

Looking Back at the Gap: International Organizations as Organizations Twenty-Five Years Later¹

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A quarter century ago we wrote a well-received article for the journal IO lamenting the fact that organizational sociologists ignored international organizations and international relations scholars knew little of the rich insights of organizational sociology. We now return to that original piece for a reassessment. While differences remain, we find a useful and healthy convergence. Both sides have moved closer to one another and have enriched their perspectives. International Relations scholars have come to see organizations as more than merely obedient mechanical tools in the hands of state leaders and have recognized a new set of highly complex players in the international arena. Organizational sociology continues to focus on the power of the environment to shape organizational form and behavior. “New institutionalism,” including “world society theory” in particular, has opened the field to a more nuanced and expansive view of how organizations work and has taken some account of the distinctive environment of the global, international scene. The rise of agentic actors of many stripes with greater legitimacy and social control beyond the nation-state has generated dramatic shifts in environmental influences. We applaud the convergence, note that organizational sociology still has need of greater recognition of the international arena, and make a few suggestions for future work.

Introduction

In 1988, twenty-five years ago this year, we published a well-received article in the journal *International Organization* highlighting the gap between organizational sociology and the study of international organizations. In fact, we called the gap “deep and persistent” (Ness and Brechin 1988:245). After reviewing key literatures in both fields, we find growing convergence between these two areas of study but also some differences and opportunities. This convergence is in large part the result of fundamental changes in both areas of scholarship. Among international

1. We would like to thank a number of scholars who have been helpful in many ways. We dedicate this article to Mayer Zald, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, who was very supportive of our effort twenty-five years ago and who showed considerable excitement about this new project before his passing in 2012. He will be missed as an extraordinary scholar but also as a supportive and valued colleague. Audie Klotz and David Van Slyke at the Maxwell School, Syracuse University, Michael Goldman at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, David John Frank, University of California, Irvine, Brian Gareau, Boston College, and Craig Murphy, University of Massachusetts, Boston were each generous with their time and knowledge. And finally, we must acknowledge the editors of this special edition, Martin Koch and Stephan Stetter, for their interest and especially their patience.

relations (IR) scholars, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) are seen now to have greater organizational autonomy as realists' perspectives have softened some with the end of the Cold War along with the rising forces of globalization, world society, and the decline of nation-state influence. IGOs today seem to be less-commonly viewed as simple extension of powerful states. This perspective has been replaced by what appears to be a more fluid set of actor relationships around both written and unwritten rules and processes within a messier concept of a society of states (Bull 2002). It is this fluidity that we would like to concentrate our attention on when discussing IGOs.

What appeals to our fellow sociologists with the concept of a society of states is that it appreciates more the complexity and nuances in behaviors and outcomes embedded in a social system comprised of more and less powerful actors—from individuals to nation-states to organizations. It is also a society that is affected by material and nonmaterial processes, values, norms, and other cultural influences that provide larger context for all actors, including states. However, we would also like to highlight the ability of non-state actors such as IGOs, nongovernment organizations (INGOs), and market-based firms (BINGOs) to help shape these norms, agreements, and related processes as well as the states themselves. In sum, we see the society of states as a social organization created by state actors, but with time it has taken on a life and logic of its own, doing what the creators never intended. This parallels sociologists' views of the nature of complex formal organizations and institutions. We discuss this more below. While the erosion of state sovereignty remains a much discussed subject (e.g., Krasner 2009; Kreijen et al. 2012; Meyer 2010) the forces of globalization and market liberalization are certainly making the world a different place, including encouraging the rise of supranational organizations like the European Union. We sociologists increasingly see organizations of all stripes as complex actors embedded in levels of environmental influences that shaped various processes and outcomes. This view seems to be shared increasingly among many IR scholars although with perhaps too much emphasis on the states and state power.

In organizational sociology, there is an even greater appreciation today than twenty-five years ago of the environmental influences on organizational behaviors and outcomes. In contrast to our original 1988 article, where we argued for the autonomy of IGOs from powerful states, organizational sociologists today tend to see organizations ironically as increasingly porous and having less autonomy. As Ellis (2010), we see nation-states, even powerful ones, as important factors in the environments of IGOs but only as one of many influences. We shall suggest that IR scholars may want to theorize more on the nature of the environments of IGOs that include various levels of state influence as well as on other actors and processes. What are the forces shaping IGO structure, behavior, and outcomes? How are IGOs affecting other actors and events in various environments? States too must be seen as a particular type of actor that is also influenced by changing environmental conditions as well. Hence, there are macro-level pressures shaping nation-states as well as IGOs that should be acknowledged. General questions arise: How do IGOs and states interact? What is the range of environmental influences that allow IGOs to engage in as instruments, as arenas, or as actors? What strategies are IGOs and their administrators employing to manage their environments? Are these strategies new? What are the macro-level environmental changes affecting nation-

states themselves? Globalization and neoliberalism are obvious ones; are there others? And how do these changes affect the activities of IGOs? When and how do IGOs influence the environments of nation-states and not simply the other way around?

While IR scholars appear to have been much more successful in integrating organizational theory into the study of international organizations (IOs), sociologists have failed to more fully develop a sociology of these transnational actors. This is likely in part the result of sociologists increasingly viewing organizations as simply organizations regardless of their placement in specific typologies, such as national or international, business, nonprofit, or public governmental (see DiMaggio 2001; Salamon 2002, 2012). There are sociologists who have focused on the behaviors of specific IGOs as well as their populations along with their consequences for others. We will examine several of these works. What has emerged from the shadows of organizational theory to the forefront is the view of organizations less as entities or nouns and more as verbs, e.g., “organizing” (Scott and Davis 2007) or as embedded in dynamic processes (Tolbert and Hall 2009) rather than static creations. Verbs suggest continuously changing environments for all actors from individuals to all organizations, including nation-states. There are social processes at play at various environmental levels.

As we did in 1988, the goal of this paper is to update readers on the state of organizational sociology and to apply some of these insights to the best of our ability as sociologists to the study of IO and IR theory. However, space is limited, so we focused only on a couple of highlights, mostly noted above. Our views are geared more to the meso and macro levels of organizational analysis and not at the individual or leadership. We begin, however, with a brief review on how we each viewed IOs in 1988. We then briefly summarize how several IO/IR scholars have made use of organizational sociology illustrating how in some ways the gap between the two fields has narrowed. Next, we explore briefly key contributions of sociologists to the study of IOs. Finally, we review recent developments and perspectives in organizational sociology and end with some thoughts on future directions in the study of IOs within IR. Our central conceptual points are as follow:

1. IGOs will likely have a range of independence from states depending upon their own characteristics and the environmental context they find themselves in, and that context may vary over time and by state actors. Or stated another way, we see IGOs as both responding to and creating environmental influences, state and non-state. What creates or allows that range of agency?
2. States too must be seen as actors who may not only shape the environment context of some IGOs but certain IGOs in certain context may define the environment for states.
3. There are larger macro-level environmental forces at play affecting all organizational actors, including nation-states. These include globalization, neoliberalism, and the myriad of the institutionalized in world society. As a result we conclude that IO and IR scholars may want to devote more attention to specifying the range and levels of environmental influences generated by IGOs as well those influences affecting them; the same holds for nation-states as well. In sum, differentiating the environmental influences would likely lead to greater understandings of IGO behavior and consequences—or as noted by Koch and Setter in their introduction—IGOs as instruments to (more independent) actors.

