Towards an Organization Theory of International Integration

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Working Paper

No. 13, October 2006

Working Papers can be downloaded from the ARENA homepage:

http://www.arena.uio.no

Abstract

This paper outlines an organization theory of political integration among nation-states. If we assume there are existing shared institutions, political integration is here seen to take place to the extent that lines of conflict coinciding with national borders are complemented with cleavages cutting across such borders so that a multi-dimensional political space can be observed. I ask what difference organizational characteristics of international or supranational organizations (IOs) make in this respect, other things being equal. The scarce attention devoted to IOs over the last decades has to a certain extent focused on how their organizational resources might have been conducive to increased problem-solving capacity at the international level. A key argument advanced in this paper, however, is that only when international institutions are structured basically according to non-territorial criteria will they start to seriously challenge the intergovernmental logic of political behaviour. In addition, it is argued that only fragmented states and loosely coupled political systems can become profoundly integrated into a larger polity according to the criteria stated above. In order to illustrate the assumptions I look at some key reforms and changes of IOs over the last 200 years.

Introduction

This paper aims at contributing to our understanding of international integration by taking as its point of departure an organization theory approach. More specifically, it will focus on how the structuring, staffing and location of IOs could make a difference as regards the degree of political integration among states. It also argues that important conditions for such integration to take place are to be found in organizational characteristics of national polities. Needless to say, this is a partial theory that doesn't at all have the ambition to provide a complete explanation of integration. Rather, it aims at spelling out the role of organizational factors in this respect, other things being equal. The next step in the development of an organization theory of integration is to ask what such a theory has to contribute with regard to our understanding of the coming about of international institutions and reforms therein. This important topic will not be addressed in this paper, however, based on the empirical examples presented some preliminary insights will be touched upon in the conclusion.

I am quite aware of that the study of international cooperation shifted its focus substantially during the 1980s and 1990s from "concrete" international organizations to international regimes (Simmons and Martin 2002). As pointed out by Reinalda and Verbeek (2004: 17), this development was (ironically) also highly visible in the journal *International Organization* (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986). Although fully recognizing the relevance of regimes for actual international cooperation, there are, however, still good reasons to study international organizations, as argued by Barnett and Finnemore (2004). Also, as we will come back to, the role that concrete

international institutions seems to play in the European context justifies that more scholarly attention should be devoted to international organization as such.

I argue in this paper that political integration among nation-states goes beyond connecting them more tightly as coherent wholes. Rather, if we assume there are existing shared institutions, integration in a deeper sense is seen as the extent to which lines of conflict coinciding with national borders are complemented with cleavages cutting across such borders. The assumption is that various structural configurations of international organizations are more or less conducive to such complementation. Indeed, organizations primarily structured according to various non-territorial criteria might be able to focus decision-makers attention along non-territorial lines of conflict. In addition to addressing the role that particular organizational characteristics at the international level might play for international integration, such features at the national level are seen as conditioning factors: arguably, only fragmented states and loosely coupled national political systems can become profoundly integrated into a larger polity according to the criteria stated above. I proceed from here by first, in the next section, clarifying the dependent variable in this paper, i.e. "international integration". I then turn to the organizational variables and discuss how they are theoretically related to the dependent variable. The following section contains some empirical observations that are meant to illustrate the assumed relationships The last section holds the conclusion.

International integration – how to see it

In this paper, international integration is understood as political integration among nation-states. "Political integration" is defined as the extent to which a predominant

