Studying International Organizations as a Continuum of Formality and Informality: History, Law, and Politics

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The articles and reviews in this edition of the *Journal of International Organizations Studies (JOIS)* deal with these questions: What are the options for studying international organizations, and what are both old and new directions? They are essential for analyzing international organizations that have evolved into significant actors for providing global order. The presentations show there is still a distance to be covered to find the best way to place IOs into a clear context.

The broadest approach is found in Ian Hurd's study of choices and methods in the study of international organizations. Hurd is one of the most important young scholars dealing with international organizations, and he draws heavily on his analysis of the Security Council. He looks at contrasting approaches to the study, looking at a state/IO continuum. The three choices for looking at IOs are as actors in their own right, as tools in hands of other actors, and as forums. All of these see IOs in their intergovernmental mode, which is the usual way of viewing them. He then looks at three methods to analyze IOs: contractualism, an examination of the agreements establishing the organizations; regime analysis, a way of looking at their processes; and constructivism, a bridging method. Hurd shows each method would be partially valid. In effect, the two dimensions could be a matrix into which approaches could be set. The lesson here is that each of the elements needs to be taken into account if international organizations are to be understood. The one element missing from the typology is the functioning of international organizations as public sector service providers, which is a new and emerging function and where the focus would be on the professional staff who provide the services.

Hurd's analysis is supplemented by Klaas Dykmann's review of David MacKenzie's history of IOs, entitled *A World Beyond Borders: An Introduction to the History of International Organizations*. Here, a historical analysis can show how the role of IOs has expanded over the century from before the creation of the League of Nations. Dykman notes that the analysis documents the growth of the issues with which the organizations, particularly the UN system, are expected to address. He is critical of the functionalist and idealist focus that suggest the organizations' growing importance and argues it lacks historical criticism of the growth.

The two contributions focus primarily on formal organizations that have both a legal basis in international treaties and a bureaucratic structure. Two other articles explore a phenomenon that, if not new, is clearly growing in importance: international networks. The advent of the In-

ternet together with the ease of travel has made informal, if organized, links among interested parties to achieve common ends, a basis for international organization. Milena Guthörl's article, "International Networks in Times of Transition" reflects the discussions and conclusions of a conference held at the University of Heidelberg on networks in October 2010. It examined how networks helped address problems, especially in Asia, from a variety of perspectives, including historical research. It shows how networking influenced international outcomes.

Ben Li's article, "Situating Information Infrastructure Builders as International Organizations," explores an emerging type of multi-stakeholder networks that bridge the gap between state-JIO-based organizations and the more fluid arrangements that help provide order in key sectors. Li's three cases are all connected with management of the Internet and include both technical and commercial networks. This responds to the fact that governments cannot dominate Internet development and governance and that order in key aspects requires networks of stakeholders that are not governments. To the extent governments are less effective actors, such networks will become more important in the future.

Finally, two contributions look at international organizations from the perspective of law. In doing so, they look at IOs from Hurd's conceptualist and constructivist perspectives. Tamara Shockley's article, "The United Nations Judicial Tribunals as Tools for Managerial Accountability," discusses the new judicial machinery inside the UN. Shockley is a practitioner herself, and her focus is on the internal application of law in the UN through the new Judicial Tribunals, recently established to provide a legal means of resolving issues of managerial accountability. While the overall accountability question has to do with the effectiveness of the organization in delivering results, the focus of the tribunals has been mostly on issues of human resource management. The system has not yet found a way to hold managers accountable for making results happen but has improved their accountability for managing staff.

As noted by Hurd, international organizations are founded on international law, both in terms of defining their functions and in determining how they are to work. Julia Harfensteller's review of Robert Kolb's "Introduction to the Law of the UN" is entitled "The UN in a Nutshell—and Much More than That." Harfensteller notes the text, prepared by someone who has worked practically in the implementation of international law, is intended to be relatively short. The book could be considered as part of what might be described as the "second generation of legal UN literature" that is marked by interdisciplinary accounts of the object of study and a cross-perspective analytical presentation of material.

Taken as a whole, the articles in this edition contribute to the exploration of key aspects of international organization analysis and at the same time suggest where more analysis needs to be done.