs, could anyone get stakeholders to pay up, and get international bureaucrats to step up, speed up, and loosen up? Maybe NGOs can.

### **THE INCLUSION OF NGOs IN IGO ACTIVITIES**

Since at least the 1970s, many members of the public around the world – and several governments too – excitedly looked to civil society groups to mitigate problems with inter-governmental organizations. Especially within liberal democratic countries, civil society groups have long brought citizens "together non-coercively in deliberate attempts to mold the formal laws and informal norms that regulate social interaction."<sup>91</sup> Why not facilitate something analogous, as a "program" at the international level, with groups targeting IGOs rather than national or local governments?

Recognizing a window of opportunity, NGOs presented themselves as embodiments of global civil society and mirror-opposites of inter-governmental organizations.<sup>92</sup> Outside observers also portrayed NGOs as the soul mates that IGOs had not yet recognized. For instance, in testimony to the United States Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations in 1975, American author and social critic Alvin Toffler analyzed the United Nations:

The UN is heavy at the top, it has a sizable bureaucracy... Yet it has no roots. Its wires run from the UN to [its] nation-states and then stop. The UN, in a word, is all top and no bottom. When we look at NGOs, we find the exact reverse. They are all bottom and no top. They have lines and wires that run down through their affiliates into the lives of literally millions and millions of people around the globe. The NGOs are active, doing things everywhere. But there is no coordination, no systematic way for them to interact, no effective way to find other organizations with similar goals, and no way to really connect their energies.<sup>93</sup>

In this view, nation-states were already failing, and neither a centralized IGO bureaucracy nor an ad hoc NGO network, on its own, would be able to fill the void. The solution: pry open IGOs

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<sup>91</sup> Scholte 2004, 214.

<sup>92</sup> SOME EXAMPLES.

<sup>93</sup> Toffler 1975, 271.

and encourage NGOs to permeate these traditional global governance structures.<sup>94</sup> Connected beneath a thin layer of management and direction provided by international bureaucrats, civil society bodies at the grassroots would be able to influence and execute international policy tasks by mobilizing in customizable and provisional groupings.<sup>95</sup>

Such high hopes were widespread. For instance in a 1983 report about incorporating non-governmental organizations in development assistance, West German officials provided a simple summary of the appeal: NGOs act “as the exact opposite of bureaucratic.”<sup>96</sup> And given the nature of their resources, NGOs may serve as better counterweights to IGOs than governments or firms could, because they build “expertise in areas diplomats tend to ignore and [reveal] information economic interests tend to withhold.”<sup>97</sup> Moreover, because their constituencies can transcend national borders, they may be highly credible in claiming to be “sovereignty-free actors” who represent a global citizenry.<sup>98</sup>

The Adhocracy is supposed to revolutionize things. In melding with inter-governmental organizations, NGOs would become less haphazard. Meanwhile IGOs would be altered even more greatly, taking on the boldness, resources, flexibility, representativeness, speediness, accessibility, and accountability inherent in non-governmental organizations.

Thus, the Adhocracy ideal is not just about streamlining IGOs; it is about transforming them. With their very nature – plus their contributions of material resources, proposals, time, and effort – the NGO portion would overcome the IGO tendency to be impecunious, timid, slow, and rigid. In addition, in serving as internalized proxies for the general public, non-governmental organizations would combat inter-governmental organizations' tendency to be unrepresentative, cloistered, and unaccountable.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the injection of NGOs would tackle output problems and process problems, making conventional global governance structures not only efficient but also legitimate.<sup>100</sup>

Proponents of the Adhocracy urged nation-states to help NGOs permeate IGOs. For instance, Toffler reassured the U.S. Congress that even if they only provided modest resources such as office space, phone lines, or travel funds to non-governmental organizations, doing so would “significantly upgrade a fundamental piece of this emerging transnational network” and “go a long way toward replacing the present [UN] bureaucracy” with something more legitimate and effective.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, he was merely formulating specific policy prescriptions for a norm that was already developing in particular countries: NGOs were not just desirable partners. For good governance practices, they were requisite components.<sup>102</sup>

Since at least the 1970s, this is the policy that the U.S. and several other states – particularly Western democratic ones – have pushed with significant time, money, and political

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<sup>94</sup> For instance, domestic representatives other than officials from member-states' executive branch could be permitted to participate in deliberations. This would undermine governments' and IGO bureaucrats' usual domination over information (Grigorescu, 2007, 642).