territorial pattern of conflict coinciding with nation-state borders is complemented with cleavages that cut across such borders. Thus, a non-integrated international system is a system in which individual actors' loyalty in trans-border interaction is directed solely towards their respective governments. As a consequence, the pattern of conflicts and alignments is uni-dimensional: only cleavages that follow state boundaries are brought to the fore at the international level. In that case we can speak of *inter-national* politics in its pure form, a form often attributed to the Westphalian state order. Political integration then takes place when actors start to develop additional allegiances; to the systemic level itself and to non-governmental entities acting on the international scene (Haas 1958/2004: 9-16). In that case, a multi-dimensional political space emerges, displaying conflicts among its constituent nation-states as well as between the whole and its parts and along sectoral, functional or ideological lines. Such a system can be seen as more integrated than a uni-dimensional system since a system is held together by its inner conflicts provided that these conflicts cross-cut each other. On the other hand, a society that is split along just one line of cleavage or has cumulative, coinciding lines reinforcing each other, may be in danger of being torn by violence or falling to pieces (Ross 1920; Coser 1956). Nation-states *are* integrated polities and they normally have in common a multi-dimensional political space as one of their key characteristics.

There are obvious advantages following from choosing *politics* (here actual patterns of conflict and cooperation) as a yardstick for measuring integration: Those emanating from a legalistic tradition, emphasizing *formal institutional features* at the international level, such as legal supremacy, voting rules etc., run the risk of overstating the role of formal institutions in this respect. And those who use the

degree of *policy convergence* across countries as their indicator of international integration also have to take into consideration that high levels of convergence might occur due to policy learning and diffusion, and, thus, without any common decision-making processes or political linkages across borders.

The organizational explanation

An organization theory approach to international integration highlights the extent to which particular organizational features; *structural, demographic* or *physical*, make a difference to the degree of integration. However, even among those studying political cooperation in such a densely institutionalized setting as the European Union (EU) it is far from obvious that organizational variables have an independent role to play. For example, according to liberal intergovernmentalism, interstate negotiations are the driving forces and EU institutions are there primarily in order to reduce transaction costs related to collective problem-solving (Moravcsik 1998). Neo-functionalism, on the other hand, although recognizing the importance of nation-states, especially in the foundation of regional organizations, places emphasis on the role of two sets of non-state *actors* in providing the dynamic for further integration; namely the secretariat of the international organization involved and those interest associations and social movements that form around it at the level of the region (Haas 1958/2004; Schmitter 1970; Schmitter 2005: 257).

Clearly, later neo-functionalists as well as historical-institutionalists and principal-agent analysts all emphasize that international institutions, when first erected, may take on a life of their own due to "locking-in" mechanisms and information asymmetry (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998; Pierson 1996; Pollack 2004). This

doesn’t mean, though, that these institutions are unpacked in order to investigate if it actually matters how they are constituted and recruited. The multi-level governance approach points to that the more complex institutional architecture found in the EU provides several opportunity structures also for non-governmental actors. However, neither those adhering to this approach tend to relate particular organizational characteristics of this institutional structure to particular behavioural patterns (Marks and Hooghe 2001; Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch 2004). Finally, constructivists may look into institutions in order to study the extent to which decision-makers become re-socialized, but they tend to do this by taking into consideration aspects of the social environment or individual attributes of the “socializer”’ and the “socialize” and their interactions rather than genuinely organizational characteristics (Checkel 2005: 813).

Organizational structure. The variant of organization theory built on here takes as its point of departure Luther Gulick’s work on organization structure and the behavioural implications of various structural designs (Gulick 1937). This structure is a normative structure composed of rules and role expectations. According to this view, the structure doesn’t determine action, but it defines organizational tasks, goals and means, shapes participants’ view of the world, and thus guides action. By introducing the concept “bounded rationality”, Herbert Simon and James March increased our understanding of the mechanisms that link structure and individual behaviour (March and Simon 1958; Simon 1965). In addition to the classical mechanisms rewards and punishments, it became clear that the interplay between individuals’ shortage of attention and structural selection is crucial for this linkage. Structures provide shortcuts, cues and buffers that match decision-makers need of simplification. The structure therefore represents a mobilization of bias in preparation

for action (Schattschneider 1975:30), focusing participants' attention only on certain problems, solutions and consequences and along certain lines of conflict. The *size* of a structure, e.g. the number of posts in a secretariat, expresses its capacity to act and have an impact.