Before we begin, however, we feel it essential to define the boundaries of our discussion. From our readings, many IO scholars seem to typically focus on IGOs and at times seem to use the terms interchangeably. This can be confusing. We noticed this imprecision twenty-five years ago but held our tongue. We use IOs as a generic term for all forms of non-state actors working at the transnational or global levels. As a consequence, we consider IGOs as a subset of IOs connected to the United Nations system and other actors engaged in global governance and related interstate activities. IO scholars also seem to focus less on international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), with even less interest in international business organizations (BINGOs), although there are exceptions there as well (e.g., see the work by Craig Murphy and Joanne Yates (2009) on international standards networks that includes businesses). The relatively new *Journal of International Organizations Studies*, our host here, itself appears devoted specifically to understanding IGOs as organizations. As a consequence, we shall focus mostly on organizational theory and literature largely from sociology with most of our attention placed on IGOs, but we stray at times.

Historical Genesis

Our original 1988 article grew out of frustration. At that time, Gayl Ness was working on the international organization of population assistance in poorer developing countries, while Steve Brechin, under the supervision of Ness and Patrick C. West, was engaged in his dissertation research, a comparative study of three IOs that had recently adopted social forestry programs as a new form of rural development assistance. In the process of reviewing the literature, Brechin found little sociological literature on IOs. Likewise, Ness who had been studying international population assistance efforts for many years, especially involving the organizational efforts of United Nations Fund for Population Assistance, UNFPA, had experienced the same. We were surprised by the gap in the literature. Organizational sociologists were ignoring a growing number of organizations working across national boundaries, while IO and related IR scholars did not draw upon organizational sociology to help them understand the nature and behavior of international organizations. We decided we should expose this unexpected gap in the literature. Sociologist Mayer Zald and political scientist and IR scholar Harold Jacobson, colleagues of ours at the University of Michigan, and then editor of the journal *IO*, Stephen Krasner, provided significant encouragement for the project.

Brechin's dissertation research focused on how three very different IOs—the World Bank, United Nations Food and Agricultural Organizations (in particular FAO's Forestry Department), and CARE USA (now CARE International)—as self-interested actors, each possessed a particular set of strengths and weaknesses in pursuing similar tasks. This work built from several sociological classics on organizations such as Phil Selznick's *TVA and The Grassroots* (1949) and *Leadership in Administration* (1957), James D. Thompson's *Organizations in Action* (1967), Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik's *Resource Dependency Theory* (1978), and Mayer Zald (with colleagues) on their political-economy view of organizations as self-serving (Zald 1970; Wamsley and Zald 1977), as well as classic works that focused on the internal characteristics of organizations. In particular, Brechin attempted to understand the type of organizational outputs and their relative effectiveness related to tree planting efforts in the developing world from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s (Brechin 1989, 1997, and

2000).² What Brechin found was that the match between the organization, its environment, and the characteristics of the social forestry task itself led to very different types of social forestry programs by each organization and also their relative success in implementing their projects, especially for the rural poor. Brechin found that internal characteristics—especially the nature of the organization’s technology and its degree of bureaucratic flexibility greatly influenced where these organizations could work, what type of social forestry activities they could pursue, and how effective those efforts were on the ground. In short, FAO, the World Bank, and CARE are very different organizations with different capacities and constraints that led to very different organizational behaviors and outcomes when it came to the similar social forestry task. FAO assisted governments with social forestry programs that rarely reached the rural poor but built up some national/agency capacity; the World Bank funded tree plantations for commercial use via relatively large loans that often failed or served only the elite in developing countries of limited need; while CARE with its considerable flexibility was the most successful in planting trees and provided these programs to poor rural communities and farmers directly in those countries where the need was greatest. With this analysis the notion of organization performance took on a much more complex and multidimensional construction including geographic dimensions. The findings stressed the importance of organizations working together in complementary networks to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses in pursuing complex tasks such rural development in the developing countries.

Ness now works at the intersection of population-development-environment. But he began with studies of organizations as a graduate student under Phil Selznick at University of California—Berkeley. Organizations are carriers of value; they grow over time and take on distinctive characters giving them specific capacities and just as specific limitations. Fieldwork in Southeast Asia pointed Ness to powerful impacts on development promotion from organizational conditions. The World Bank was still promoting import-substitution development in Malaysia, but the country grew during the 1960s from export promotion, which soon became the new mantra of the Bank, which survives today. In its Rural Development Program (Ness 1968), Malaysia built an organization highly effective in turning the old colonial bureaucracy into a highly effective tool of development promotion, especially through physical infrastructure development.

The medical technology developed during World War II was found to be especially effective in reducing the high death rates that dominated the LDRs. With the new IGOs (WHO) to distribute this new technology, mortality fell rapidly in many countries, leading to rapid increases in population. That human population growth was soon seen to be a major impediment to economic development and a new set of IGOs (UNFPA, USAID etc.) and INGOs (IPPF) emerged to promote fertility limitation. By the mid-1960s they were aided immensely by the development of a new non-coitally specific contraceptive technology (IUDs oral pills, injections subdermal implants etc.). One very important aspect of the new mortality and fertility reducing technology is that they were what Ness and Ando (1984) call

2. In this study, Brechin had four dependent variables or, more accurately, sensitizing concepts: program entrance or when did the respective organizations begin their social forestry programs?; level of commitment or the amount of resources and level of activity each organization engaged in this new program; program appropriateness, or where did these organizations work? Were they in the countries and regions most in need of assistance?; and finally, program performance or how well did each organization do in directly making their program serve the rural poor?

bureaucratically portable; they could be carried by large-scale bureaucratic organizations and distributed rapidly through a wide population. In effect, they permitted dramatic reductions in mortality and fertility without requiring widespread changes in deeply embedded patterns of human reproductive behavior. Again, it was easy to see the *organizations* carrying these new technologies varied immensely in specific characteristics that affected their effectiveness. In health, for example, the World Bank gave many loans to promote health. But the standards by which it judged its field officers—the loan to labor ratio—usually meant the bank gave large loans for state-of-the-art hospitals in large cities, when the need was primarily for large numbers of small primary health clinics in the rural areas. A striking illustration of the difference this can make is seen in the contrast of Indian and Chinese health strategies. The Chinese (with no external assistance) developed the “barefoot doctors” program that greatly extended paramedics to the rural areas, which brought the infant mortality rate down at an exceptionally rapid rate. India chose major hospitals with bank loans, even further restricting the use of paramedics, resulting in far slower infant mortality reductions.³ The WHO and the World Bank also worked to assist the new population policies that attempted to reduce fertility. Finkle and Crane (1976) had shown how specific organizational characteristics of the WHO obstructed fertility decline programs. Moreover, Ness pointed out that though the World Bank gave substantial loans for population programs, it does not track the extent to which those loans are drawn down, thus it really has no idea how much it is providing to population programs.