<sup>95</sup> Toffler 1977, 271.

<sup>96</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 1983, pp. 50, 54-55.

<sup>97</sup> Princen 1994, 41-42.

<sup>98</sup> Rosenau 1990.

<sup>99</sup> For instance, including non-governmental organizations in international policymaking would force IGOs to hear alternative views, then either adopt those views or carefully justify any divergence (Dany 2014, 422).

<sup>100</sup> Steffek and Kortendiek 2017.

<sup>101</sup> Toffler 1977, 271.

<sup>102</sup> Reimann 2006, 59.

capital in international fora.<sup>103</sup> As the Cold War continued, the Eastern bloc and parts of the developing world remained wary. But after the Soviet Union disintegrated in the early 1990s, the pro-NGO norm gained momentum and peppered scholarly work as well.<sup>104</sup>

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the general image of non-governmental organizations was becoming an exalted one in numerous countries. In part, this was due to what NGOs had accomplished. For instance, one researcher describes the U.S. government's experience:

[Non-governmental organizations] have exhibited a chameleonic usefulness for pursuing foreign policy objectives that change from one administration to the next. In the 1950s they were perceived by many in the Congress and executive branch as bulwarks against communism and exporters of the American dream; in the 1960s as implementers of participatory democracy at the grassroots levels; in the 1970s as humanitarian agents for basic-needs fulfillment among the poorest, and in the 1980s as a proof that privatization is an effective solution to the economic problems of developing countries.<sup>105</sup>

Such experiences help to explain the decades of staunch bipartisan support the U.S. government has given to non-governmental organizations.

Exaltation of NGOs has been fueled not only by what they can accomplish, but also what they seem to embody. Emphasizing their “smallness, good contacts at the local level, freedom from political manipulation, a labor- rather than capital-intensive orientation, innovativeness, and flexibility in administration,” proponents contrast them with international bureaucracies, national governments, or corporations.<sup>106</sup> Non-governmental organizations seem to have “fewer material constraints, greater moral imagination, deeper ethical commitments, and more freedom of maneuver.”<sup>107</sup>

Interest in having NGOs shake up IGOs has intensified. Some international bureaucracies, such as the Secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization, long recognized the appeal of NGOs and had worked with them far before states pushed for it. Others were more standoffish until particular leaders led the charge. For instance, as president of the World Bank from 1995 to 2005, James Wolfensohn made collaboration with NGOs a “hallowed concept.”<sup>108</sup> International relations scholars, too, have mused that partnerships might be more generally useful, offsetting IGOs' “bureaucratic pathologies.”<sup>109</sup>

With varying swiftness and enthusiasm, during the last several decades inter-governmental organizations opened themselves to non-governmental organizations. Like states, IGOs have expended tremendous material resources, human capital, political will – and of

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<sup>103</sup> These efforts have produced, for example: the World Bank Inspection Panel (created in 1993 to improve accountability to local communities), reforms in the Global Environment Facility (carried out in the mid-1990s to improve meaningful participation from developing countries), the UNECE Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (which came into force in 2001), and the UN Environment Program's civil society forum (institutionalized in 2002) (Bernstein and Cashore 2007, 353).

<sup>104</sup> Sikkink 1993; Princen 1994; Boli and Thomas 1997; McCarthy 1997.

<sup>105</sup> Smith 1990, 192.

<sup>106</sup> Smith 1990, 6.

<sup>107</sup> Ron et al. 2005, 575.

<sup>108</sup> Ottaway 2001, 266.

<sup>109</sup> Abbott and Snidal 2010, 341; Barnett and Finnemore 2004.

course, opportunity costs – to bring forth the Adhocracy.<sup>110</sup> And now, many of the world's major IGOs offer some sort of official access for non-governmental organizations.<sup>111</sup>

Taken to be the antithesis of inter-governmental organizations, NGOs have been injected into IGOs on a widespread basis in the hopes of making the latter "work." The Adhocracy is here. A future step will be to find out whether it functions as envisioned.

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<sup>110</sup> Scholte 2004, 215-216.

<sup>111</sup> Tallberg et al. 2013.

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