Horizontal specialization of a structure refers to the way in which different issues and policy areas are supposed to be linked to or de-coupled from each other. Those areas that are contained in the same organizational unit are more likely to be coordinated than those that belong to different units (Gulick 1937). According to Gulick, there are four fundamental ways in which tasks may be distributed horizontally among units, namely in relation to territory, purpose (sector), process (function), or clientele served. If, for example, an organization is internally specialized according to the geographical areas it serves, the structure reflects the territorial composition of the system and focuses attention along territorial lines of cleavage. Such an arrangement is expected to induce spatial frames of reference and to encourage policy-makers to pay attention primarily to particular geographical concerns and need for "intra-territorial" policy coherence. Organizations based on a purpose principle, on the other hand, are supposed to foster sectoral horizons among decision-makers, to focus attention along sectoral lines of cleavage and to emphasize policy standardization across territorial units.

Vertical specialization denotes the division of labour across organizational levels. Like the horizontal task division the vertical arrangement may be more or less loosely coupled. For example, a regulatory authority might be allowed or required to operate at arm's length from its political superior.

A *primary structure* is more demanding than a *secondary structure*. Affiliation to a primary structure means that a person is expected to use most of her or his time in a particular organization – it may be her or his main employer. Secondary structures, on the other hand, usually engage people only on a part-time basis. A typical secondary structure is a committee system. Modern systems of governance coordinate policies extensively across levels and sectors through committees. Thus, participants become exposed to new agendas, alternatives, actors and obligations We therefore expect that committees, like other organizational arrangements, might affect the perspectives, interests and identities of those who attend - for example by expanding frames of reference and identification. However, the impact will be less profound than in organizations to which persons have a primary attachment.

To install a structure even of a secondary kind at a higher level that is based on another principle of specialization than the structure below may induce integration of the different parts of the subordinated organization. This is thought to happen since the design of the superior entity in this case tends to complement and refocus the pattern of conflict and co-operation found at the lower level (March 1994: 119-20; Egeberg 2003). Thus, for instance, to achieve better coordination in a highly sectorized administration, one could organize the upper level by geography. Conversely, if the purpose is to integrate a set of territories, the organizational remedy would be to arrange the level above according to purpose or other non-geographical principles of specialization.

Organizational demography. According to Pfeffer (1982:277) organizational demography refers to the composition, in terms of basic attributes such as age, sex, education and social and geographical background of an organization's members. In addition, the former, present (e.g. length of service) and future careers of organizational members are dealt with here. When it comes to accounting for decision behaviour in organizations, these demographic factors interact with each other and with structural variables in a complicated manner. For example, participants' backgrounds are supposed to be more important in organizations characterized by short term contracts than in entities with life-long career patterns, and more important within secondary structures than within primary structures. Thus, empirical studies of public bureaucracies have in general revealed rather weak relationships between officials' background (except educational) and their actual decision behaviour (Meier and Nigro 1976; Lægreid and Olsen 1984). Also, a wide variety of experiences acquired outside the organization are not particularly relevant to policy disputes taking place within it. Only when a clear "representational linkage" exists can we expect a background factor to affect significantly a person's organizational behaviour (Selden 1997).

Considered as individual attributes, only length of service can qualify as a real *organizational* factor among the demographic variables mentioned. However, this becomes different if we instead deal with *proportions* of a given organizational population that come from, for example, different regions or professions. Clusters or enclaves of people with similar backgrounds seem to make it more likely that particular group interests might be pursued (Selden 1997).

Organizational locus. The physical dimension of organizational life has not received much attention in the literature (Pfeffer 1982:260-71). However, most organizations are located in particular places and buildings. Organizational locus, like organization structure, creates boundaries that may focus the attention of decision-makers and help them cope with a complex reality. Thus, people may come to associate particular sites and physical spaces with particular identities and role conceptions (March 1994:73). Physical proximity among decision-makers tends to facilitate interaction and coordination (Egeberg 2003). When multiple organizational memberships (e.g. primary and secondary) are separated in space (and then often time), cues are provided for evoking different roles and identities. Concentration in space (and also often time), on the other hand, makes it more likely that role perceptions and identities are carried over from one unit into another (March 1994:70-73).