The overall lessons from these and many other experiences in tracking organizational attempts to promote economic development and human welfare simply confirmed the basic observations learned from Selznick and others: Organizations matter, and the specific characteristics they develop over time play a large role in determining both what they will do and how effective they will be. However, without surprise, the literature in organizational sociology has evolved over the decades. Our 1988 paper and our earlier work focused less intently on the nature of the environment in which these organizations worked nor the importance of organizational networks. Today these would be seen as major oversights. In the sections below, we review some of the more significant changes in the sociological literature on organizations. With that said, IO and IR scholars have made considerable use of organizational theory to inform their work. We review some of those key developments next.

IO Scholars and Organizational Sociology: Toward a Contingency Theory of IGO Action?

A number of IR scholars have focused on the sociology of IOs. This has been especially true of such scholars as Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, among a number of others. Dikjzeul and Beigbeder (2004:7) credit Jonsson (1986) as likely the first scholar to point out the gap between organizational sociology and the study of IOs (and also focusing on organizational networks—a real pioneer). Dikjzeul and Beigbeder along with their collaborators focus on the failure of IR theory to fully incorporate a more dynamic appreciation of IOs, especially IGO relationships with INGOs, whose numbers and activities have proliferated in recent decades on

3. Ness calculated that had India been able to achieve the IMR that China achieved by 1980, it would have saved some thirty million infants from an early death. This is about the number of Chinese deaths from famine as a result of China’s disastrous Great Leap Forward 1958.

the world stage. However, Dijkzeul and Beigbeder's main point is on the need for IR scholars to focus greater attention on the actual management issues IGOs face. There seem to be limited contributions regarding those concerns. How do IGOs organize their work, acquire and manage resources, navigate tricky environments, and deal with particular failings or achieve success? Here the authors point to the need to investigate the literature and theories found in organizational sociology but also public administration. We would agree. In many regards public administration literature and perspectives may be closer in content than organizational sociology, given the common focus on the administration of collective goods.⁴ Dijkzeul and Beigbeder, along with their contributors, explore a number of these questions from the United Nations itself as well as change and transformation at the UN Conference in Trade and Development (UNCTD) due to environmental changes.

Barnett and Finnemore, especially with their 2004 book *Rules for the World*, have made the most detailed and convincing statement in applying established sociological perspectives to the study of IOs. In our opinion they argue successfully in explaining how IGOs create autonomy from powerful states. They begin with the statement that “we can better understand what IOs *do* if we better understand what IOs *are*” (Barnett and Finnemore 2004:9). In their volume, they expand upon some of their important earlier work to explore the International Monetary Fund, United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, and the United Nations Secretariat. What these authors focused on is the autonomous nature of IOs creating both bureaucratic capacity and failings. Similar to our 1988 paper, Barnett and Finnemore maintain a critical focus on the question of organizational action and performance. Drawing upon sociology's major early contributions to the study of complex formal organizations, these scholars clearly acknowledge the duality of organizations as both technical production systems created to achieve rationally identified goals, and an adaptive social system that give them independent capacities, limitations, and pathologies. Here they draw upon the classical insights of Max Weber on the nature of bureaucracies including the control of information, construction of knowledge and expertise under a hierarchy of offices and system of rules, aligned around the legitimacy of these legal-rational authority structures, along with the relentless pursuit of mission. Most of the book illustrates quite convincingly the relatively autonomous nature of IOs from state actors in various ways but particularly through the creation and use of bureaucratic rules to act and create social reality. We find below that this basic observation continues to be shared in sociological contributions to IOs as well. Yet while Barnett and Finnemore (and others) have succeeded in demonstrating independent bureaucratic capacity of IGOs separate from states, they do not fully explore the competition and cooperation among the IGOs given scarce resources or the broader environments which IGOs and states are both embedded.

4. Of interest, departments of public administrations throughout the U.S. at least have been reorganizing their curriculum in an effort to keep up dramatic changes in organizational environments of public agencies, including better understanding public agencies in different parts of the world. These rapid changes are largely the result of the global spread of neoliberalism ideology and forces of globalization making the world more interconnected and in endless flux. Demand for greater efficiencies, tighter budgets, and more timely and effective decisions are changing the nature of public agencies, especially in Western countries. Privatization and governance engagement with other actors and stakeholders has changed the very notion of public management. Are IGOs even though viewed as non-state actors feeling the same or different set of pressures as found in the public agencies of Western democracies? Given the rise of global culture and pressures, one would expect they are. Perhaps public administration departments will continue to internationalize their curriculum to more discussion of IGOs and their changing administrative needs? (see O'Leary, Van Slyke, and Kim 2010).

While Barnett and Finnemore's work was essential in explaining the sources of bureaucratic capacity that provides IGOs with some agency from nation-states, we sociologists have little to add to that discussion today. It is not that the topic of bureaucracies is unimportant, but rather it is not seen as cutting edge. Our attention has been elsewhere. What is more cutting edge is exploring how the bureaucratic form of organizing, that is, how the centralized, hierarchical, and rule-bounded forms, is under ferocious attack from relentless environmental pressures. This is discussed in more detail below in another section. But questions emerge. Are the bureaucracies of IGOs feeling the same pressure to flatten their structures and streamline their processes as most other organizations? If so, how are those pressures affecting what IGOs do and how they do it? If IGOs are not experiencing these pressures (which is unimaginable) or not as intently as other organizations (which is plausible), why? This would be exceedingly interesting to explore in detail. Are the environments of IGOs different and allowing them to maintain more or less their hierarchical structures and routines?

On the questions of the operation of bureaucracy per se, public administration is more likely to provide more insight as it has remained a relatively more active area of research. For example, see Ralph P. Hummel's (2008) *Bureaucratic Experience*.⁵ In a 2008 paper, some of which is repeated in the introduction to this special issue, Martin Koch moves the discussion forward considerably by seeing IGOs more as organizations than state creations. We applaud this notion. Here he articulates a stronger separation between IGOs and states by arguing that they are world organizations with much broader mandates, actions, and effects. In a growing number of cases, IGOs are monitoring and sanctioning states themselves, even powerful ones (see Hurd 2011). Koch and Stetter (see the introduction) make constructive use of three metaphors that place IGOs in a particularly different light based on their varying degree of connectedness to states—IGOs as instruments, arenas, and as more independent actors (although we would prefer the concepts of embedded and interdependent actors; see below). What is conceptually important here is to suggest that these metaphors may apply to different IGOs or the same one across different contexts, activities, and or time.