Institutionalization. According to Selznick (1957) all institutions are organizations, yet not all organizations are institutions. Institutionalization adds important characteristics to an organization. Thus, the current fashion of classing all kinds of rules, regimes and organizations as institutional phenomena has in a sense impoverished the concept of an institution. Institutionalization necessarily takes time. It means that organizations are growing increasingly complex by adding informal norms and practices. To become a real institution, however, Selznick (1957:17-22) argued that the "grown-up" and complex organization also had to be *infused with value* beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand. By this, he meant that an organization acquires a self, a distinctive identity, involving the taking on of values, ways of acting and believing that are deemed important for their own sake. For the individuals who participate directly in it, an organization may acquire much

institutional value, yet in the eyes of the larger community the organization may be readily expendable. Thus, arguably, from a *political* perspective, organizations become real institutions as they come to symbolize the *community's* aspirations, its sense of identity. Real institutions embody *societal* values, and strive to impose those same values on society. Institutionalization could mean that not only particular organizational structures and informal norms become infused with value and meaning, but also a particular demographic composition of the organization and the place and building associated with the organization (Goodsell 1988).

A shared context of understood meanings may aid considerably to communication in institutions. It may create energy that increases performance and co-ordination, and be of special importance in times of crisis or threat (Selznick 1957:18; Brunsson and Olsen 1993:5). Another implication of institutionalization deals with the possibilities for deliberate reform and reorganization. "An organization that does take on this symbolic meaning has some claim on the community to avoid liquidation or transformation on purely technical or economic grounds" (Selznick 1957:19). The inherent robustness of institutions now seems widely acknowledged in the literature (Olsen 2007).

Assumed relationship between institutions and integration. It follows from the discussion above that multilateral, intergovernmental conferences arranged on an ad hoc basis at shifting locations without any permanent staff could be expected to only marginally complement national allegiances and territorial lines of conflict. Even if geography remains the primary basis for organizational specialization we can, though, expect regular conference arrangements and permanent physical facilities to slightly

increase the level of system loyalty among participants. If in addition an international secretariat is established with full time positions (a primary structure) it becomes more likely that a group of decision-makers will develop strong loyalties to the new centre, and more so if these people are recruited primarily on a merit basis, are not concentrated in national clusters and can foresee life-long careers in the organization. If such a body has a certain size and expertise it might furnish ministerial councils with well-grounded policy proposals, making it more likely that government representatives come to adopt a wider perspective on issues. Establishing a presidency for a fixed period of time and not only ad hoc is also expected to add to the weight of system-level organizational roles. And, national officials at permanent missions to international organizations might become more susceptible to the concerns of the respective organizations than delegates sent out on an ad hoc basis from national capitals.

International institutions that are basically organized according to territory may at lower levels (e.g. as regards their committees, secretariat) be specialized by sector or function. Thus, sectoral identities might emerge or simply be sustained in cases where participants originate from national sectoral administrations. Cooperation and conflict along sectoral or functional lines may then come to complement territorial patterns of behaviour, although still to a modest degree. If, on the other hand, important international institutions' uppermost principle of specialization shifts from a territorial one to non-territorial ones it becomes more likely that conflicts are redirected from territorial to non-territorial patterns. In that case, an institution might come to challenge seriously the prevalent uni-dimensional political space at the international level.

A particular institutional architecture at the international level should not at all be seen as a sufficient condition for political integration in a deeper sense to take place. In particular, the prospects for integration have to depend on organizational characteristics of the polities that are to be integrated. The more loosely coupled these polities are, horizontally as well as vertically, the greater the chance that interest groups, political parties and even parts of the state itself, like courts of justice and regulatory authorities, might align with their counterparts in other countries and at the supranational level. Thus, profound political integration means that the parts (nation-states) are not connected more closely as coherent wholes, but that the parts themselves are reorganized. If international organizations also have become institutionalized so that their structure, demography or locus have become infused with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand and are taken for granted, their impact on actual decision-making behaviour will probably also be stronger.

International institutions and integration: brief empirical examples

Classical diplomacy can be conceived as a kind of international institution although it lacks an organizational centre (Batora 2005). The several foreign offices and their missions abroad comprise the organizational components and an overarching system of norms embodies a code of conduct on what is deemed appropriate inter-state behaviour. Thus, although diplomats' allegiance relates primarily to their respective nation-states, they nevertheless tend to share a corporate feeling that transcends differences of nationality and language (Nicolson 1969: 40). The fact that the diplomatic corps present in a capital in some matters is represented by a *doyen* vis-à-

vis the host government is one way of expressing that the diplomatic community as such has some common interests. When, subsequent to the Peace of Westphalia, *resident* ambassadors became more common even among Europe's smaller powers, diplomats might have started to evoke also a third kind of loyalty, namely to their respective host countries (cf. "going native") (Jönsson and Hall 2005). All in all, therefore, bilateral diplomacy can be seen as an international institution which notwithstanding its lack of an organizational centre makes states components of a state *system*.

The kind of *multilateral* diplomacy instituted by the Vienna Congress 1814-15 comes closer to an international organization in the sense that representatives from more than two countries are exposed to each other simultaneously. However, the Concert of Europe and its Great Power conferences at ministerial as well as ambassadorial level didn't meet on a regular basis and had no permanent location or secretariat attached to it (Schroeder 1994). Although this way of organizing European politics didn't challenge profoundly the Westphalian order, it nevertheless may have contributed to transforming a system of states into a *community* of states (Schroeder 1994; Holsti 2004). Accordingly, the Concert decided on the admission of new members to "Europe" as when it declared that Turkey was entitled to full status in the European system (1856), and when it accepted that Serbia could "enter the European family" (1878) provided the country recognized religious freedom, described as one of "the principles which are the basis of social organization in all States of Europe" (Claude 1964: 22).

It was the highly specialized sectoral or functional international organizations established during the second half of the nineteenth century (e.g. the International Telegraphic Union and the Universal Postal Union) that produced inventions like the permanent secretariat with a fixed location, the division of labour between a general conference and an executive council, and regular meetings (Claude 1964). The *basic* principle of organizational specialization was territory, though. Thus, while the general conference was composed of representatives from all member states, only a few selected governments had a seat in the executive or governing council. As could be expected then, studies of decision-making processes within such organizations have shown that neither these organizations, notwithstanding their innovative character, challenge seriously the inherited state order. The power distribution and conflict pattern within these organizations seem to reflect very much the power distribution and territorial pattern of conflict found in the wider system (Cox and Jacobson 1973). Nevertheless, since the additional sectoral or functional specialization of these organizations primarily engages non-diplomats as delegates from national administrations and also tends to partly sustain these officials' original sectoral or functional orientation, transnational coalitions along sectoral or functional lines are plausible within bodies structured in such a manner. Those attending meetings on a regular basis in comparable entities also display a considerable amount of loyalty to the international bodies in which they participate although this loyalty is clearly inferior to their national loyalty (Egeberg *et al.* 2003; Beyers 2005). Moreover, it has been documented that expert-based permanent secretariats contribute significantly to task expansion at the international level and that they also may be able to create transnational coalitions and arenas by linking previously disconnected actors (Cox and Jacobson 1973; Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Trondal *et al.* 2005).

The Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 pointed in the direction of permanent location and staff, and thus regularity, also in the so-called “high-politics” area (Claude 1964). However, it was not until the establishment of the League of Nations (1919) that what had already been achieved organizationally in the sectoral or functional field became realized in the security domain. Its founders approved the basic principles of the Westphalian order; they accepted the independent sovereign state as the basic entity and the great powers as the predominant actors. However, in the “high-politics” area the League also represented a considerable proportion of organizational innovation: for the first time a central structure consisting of a general conference, a council and a secretariat with a fixed location had been created. According to Claude (1964: 175), “nothing essentially new has been added by the multilateralization and regularization of diplomacy until the secretariat is introduced; this is the innovation that transforms the series of conferences into an organization”. In addition, the role of the Council president, the permanent missions of the member states in Geneva and numerous specialized committees in several sectoral and functional policy fields added a new dimension to the older forms of diplomacy (Steiner 2005). A study of the role of the presidency in a comparable setting shows that the presidency’s brokerage efforts can help governments avoid negotiation failure due to its privileged access to information about state preferences and its procedural control, although these resources are not only used for collective gain but also for pursuing national interests (Tallberg 2004). Research on the EU-Council’s Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) unveils how the member states’ resident ambassadors complement their pre-established national identities with collective, EU identities (Lewis 2005).

While the founders of the League of Nations had accepted Europe as the central core of the world political system, the establishment of the United Nations (1945) clearly signalled a more global orientation. However, in organizational terms the United Nations could mainly be described as a moderately revised version of the League. It reformed somewhat the arrangement for collective security, for example by conferring upon the secretary general a more "political" role as regards policy formulation and developed further the network of intergovernmental, specialized organizations, however, without launching real innovations (Claude 1964). Neither other post-WWII organizations, like the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) (1948), NATO (1949) or the Council of Europe (1949) deviated in their set-up from the territorially based decision structure inherited from the past, although the two last ones incorporated consultative, indirectly elected parliamentary assemblies.

Arguably, significant organizational innovation did not take place before the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952, predecessor of the EU. For the first time, a state-like institutional system at the international level could be identified, consisting of an executive body organized *separately* from the council of ministers and with its own political leadership (the High Authority), two legislative bodies (the Council and the Assembly) and a Court of Justice. Thus, the four key institutions of today's EU, namely the European Commission, the Union Council, the European Parliament (EP) and the European Court of Justice (ECJ), were already operating from 1952 on, although in a nascent form. Equally important as regards the system's innovative character is the fact that

individual core institutions have been structured on a non-territorial basis. Only the Council reflects in its composition and functioning parts of the legacy from the classical international organization: contestation follows for the most part territorial lines although considerable attention is also devoted to systemic, sectoral and functional concerns (Egeberg *et al.* 2003; Thomson *et al.* 2004; Lewis 2005).

However, as regards the Commission, its basic principle of specialization is sector and function rather than geography. Thus, its departmental structure, which has much in common with a national ministerial organization, probably explains why conflicts tend to occur more frequently along sectoral or functional lines than along territorial ones (Egeberg 2006). Since most interest groups also are sectorally or functionally based they, and particularly those that are organized at the European level, tend to see the Commission as their most promising point of access to the EU policy process (Kohler-Koch 1997; Eising 2005). Students of international non-governmental organizations in general have found that such groups often experience difficulties in getting their message across in relation to the structurally less compatible intergovernmental organizations (Risse 2002: 265). The Commission's emancipation from the control by national governments is underpinned by an overwhelming proportion of permanent administrative posts, merit recruitment, multi-national staffing at all levels so that national enclaves are avoided, and lifelong career patterns within the institution (Egeberg 2006).

Having gained more power over time, the directly elected (from 1979) European Parliament (EP) increasingly provides an interesting arena for European party families. The EP embodies organizational features that tend to focus attention on non-

national lines of cleavage. For example, the Parliament's physical arrangement seats members according to European party family rather than by nationality. Economic incentives make it rational for party groups to align transnationally. Studies do in fact show that although EP party groups behave less cohesively than groups in member state legislatures, they are more cohesive than parties in the US Congress (Hix 1998; Raunio 2002). Voting behaviour in the EP mainly coincides with a left-right dimension (Hix 2001). To this ideological (partisan) dimension the EP's system of standing committees adds a sectoral or functional dimension to the conflict pattern (Neuhold 2001). Moreover, all the four EU core institutions have reached a considerable level of institutionalization. This is reflected in the fact that their existence is not on the agenda; what is being discussed is their respective roles in various policy fields.