We view Koch's innovative thinking as very much more in line with the thinking of organizational sociologists. Here we see more an expansive and fluid view of IGOs as organizations in different contexts; even powerful states may be a particular yet limited stakeholder in the IGO's environment. There are other influences and processes at work beyond simply states shaping organizational realities. This broader view of organizations and their environment highlights possible limitations in using principal-agent theory with IGOs as it connects them much too closely to nation-states. While such a theory has utility in examining those specific dynamics between two actors, it may be limiting in view of broader environmental influences. Meta-organizations have garnered some attention recently (e.g., Ahrne and Brunsson 2008). While recognizing slight differences among organizations comprised of individuals versus other organizations might be useful to some, organizational sociologists would not tend to treat them as conceptually different. In fact, John Meyer (2010) considers individuals to be agentic actors as are organizations, lessening the distinction. The institution can be diffused by individuals' actions as well as by organizations' actions. Also,

5. Other key literature on bureaucracies likely useful to IR scholars include Svensson, Trommel, and Lantink (2008), Gains and John (2010), and Wise (2004).

in order to exist, all organizations must engage, recruit, and retain participants—whether those participants are individuals or other organizations. This is basic organizational theory with roots in the natural system perspective (see Scott and Davis 2007). Various business and industrial groups have existed for some time such as Chambers of Commerce or the National Association of Manufacturers. In that way, IGOs could be seen as examples of a type of membership-based organizations comprised of nation-states with various levels of governance responsibilities as does Ahrne and Brunsson. Another way of viewing meta-organizations is as a tightly knitted network of organizations (see Benjamin et.al. 2011), or discussions of networked organizations, engaged in nature protection. But not all network members would be created equal, and variance in the level of influence should be noted. Meta-organizations would also illustrate the imaginative ideas of Karl Weick (1976) who viewed organizations as loosely coupled systems.

While the term “autonomous” makes sense given the historical context of the debate found among the perspectives in earlier IR literature, we do not find it an appropriate term. (Note: we have used the term the same way as IR scholars have above to signal our understanding of that earlier context.) Current sociological theory would not consider any organization truly autonomous. Rather, organizations are empowered and constrained in numerous ways depending upon the specific context and related processes and relative organizational capabilities. Various degrees of actor agency would be a more accurate way of characterizing this understanding for a focal organization of an organizational set. More recent research by IR scholars, as noted above, IGOs have been shown to have varying degrees of agency while embedded in levels of environments. These environments are filled with opportunities, resources, threats, and constraints, both material and nonmaterial and at various scales. To some this focus on terms may seem an exercise in semantics, but word choice and framing often matter. States can be powerful stakeholders in the environments of IGOs. IGOs can be powerful stakeholders in the environments of many states. Future IR research may want to focus more on the organizational characteristics, strengths, and environmental conditions that provide IGOs with various levels of agency and impact. Which specific configurations of characteristics and environmental conditions actually shape specific behaviors and actions of any given IGO? How might IGOs contribute to the environment of states and even larger macro-processes such as neoliberalism (e.g., the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund, or the World Bank)? One might present this as a type of contingency theory of IGO agency—from limited to expansive agency.

Sociological Contributions to the Study of IOs and IR

As we noted in our introduction, sociology as a discipline has failed largely to focus consciously on IOs as organizations. Organizational sociologists increasingly are making fewer distinctions among types of organizations. This is discussed in greater detail below. However, sociologists (among most other social scientists) have developed keen interest in globalization processes and the neoliberalism agenda. These developments along with the rise of important international agreements have provided an avenue for some more recent contributions by sociologists on the consequences of IGOs on larger society to the more limited world of states and IGOs. In this section we now discuss selected sociological literature relevant to the study of IOs and IR.

Michael Goldman's Imperial Nature

Perhaps one of the most important recent exceptions in utilizing sociological perspectives to study IOs is Michael Goldman's 2005 well-received book on the World Bank. In his book, Goldman explores the well-worn path on the power of the international development banks. What makes his book particularly exciting is that he conducts an organizational analysis but draws upon sociological theory largely outside of traditional organizational sociology. In particular, Goldman makes use of both Michel Foucault's notion of "power/knowledge"⁶ as well as Antonio Gramsci's famous concept of "cultural hegemony" to understand why the bank has become so dominant in promoting its particular brand of "sustainable development" largely informed by a neoliberalism-based worldview. Foucault (1977:27) links power and knowledge in the following way:

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of "the truth" but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, "becomes true." Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations.

Goldman draws also upon Antonio Gramsci's concept of "cultural hegemony" (Gramsci 1971). Here Gramsci attempts to explain the failure of workers' revolutions in Mussolini's fascist Italy by arguing that the success of society's dominant ruling class in manipulating that society's cultural views and values to the degree where the elite's cultural values and views became the shared vision of meaning and acceptability for the entire society.⁷

What Goldman showed was how the bank constructed its own concept of sustainability, one that strongly favors a version supported by global economic elites, through its self-generated scholarship from its own reports and position papers. Given its relative wealth and power, what makes the World Bank unique as an IO is its ability to construct policy documents with its own funding programs. The bank in effect specifically operationalizes its own constructions of cultural appropriateness at a global scale. Through ongoing workshops, the bank trains development officers both within the bank itself, as well as officials from the developing world, in the bank's approach to sustainability. These trained officials demanded the bank's loan projects be designed around the bank's concepts of sustainable development projects. The bank then creates an "authority of 'the truth'" and shapes those requesting development loans to favor the particular programs from the bank and then makes those concepts reality on the ground. In short, the bank "makes itself true." Officers within the bank and those external to it mutually reinforce the bank's own concepts of sustainable development.

In essence, within the global development community, the bank defines appropriate sustainable development, and it becomes the world's dominant definition. Through bank action, the world community is provided a dominant cultural model of sustainability, built around the bank's support of market-based concepts of neoliberalism. The bank's hegemony over cultural

6. This is not to say that there is not a literature focusing on Foucault's contributions to organizational studies (see McKinley and Starkey 1998).

7. Of course, Gramsci is well represented in the IR literature (see Gill 1993).

models of sustainability has overshadowed other competing models of appropriate sustainable development. The bank's model gives greater legitimacy to the marketplace actors and approaches while delegitimizing those efforts by citizen groups, governments, and others who favor a more collective action or protection of public goods approach to addressing issues of sustainability. In more conceptual terms, the World Bank—shaped by broader environmental influences of neoliberalism ideology—has operationalized those values on the ground in its own terms, reifying them through its actions that have substantial and real consequences affecting how particular nation-states act and their multitudes of individuals and communities around the world.

Sarah Babb—Behind the Development Banks

Another well-received study of IOs, also on development banks, is sociologist's Sarah Babb's 2009 book *Behind the Development Banks*. The study focuses on domestic U.S. politics, particularly the interplay among congress, the U.S. administration, and bank officials, and how those interactions favor U.S. interests. Here the relationships are incredibly fluid over time regarding the specific politics being played out at that moment, but the common theme rests largely on how the bank's development programs support American businesses, in particular those in the districts of powerful committee members of congress. What is interesting here is how the U.S. government shapes some of the policies and actions of these international development banks. At first blush, this may appear to be a throwback to the realist perspective of state control of IGOs. However, organizational sociologists would not tend to view organizations as fully controlled or isolated from other powerful actors.