The complex institutional architecture at the EU level, with a considerable degree of functional specialization among the different institutions, in itself injects *institutional* cleavages into the system as well. Tensions between, for example, executive and legislative bodies are well known from national politics as well. Now, one could argue that although inter-institutional conflicts cutting across nationalities do occur rather frequently at the EU level, this kind of "turf battles", nevertheless, take place at the surface and do not really penetrate the lower levels of governance. It may be easier to understand that ideological (partisan) and sectoral cleavages at the EU level are observable across levels of governance since they can be mediated through multi-level political parties and interest groups. There are signs, however, that also conflicts among EU institutions might "run deeper". Concerning the Commission, it could be interested in dealing more directly with parts of national administrations, both for

policy development and for implementation purposes, thus institutionalizing more of a multi-level genuine “Union administration”. Arguably, the “agencification” process that has taken place in most member states over the last years, meaning that regulatory tasks have been hived off from ministerial departments and put into semi-independent bodies, has cleared the way for making such bodies “double-hatted”, that is, they are supposed to serve both national governments *and* the Commission. By connecting up national agencies in issue-specific administrative networks, partly by-passing national governments (ministries), the Commission would, in a sense, actually extend its organization down through the levels without formally erecting its own offices. The Council, on the other hand, primarily links up national ministries. Thus, the division of labour between the Commission and the Council tends to trigger centrifugal forces at the very heart of national governments (Egeberg 2006).

Similarly, in order to help safeguard the uniform application of Community law, co-operative relationships have developed between the ECJ and courts of justice in the member states. Important in this respect is the procedure which enables national courts to refer to the ECJ questions of EU law (Arnull 2003). Also illustrative of the direct relationships between equivalent institutions at the two levels, by-passing national governments, is the European System of Central Banks in which national central banks constitute “branches” of the European Central Bank (Verdun 2003:314). Finally, consider the EP which recognizes national parliaments and the Conference of (parliament) committees specialized in EU affairs (COSAC) as consultative bodies (Mittag and Wessels 2003:433).

Thus, in the EU the organizational conditions for political integration in a deeper sense are present at the EU level as well as at the national level. As shown, the institutional architecture at the EU level seems to be conducive to a multi-dimensional pattern of conflict and cooperation: cleavages along sectoral, functional, ideological (partisan), institutional and system-subsystem lines are cutting across national borders. At the same time, national polities are for the most part relatively loosely coupled systems, characterized by extensive vertical and horizontal specialization and fragmentation. Accordingly, regulatory authorities, central banks and courts of justice are more open for being re-coupled into "coalitions" or networks of equivalent institutions across national borders and levels of governance. In a liberal society the same of course pertains to political parties and interest groups; they are free to join transnational federations.

Loosely coupled polities have not always been the case. Over time, governments have variably striven to coordinate tightly and to control external relations in order to enhance territorial coherence and autonomy. For example, one of the effects of the Thirty Years War was that the strengthened territorial state became more able to cut off or control the direct relationships that had developed over the years between the papacy and local churches; relationships that tended to circumvent secular power centres. This papal "transnational" system of governance had been important for the practicing of several aspects of private law and for the appointment of bishops (Duffy 2002). A rather extreme variant of the tightly woven polity is the totalitarian state. It follows from our theoretical reasoning that such a state can not become integrated into a larger polity in a profound sense. Illustratively, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany or the

Soviet Union were not even willing to allow their officials to temporarily transfer their loyalty to international secretariats while staying there (Claude 1964).

Conclusion

This paper has asked what difference organizational factors make – other things being equal – as regards the level of political integration among nation-states. More precisely, it has looked at characteristics of IOs in this respect as well as at organizational features of national polities, which are considered as conditioning variables. If we assume there are existing shared institutions, political integration has been seen to take place to the extent that lines of conflict coinciding with national borders are supplemented with such lines cutting across borders so that a multi-dimensional political space can be observed. It has been illustrated how organizational components like multi-national arenas, role differentiation, permanent staffs and location and institutionalization might tend to strengthen system-wide concerns. However, the main argument has been that only organizational specialization that is based on non-territorial criteria starts to challenge seriously an intergovernmental pattern of conflict and cooperation. This is even more evident if non-territorial specialization constitutes the basic (uppermost) organizational principle, as has been shown regarding the European Commission and Parliament.