We view Babb's study, however, to be more in the spirit of Philip Selznick's famous 1949 study of the Tennessee Valley Authority on the politics of organization, or how organizations must adjust to powerful environmental challenges while attempting to promote their own objectives and interests. Political scientists and sociologists would both likely agree on the influence the U.S. government has had on international development banks given the historic rise of international development assistance with U.S. ascendancy following the end of World War II. From an organizational sociological perspective, however, the U.S. government would simply be seen as a powerful actor in the environments of these banks. The U.S. government has always been and remains a major financial supporter of these organizations, with U.S. representation on their governance structures as well. Congress, however, with its control over cash outlays, makes the U.S. government a particularly powerful stakeholder in their technical environments. These realizations tap into powerful theories on organizations, such as the Resource Dependency Theory (e.g., Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) that focuses on power differences and relationships among organizations and strategies to manage them. Control over resources as well as governance arrangements are obviously important sources of power. All organizations are dependent upon resources controlled to varying degrees by other actors in their respective environments. This lays the groundwork for the delicate dance between greater organizational agency pursued by leaders and the reality of dependent relationships. While Babb focuses on the U.S. influence on these organizations, she does not focus on how bank managers adjust to these influences. What strategies do they employ to minimize troubling dependencies and leverage advantageous ones? How do the managers interpret these forces?

And how do they and the internal constituencies navigate them to achieve the objectives they desire? An analysis answering these types of questions would provide completely different insights on these banks and their operations.

A Sociological Reexamination of the Montreal Protocol—Brian Gareau's From Precaution to Profit

Another sociological example looks at the network of organizations and related international governance structures that shapes international agreements, in this case the 1987 Montreal Protocol. Brian Gareau (2013) investigates recent developments in this important environmental convention that regulates harmful gases related to ozone layer depletion in our planet's upper atmosphere. This scholar focuses on the influence the broader cultural environment has had on the actors of environmental policy and practice. Gareau argues that the rise of neoliberalism over the last several decades has reshaped this critical international agreement. He explores the more recent discussion of the protocol's phase out of the chemical methyl bromide, a powerful ozone-depleting substance used largely as a soil sterilant in the production of various seeds as well as other products. Of interest, the chemical is a far more potent ozone destroyer than chlorine from refrigerants, the original focus of the protocol. It is also incredibly harmful to human health. The phase out of methyl bromide was not a part of the original agreement but was added to the protocol phase-out list in 1990 as part of the London Amendment. The U.S. is the largest user of the chemical. With market-based ideology growing in both the rhetoric and reality of government action globally, Gareau noticed shifts in discourse and ensuing power dynamics among the organizational actors in the international arena from the original agreement and later efforts to amend it. While the amendment to the protocol required a phase out of methyl bromide, the U.S. government, with urging from industry, fought hard to obtain exemptions for some of its use, particularly for strawberry production. The environmental NGO community provided little resistance and, in fact, focused their efforts around finding more market-based solutions to the problem. Gareau's analysis is in sharp contrast to the original scholarly research that touted the diplomatic and environmental successes of this international convention by Benedick (1998) and Canan and Reichman (2001). These scholars in both examinations hailed this convention as a model for future global environmental treaties although on different dimensions.

Gareau's work emphasizes that shifts in the broader organizational environment matter significantly and that in this case neoliberalism has changed culturally the support for new power dynamics among the existing governance structure. The rise of neoliberalism helped to shift the narrative of the Montreal Protocol away from the "healthy" notion of precaution to one for the greater protection of profit. As Gareau (2013:3) states, "This emphasis on the free market, however, has a way of changing the ways actors engage, debate, and interpret knowledge—including the Montreal Protocol." What Gareau uncovers is that with this ideology, powerful states, industry players, and even expected watchdogs—environmental NGOs, were in greater realignment with the principle of profit over precaution (also see Gareau 2012). In more conceptual terms, changes in values in the broader environment in which most organizational actors are embedded shifted the power dynamics among the key organizational actors within the later negotiations of this regime, giving more power to corporations with greater state support while diminishing the influence of civil society organizations.

The Economic Sociology of IGOs—The Work of Paul Ingram

Perhaps the most exciting example of how sociology and the study of IGOs/IR have converged in recent years is through the imaginative and thoughtful work of Columbia University sociologist Paul Ingram. With collaborators, Ingram has explored IGOs in several complementary ways—as in examining IGO performance engaged in particular activities such as economic relations, peace, and democracy as well as their ability to provide the context for interstate network connections. This later focus is accomplished through exploring the growth and decline of IGOs over time through organizational ecology perspectives (see Hannan and Freeman 1989). What binds the two works we examine here is his examining of IGOs as part of organizational networks. Network theory has greatly influenced organizational and economic sociology in recent decades. There seems to be a similar interest in networks in IR theory as well. Organizational networks quickly lead one to issues of governance arrangements, which of course is a central focus within IR. We return to that observation in the conclusion.

In a 2005 article, Ingram and collaborators attempt to answer a question that IR scholars have been asking for years—what impact, if any, do IGOs have on nation-states and world affairs? In this article, Ingram et al., ask a more specific question in this vein—do IGOs, such as the World Trade Organization, facilitate or hinder trade among member states? Here they cite Jacobson and colleagues (1986) who argued that at best the evidence historically has been mixed. Drawing upon economic sociology’s concept of “embeddedness” (Grandovetter 1985; Uzzi 1996),⁸ or the number and quality of network connections among actors, the effects IGOs have had in encouraging trade within the European Union (EU) can be explored. While IGOs promote institutions, it is the embeddedness of actor connections that seem to facilitate trade. They argue that the EU’s success in increasing trade was not simply the result of establishing institutions but the creation of an integrated society through the actions of IGOs. In their study, Ingram and his coauthors demonstrate that two types of IGOs have important effects on EU trade—economic IGOs or EIGOs and social-cultural IGOs or SCIGOs. The greater the number of connections made by SCIGOs among nation states the lower the transaction costs, supporting greater economic activity. The authors argue that the social and cultural integration generated by the SCIGOs made the actions of EIGOs more effective. So those state actors with the greatest connections increased in trade compared to those actors who had fewer. In fact, with their quantitative analyses, the authors measured the actual impact. They note that “doubling the level of connections between two countries across all IGOs is associated with a 58% increase in trade” (Ingram and Busch 2005:850). The authors conclude that there may be other connectivity factors here as well, such as efforts by INGOs or multinational corporations. Still, the role of IGOs in promoting integration and interstate trade was clear. This illustrates wonderfully the importance different kinds of organizations can make as we argued in our 1988 paper. Not all organizations are alike; their impacts may differ. This work seems to support the long-established Functionalist Theory of IR (Mitrany 1976). Do these findings give this old theory new life?

In a 2010 article, Paul Ingram and Magnus Thor Torfason expanded upon in part the 2005 research by using an organizational population-ecology approach to explore IGOs

8. In Uzzi’s well-known article, he showed that actors suffered from too few as well as too many network connections; there was a happy middle ground.

founding and death related to network connections in pursuing three activities—trade, peace, and democracy. They call these IGOs “network weavers” as these actors provided the *context* that facilitated, or made possible the weaving of, connections between nation-states. It is a complex, multi-dimensional study, but the results are exciting. Using a population-ecology approach to IGOs, Ingram and Torfason chart organizational density (births minus deaths) from 1815 to 2000. They demonstrate that as the number of IGOs increases so do the number of potential number of bilateral state ties. The relationship is nearly one to one. While this is what IR theories and others have long argued, or at least hoped for, this work confirms that basic relationship but also provides more nuanced insights.

From a population-ecology perspective, the growth in the number of IGOs would suggest there are resources available for such growth creating greater competition and performance among IGOs and perhaps other actors. The authors continue by stating the following: “IGOs are more likely to be founded and less likely to fail when they incorporate easier affiliations, particularly those between states that are similarly democratic and geographically proximate. IGOs that incorporate affiliations that are particularly valuable were both more likely to be founded and more likely to fail, with valuable affiliations being those between states that had recently warred and those with more dyadic trade” (Ingram and Torfason 2010:598). They go on to find that IGOs that span structural holes (Burt 1992), i.e., those actors that connect two completely separate networks (which may be rare in IR), were less likely to fail. The authors show there are greater IGO births and fewer deaths when the citizens of the states engage actively with NGOs. These findings suggest a positive interdependency between IGOs and NGOs. Ingram and Torfason conclude with ideas for future research. Specifically, they suggest that future research may want to explore the variation among the IGOs, such as by sector, and what particular impacts they may have on respective global actors and processes.

New Institutionalism and World Society Theory

New institutionalism theory represents a cultural turn in organizational sociology (see Meyer and Rowan 1977 as a foundational piece; see too Scott 2008). It challenges rational choice theory by arguing that organizational structure and action may not always be rooted in utilitarian pursuits. Rather, organizations pursue courses of action for the sake of securing legitimacy from the larger environment sometimes through the construction of myth and ceremony. It should be noted, however, that greater legitimacy does typically translate to material resources by signaling to others the organization’s appropriateness. In that sense, such efforts should be viewed as strategic.⁹ Additional work (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; and Powell and DiMaggio 1991) has argued that those organizations sharing the same organizational fields (or industrial sectors), or more tightly embedded and networked organizations who engage each other often are affected by similar external pressures, typically look and behave similarly through several processes of isomorphism.

New institutionalism illustrates exceptionally well how organizational sociology and the study of IOs have come much closer together (see Barnett and Finnemore 2004; but especially Finnemore 1993; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Barnett and Finnemore (1999:700), citing

9. Before going too far and assuming that new-institutionalism remains rooted in rationality, see work by Frank Dobbin (1994; 1997). In these two pieces Dobbin convincingly argues that rationality itself is culturally based.

Kranser (1983) state that “Regimes are ‘principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures’; they are not actors.” This sounds right in that organizational actors typically are players in the construction and maintenance of regimes and are not the regimes themselves. However, regimes too are processes created and observed by organizational actors, but who are then shaped by the constructed processes themselves as well as by broader norms, values, and material realities found in the even broader environment. Regimes then become part of the embeddedness for those organizations they engage directly, and they may have larger consequences for others. This parallels sociology’s critical but sometimes fuzzy distinction between institutions and organizations (see Scott 2008; Selznick 1996). In fact, IR regimes are used by Scott (2008:79) as an example of particular type of institutional process.

What we like about the concept of regime, beyond a simple understanding as an international agreement, is that it combines actors and activities, discourse and norms collectively created to address a collective action problem. But it is the network of actors engaged in processes that shape that collective reality for others, not simply a single actor. International regimes become equivalent to an organizational field for those organizations engaged in that regime. These networked organizations likely face similar pressures and would likely begin to look and act more similar to one another. This moves the discussion of organizations in a different yet important direction to networks of actors embedded in process. We return to this important observation in the next example below.

In sociology, our social theories “have tended to see human social life as embedded in institutions, or as exogenous patterns of meaning and organization” (see Jepperson 1991 as cited in Meyer 2010:2). To us, this view takes us back to Hedly Bull’s notion of the society of states but perhaps with slightly less emphasis on the states (or perhaps more as a system in which states are becoming increasingly less influential). Organizational sociologist John Meyer and colleagues (1997) in an *IO* article introduced a broader yet compelling understanding of “environmental regime,” somewhat different from that of IR scholars. This article introduced to the IR community Meyer’s concept of “world society” that defined a world environmental regime “as a partially integrated collection of world-level organizations, understandings, and assumptions that specify the relationship of human society to nature” (Meyer et al., 1997:263).

A version of new institutionalism has expanded into a broader concept called “world society” or earlier known as “world polity” (see Krucken and Drori 2009 for a recent excellent comprehensive volume on the theory). The point here is that while IR regime theory is incredibly useful in understanding norms, agreements, and processes around addressing a particular international problem, such as regulation of gasses depleting our ozone layer, there are broader socio-cultural processes at work that need to be recognized. These larger processes affect IGOs, other organizations, nation states, and larger constituencies. They provide the cultural foundations and processes for IR regimes themselves. In sum, IR regimes should likely be seen as a narrower and more specific, tightly bounded set of processes and expectations typically managed by and involving a particular set of organizational actors. There are other broader norms and processes that occur beyond those tied specifically to international conventions. These shape our world culturally and symbolically providing the essential backdrop for these more narrow actions.

As an outgrowth of new institutionalism, World Society Theory stands in sharp contrast as well to the core material power perspectives behind cultural trends and consequences offered by Michael Goldman, Sarah Babb, and Brian Gareau above, but it can, although it rarely does, recognize the biases of an established world order regarding what becomes institutionalized and how. But it is what becomes institutionalized and diffused that matters. Meyer (2010) makes the case for agentic actors—from individuals to all organizational actors, including nation-states that create environments of the institutionalized that influence the behavior of all actors as the result of global diffusion. So it is a type of structuration—of actors at all levels involved in both creating change in patterned relationships while reinforcing them. Hence, the role of interdependent actors in World Society Theory is clear as both carriers and recipients in the global diffusion of cultural values, practices, ideas, innovations, and structures. Still one needs to be mindful of the full range of actors involved from individuals to civil society organizations at all scales, social movements, ideas and ideologies, firms, international public bodies, and nation-states. As in new institutionalism, the objective of World Society Theory is to understand the diffusion of similar ways of doing and being globally across numerous domains. IOs are seen as important carriers of global (i.e., dominant) culture largely through the distribution of rationalized scientific information and findings as well as professionalized knowledge and practices (Krucken and Drori 2009:13). Meyer (2010) sees nation-states themselves as recipient actors of cultural diffusion from IGOs who acquire them from institutionalized concepts and practices or the cultural construction of social agency at the global level through world society. Institutions confer status, identity, and rights to social actors. They provide as well these actors with schemata for making sense of the world.

For interesting examples regarding the global diffusion of environmental protection efforts see work by David Frank and colleagues (2000) and an equally interesting critique from the late Frederick Buttel (2000). Those interested in how the international community might prolong civil wars in weak states, see Ann Hironaka's 2005 book *the Neverending Wars*. What we find in the earlier works by Finnemore (1993) and Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) is a focus on the role of IGOs like UNESCO in diffusing values and policies through their actions. What they observe is a more fine-grained analysis of actual actors at work in the diffusion through World Society Theory. John Boli has done similar work looking at INGOs as diffusing global culture (see Boli and Thomas, 1998). World Society Theory and current perspectives in IR seem to illustrate extraordinarily well the convergence between organizational sociology and the study of IOs.