Particular organizational traits at the international level probably make up necessary although not sufficient conditions for integration to take place. Arguably, only loosely coupled national polities are conducive to political integration in a deep sense since only such systems "allow" political parties, interest groups and even parts of the state

itself, like regulatory authorities and courts, to align with their counterparts across borders and levels of governance.

As said in the introduction, the next step in the development of an organization theory of integration is to ask what such a theory has to contribute with regard to our understanding of the coming about of international institutions and reforms therein. Quite intuitively, one could suggest that organization theory might be better equipped for making sense of continuity and incremental change rather than radical reforms of institutions. Taking as our point of departure the chronologically ordered empirical examples in the former section, the apparent "stickiness" of the intergovernmental model is indeed a striking observation. The territorially based decision structure certainly seems to be *the* institutionalized model for organizing politics at the international level. Since the first steps in the direction of a more regularized multilateral diplomacy happened in the wake of the Vienna Congress 1814-15, the model has survived until this day and seems indispensable and ubiquitous in all government arrangements at the international level (Schiavone 2005). In the EU, the world's most advanced supranational polity, the classic model is of course primarily reflected in the set-up of the Council; probably the most important legislative body of the Union, a body that also has executive functions within the area of a common foreign and security policy. Thus, the fact that the Council has an intergovernmental structure somewhat similar to the second legislative chamber of the Federal Republic of Germany does not mean that the EU has copied the Germans' rather peculiar arrangement. Rather, it signals the institutional robustness of the classical model and the inherent path dependence as regards organizing politics at the international level.

The second striking lesson that might be drawn from a simple chronology of organizational forms is that although there obviously is an enduring intergovernmental core there nevertheless seems to have been taking place a continuous expansion and refinement of structures. Over time they have become more subtle and complex, perhaps endowed with more capacity for order and problem solving. Such developments may be interpreted as organizational learning processes which are *inter alia* mirrored in the growth of secretariats, buildings, procedures, role differentiation and committee systems.

Finally, the third remarkable observation is that some changes seem to have more the character of leaps or innovations than of incremental changes. In order to account for such changes, organizational factors probably play a more limited role. According to historical institutionalists, critical junctures at which existing institutional arrangements may be placed on new paths or trajectories are often attributed to big, exogenous shocks such as war or economic crisis (Ikenberry 1998; Pierson 2004; Olsen 2007). Under such circumstances, "steep learning" may take place and actors may come to accept solutions they wouldn't otherwise accept. Thus, the Westphalian order can be seen as an innovative response at that time to the shock caused by the Thirty Years War. In the same vein, the Napoleonic Wars may have constituted a catalyst for the qualitative changes that followed the Vienna Congress (Schroeder 1996). Moreover, the First World War may have been a prerequisite for shifting track to a considerable extent as regards international security organization (Steiner 2005). Finally, the new catastrophe in the years 1939-45 may have opened the door for the most radical reform of international organization seen so far. However, as shown, organizational innovations do not seem to replace existing arrangements; they are

rather *layered* around existing bodies (Thelen 2003). Moreover, shocks do not necessarily lead to innovation: the UN, OEEC, NATO and the Council of Europe all inherited the territorially based structure at their core. So it is quite possible that the peculiar design of the EU and its predecessors has to be attributed to the *entrepreneurship* of Jean Monnet, adviser to the French foreign minister Schuman (Duchêne 1994). Entrepreneurs provide skills beyond what follows from their organizational roles. On the other hand, without a relevant organizational platform and a window of opportunity such skills may never be translated into action.

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Acknowledgements

I thank Jeffrey T. Checkel and Johan P. Olsen for their valuable comments on this paper.

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