Recent Developments in Organizational Sociology

It is not surprising that the perspectives of both organizational sociology and international relations have changed over the last twenty-five years. In fact, one would be more surprised if they had not. Yet few things are truly new. Rather, with time comes new found emphasis on concepts introduced earlier. Below we highlight some of those changes in organizational sociology and raise a few questions hopefully relevant to the study of IGOs.

The literature we covered in our 1988 paper, especially regarding the five elements of organizations (goals, technology, participants, structure and environment) and their analysis, as related to performance, is not inaccurate today. Rather, the field has moved on; there are

new insights and emphases. As is likely obvious by now, organizational sociology continues to value the importance of environmental influences on organizations and their structure and behavior. This comes through clearly in our discussions above. Interest in organizational networks has gained considerable attention in recent decades along with the shift from organization as entity to organization as process. Here we increasingly see organizations as little more than semi-bounded internal networks of information flows and decision making. Organizations connecting with other organizations have become an even greater focus more recently even though the advent of the open systems perspective articulated the importance of growing environmental turbulence in shaping organizational realities.

To help us reflect briefly on these new changes in organizational sociology, we draw upon the thinking of organizational sociologist, W. Richard Scott. In 2004, Scott provided a reflection of his fifty years of scholarship in this field; we have reorganized them slightly. He places these recent developments into three major areas: changing boundaries and strategies, changing power processes, and changing concepts of organizations as entities to processes (also see Scott and Davis 2007). We see these discussions as having relevance to both IOs and IR.

Changing Boundaries and Strategies

Originally viewed as more or less closed or bounded social systems, our conceptualizations of organizations have evolved over the decades, and especially with the rise of the open systems perspective. Today, organizations are seen as much more porous and ever changing. Instead of closed-bounded systems, they are now seen as nearly borderless. What activities and participants are included within an organization and which ones are excluded takes us essentially to the theoretical perspective of Transaction Cost Analysis (Williamson 1975, 1985). With greater environmental turbulence due to economic and cultural globalization and rapid changes in technologies, especially communication based, among many other influences requires organizations to be far more reactive to changing global conditions of a “smaller” world, highlighting more environmental threats and opportunities alike. This combined with neoliberal principles of market supremacy has dramatically changed the landscape for all organizations. As a consequence, managers have changed strategies of “internalization” or of adding additional activities and structures into the organization to one of “externalization” or eliminating activities and structures from their boundaries. Hence, managers search for greater flexibility in what their organizations look like and how best to respond to these changing conditions. Organizations and their managers today tend to take on more temporary activities and structures over relatively short periods of time making organizations more flux than stable. These include downsizing and outsourcing formerly internal functions to other organizations. So strategies then include external contracts, strategic alliances, short-term project teams, and the like to enhance flexibility (also see DiMaggio 2001; Salamon 2002, 2012).

Streamlining and developing alliances or contracting with other organizations for services, workers, or components related to production or service processes can provide for greater flexibility and at times greater efficiencies. Third-party outsourcing and contracts have been a hallmark of this new era. These developments should be seen as forms of interorganizational relationships. Governments too have been particularly engaged in various reforms such as

new government, e-government, and the like that also engage issues of outsourcing and privatization of state functions (see Brechin and Salas 2011; Salamon 2002; VanSlyke 2007). While the privatization of government services is usually encouraged for reasons of efficiency and performance, actual studies show these gains are rarely realized rationally, but symbolically they carry significant weight in a neoliberal world. However, such outsourcing of government or public activities, especially to private third parties, may challenge the very notion of government in many nation-states. Are there activities of the public and nonprofit sectors that should not be outsourced, such as policing or military capabilities? To what degree have IGOs been swept up into this neoliberalism belief in private sector efficiencies over public control and meanings? Are state functions being outsourced to IGOs? If so, what are the consequences of those efforts on these organizations and the constituencies they serve? Are IGOs outsourcing their own function(s) to other actors? Or are IGOs unique and have escaped these types of pressures and changes? If so, what makes them unique?

Changing Power Processes

Under this heading, Scott focuses on two types of changes related to power and control—internal to organizations and the effects organizations can have on larger society. Regarding the first, rapid environmental changes, especially globalization, have placed increasing pressure on the effectiveness of traditional unity hierarchical structures. Tall bureaucracies are famous for their ability to control workers and work processes, and increasingly for their inefficiencies due to time delays and distortions of information and instructions as they move up and down the hierarchy. However, with flat or more horizontal structures, such as temporary work teams, greater professionalization, and outsourcing activities to others, how do managers maintain control over work and workers? For public sector management, this has been a growing central concern in public administration programs as they engage new strategies and expertise. Emphasis has shifted from less supervisory management to more collaborative governance and from managing individuals to more managing contracts (also see Brown et al. 2006; Salamon 2002). However, managing contracts may provide greater flexibility to the organizations and their managers by giving them the ability to add, eliminate, or change contracts, better matching organizational needs to rapidly changing conditions. They also lose direct control over the day to day activities and ability to intervene if needed unless provided for by the contract. Other organizations, even under contract, tend to demonstrate their own autonomy. However, ownership over specific functions does not always guarantee control as well. Here principal-agent theories become extraordinarily relevant to this type of discussion (see Van Slyke 2007).

Where vertical bureaucratic structures remain, it is either the result of more conducive environments or the necessity for command and control over operations, that is, strict accountability for which bureaucracies are famous, and are likely required. It is also true that vertical structures work well when the environment is stable and the technology well known. Government organizations as public monopolies also typically have both less-selective environments and needs for stricter accountability to stakeholder groups such as the general public or nation-states. These needs lead managers to greater reliance on the construction of various types of organizational networks to overcome limitations of a single actor. How are these types of power and control needs affecting the management of IGOs today?

Due to the global spread of neoliberalism ideology and the rise with it of the dominance of the markets in public life, market-based actors in particular have gained greater material and symbolic power in recent decades (Harvey 2005). Large corporations and their owners in particular, especially in the U.S., have asserted themselves politically (see in particular Perrow 2002) as legal persons with free speech rights and in greater control of nonprofit organizations of civil society (MacDonald 2008; Salamon 2012). Has the rise of politically active large corporations affected the management and outcomes of IGOs at a global scale? If so, what consequences have these powerful market actors had in shaping the management, activities, and outcomes of our intergovernmental organizations? Our above examples by Michael Goldman, Sara Babb, and Brian Gareau would suggest their influence is strong in ways that are direct and indirect.

Changing Concepts from Organizational Entity to Process

As noted several times above, organizational sociologists are increasingly focusing attention on how organizational structures and boundaries are ever changing. In short, organizations are becoming flatter and boundaries more porous. As noted already, vertical bureaucratic and relatively isolated structures appear to be under selective pressure from a changing environment. In a more turbulent, globalized world with instant communications requiring rapid decisions and greater competition from more actors, tall formalized structures tend to be at a growing disadvantage. Internal control mechanisms associated with hierarchy are being replaced by greater reliance on flatter team-based professionals internally and outsourcing to other organizations externally. These changes suggest smaller, more nimble organizations that work together (see ideas of the rise of the networked firm DiMaggio 2001; Perrow 2002; Scott 2004).

Understanding organizations as more process or organizing than simply as static structures or entities emerges from more ecological views of organizations (Scott and Davis 2007:385). Organizations are continually evolving and changing to match the ever-changing and evolving set of environmental demands in which they are embedded. The process of continuous change then makes organizations in constant flux and transformation. Drawing upon the work of Mustafa Emirbayer (1997) and Karl Weick (1979), Scott highlights the rise of relational conceptions of organizations. As a social psychologist, Weick has long viewed “organization” as a noun and as a myth (Weick 1974:358). When looking at organizations, he instead sees organizing as individuals connected with others in processes of continuous and ongoing information exchange. Emirbayer sees organizations similarly as “inseparable from the transactional contexts in which they are embedded” (1997:287; also see Scott and Davis 2007:386), as structures or actors embedded in an ever-changing environmental context are in continual flux and transformation themselves. How does seeing IGOs more as process and less as entity change our understanding of IGOs? What is the nature of the processes within and among IGOs and their environments? Are they fundamentally different from other organizational actors given their transnational roles and membership-based organizations?

Conclusion

We have covered much ground. As we note, we see considerable convergence between organizational sociology and IOs. The gap we characterized in 1988 as “deep and persistent” appears to have narrowed substantially. This is exciting news as it suggests growing synergies

between our two disciplines. The literature we reviewed also points to new gaps in our knowledge as well as new opportunities for future research. We present four possibilities for possible exploration. These include 1) differentiating the environments of IGOs; 2) exploring how IGO leadership navigates environmental pressures and dependencies; 3) better understanding the social legitimacy of IGOs; and 4) better understanding the organizational networks in global governance.

First, while environmental influences are powerful in shaping all organizations, what are the particular influences faced by IGOs? While the macro-influences such as neoliberalism ideology and the institutionalized in world society have affected most organizations everywhere, what are the more unique forces shaping specific IGOs? This would add greatly to our understanding of IGOs and the pressures they face. How are market-based approaches and principles influencing the actions and effects of IGOs? Drawing upon organizational fields in new institutionalism, one would predict that actors within the same field would resemble one another. Or stated another way, what are the various organizational fields among IGOs and what are their respective impacts within those fields? Looking at established international regimes would be an obvious place to begin (see Gareau 2013 above). But are there others not directly tied to specific agreements? For example, what are the environments of each of the major UN agencies, like the Food and Agriculture Organization, or the UN Population Fund, which has been battered by the United States' internal cultural wars over abortion? How similar and different are they from other agencies? And what consequences do these differences have on organizational performance and impacts? We see the need for IR and organizational scholars to investigate in greater detail the various environments IGOs engaged and are embedded within. We would expect IGOs to experience both similar and very different influences and varying state influence. Here one could argue for a contingency of environmental influences in IR with the greater recognition in the range of environmental forces of both IGOs and nation states as both responding to and creating them.

Second, another potential area for future research would be on IGO leadership. Although we did not investigate this topic specifically given our meso-to-macro level focus, questions emerged from some of the literature we did discuss. How do these leaders navigate the powerful external forces and dependency relationships as well as internal demands? These types of questions surfaced with our discussion of Sarah Babb's (2009) research on the development banks. What skills and resources are required to promote the more independent interests of these otherwise environmentally constrained organizations? How do IGO leaders and other powerful internal and external constituents define organizational interest? These types of works seem rare (see Dijkzeul and Beigbeder 2003; and Bhandari 2012 as partial exceptions.)

Third, as noted briefly above, more recent organizational sociology has broadened and complicated the questions of organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Instead, these older ideas have been augmented with the concept of social fitness and the pursuit of legitimacy. The postmodern turn in sociology and the study of organizations argue that efficiency or effectiveness are questions that are based in social construction, that is, "effectiveness" based on whose definition or criteria? Equally, sociologists have gravitated to the process of organizational adaption to environmental pressures or to their elimination through "natural

selection.” This view sees organizations more as adaptive social systems. The question of adaptation has been couched in terms of social fitness. The social fitness concept emerges from both new institutionalism and ecological views of organizations. Here organizations are appreciated as social systems embedded in larger environments shaped by a myriad of processes including cultural-cognitive understandings and other environmental pressures (see Powell and DiMaggio 1991; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott and Davis 2007). With new institutionalism theory,¹⁰ organizations are shaped by these cultural pressures, especially those located within the same “industrial sectors” or organizational fields or of greater relevance to IR, regimes. They are shaped by cultural rules that signal to the larger environment of conformity and acceptance of those rules and norms through structural additions or changings, such as new offices, programs or procedures. Conformity brings legitimacy which allows access to various material resources, supporting organizational survival. How do IGOs signal their social fitness? Why is it the case that IGOs seem to be thriving? We believe some really interesting work could be geared to answering these kinds of questions.

Finally, in recent decades, network theory has greatly influenced the sociological study of organizations and with them there has been growing appreciation of multi-actor engagement, including governance arrangements. There seems to be a growing interest in IR theory as well, but more attention may be warranted. Paul Ingram’s work appears to have opened a new world of opportunities—both in his creative use of population-ecological perspectives but also on the power and influence of networked relationships. While Ingram and collaborators focus on the influence of IGOs on state behavior and integration, their focus is largely on state actors. However, Ingram states the need to pursue the effects of other important actors such as nongovernmental organizations, both domestic and international in setting the context for greater or lesser state integration. John Mathiason’s 2008 book, *Internet Governance*, illustrates too the changing nature of global governance, especially its fluidity of the task and the critical role private and nonprofit actors as well as nation-states play in regulating this crucial global activity. It illustrates well the processes of organizations and the complexity of engagement of actors beyond states. Finally, Anne-Marie Slaughter’s book, *A New World Order* on growing governmental networks and their underappreciated role in global governance is likely worth exploring organizationally as well. Are Slaughter’s observations similar to or different from those of Paul Ingram and collaborators? Are they observing the opposite sides of the same coin or are there different phenomena taking place? In short, are IGOs roles in promoting global governance changing? How are nation-states themselves adjusting to changing engagements with IGOs? As noted above, the environment seems to be supporting IGO growth. This would suggest world integration is providing important context for their development, but how exactly? What is cause, what is effect, and what is complementary or in conflict?

While society and our disciplines have changed dramatically over the last quarter century, so have our organizational actors. Organizations shape our world in every way big and small.

10. New Institutionalism (see DiMaggio and Powell 1983, Powell and DiMaggio 1991) is in contrast to “old institutionalism” (sources: Selznick 1957, 1986). New institutionalism looks toward cultural explanations for why many organizations tend to look alike, especially those sharing a similar environment called organizational fields. Old institutionalism reflects Selznick’s observation that organizations develop a particular character, including its domains of operations, with built-in strengths and weaknesses all as a result of establishing themselves in hostile environments. In a 1986 article, however, Selznick (1986) argues that too fine of a distinction has been made between the old and the new.

Our understanding may have changed along with their particular configurations, but what has remained is their enduring importance. It will be fascinating to watch what the next twenty-five years bring in our increasingly organized world.

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