Reaching Out, or Not: 
Accounting for the Relative Openness of International Governmental Organizations Towards NGOs

Schriftliche Arbeit zur Erlangung des Akademischen Grades
“Magister Artium”
an der Fakultät für Sozial- und Verhaltenswissenschaften
der Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen

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Tübingen, den 27. Februar 2003
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Research Questions

International governmental organizations (IGOs)\(^1\) are back in business. Long neglected by cold warriors and International Relations (IR) scholars, the latter of which developed an interest in the study of informal institutions (Simmons and Martin 2002: 193f.), IGOs have recently been exposed to previously unknown levels of public and scholarly interest. The end of the Cold War slowly sinking in, politicians, civil servants, and scholars of various professions by now find themselves engaged in a new round of constitutional politics, the last one having taken place roughly 60 years ago (Ikenberry 2001: ch. 6). IGOs as international institutions are at the core of the new constitutional project. Naturally, the parameters are different. First, the world is not faced with the task of rebuilding an international governance structure. Rather, the mission is to transform existing governance arrangements so as to make them more effective and accountable. Second, those involved in global constitutional politics are called upon to reconcile institutional designs with 1) the expansion of political space beyond the confines of the nation-state, and 2) the rise of a host of private actors who are endowed with policy-relevant resources, and who consequently call for formalized mechanisms of participation in what now is commonly referred to as global governance (Brühl and Rittberger 2001).

The multi-level character of contemporary global politics and the pluralization of global agency raise distinct challenges for constitutional politics. Regarding the former, one prominent issue of concern is the density of institutional arrangements at the global and regional levels. The proliferation of international institutions over the entire range of issue areas has partly resulted in significant overlaps of function and competence. This raises the question of how to approach inter-institutional linkages, both horizontally (global-global, regional-regional) and vertically (global-regional) (Young 1999: 164). Concerning the latter, the daunting task facing practitioners and theorists alike is to devise a framework that strikes an acceptable balance between a governance system’s accountability (input legitimacy) and effectiveness (output

\(^1\) For reasons of brevity, international governmental organizations will be referred to as either IGOs or international organizations.
legitimacy) (Scharpf 1999: 17-22). That is, governance structures have to allow for higher levels of private actor involvement without paralyzing the systems’ ability to allocate material and ideational values.

The language used so far has not been one of “quiet revolution” (Annan 1998), but of ambitious systemwide reform. It articulates a fundamental belief in the malleability of existing institutional arrangements that appears somewhat optimistic, given the amount of constraints that are built into the present system. IGOs – the subject of this study – assume center-stage in prescriptive works which call for constitutional adjustments, both in terms of substance and process. This study is mainly about process. It takes the pluralization of global agency as given, and explores a widely discussed behavioral pattern in contemporary global politics: IGOs have increasingly opened up to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Unlike prescriptive analyses which push IGOs into the (at present) uncomfortable role of “network managers” and “linking-pin organizations” (Metcalf 1996; Reinicke and Deng 2000: 99f.; Benner et al. 2001: 367), I am committed to the goal of generating descriptive and explanatory knowledge.

For a theorist of international relations, the just stated behavioral pattern is puzzling on at least four counts:

1. Starting with a literal reading of the term “IGO” as state-centric theorists would have it, it is striking why IGOs would invest the time and resources to open up to non-state actors in the first place.

2. Taking a cursory view at the degree of agency fragmentation at the global level over the last two centuries or so, one must be puzzled by what seems to be a cyclical pattern of IGO openness (Charnovitz 1997: 268f.; Raustiala 1997: 732) (variance across time).

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2 In this context, plural or fragmented agency does not refer to the absence of a single global authority (world government), but to the co-existence of public and private actors.

3 I will elaborate on the difference between quantitative and qualitative conceptions of openness as well as my preference for the latter below at 2.1.

4 Despite being prescriptive in orientation, the aforementioned studies on so-called global public policy networks (Reinicke 1998 being the seminal work) have made a significant contribution to descriptive and explanatory endeavors into novel governance mechanisms. It is no exaggeration to say that they defined a new agenda for research.
3. After having developed a number of indicators of IGO openness\(^6\), today one finds significant variations in degree of openness across the population of IGOs (O’Brien et al. 2000: 2f.; Raustiala 1997: 732) (variance across units of analysis I).

4. Conceptualizing NGOs in a broader fashion\(^7\), one is struck by the fact that IGO openness is frequently biased towards a particular kind of non-governmental organization (Lee, Humphreys, and Pugh 1997: 356) (variance across units of analysis II).

Each of these puzzles involves analytically distinct, but empirically interrelated aspects of my study’s dependent variable: IGO openness. To be sure, all of these aspects have received some treatment in the voluminous literature on transnational actors and suprastate governance. Nevertheless, prior efforts are unsatisfying on a number of counts. Above all, I contend that both the public and the scholarly discourse lack an adequate conception of IGO openness. Thus, part one of my thesis will be devoted to developing an empirically informed and analytically tenable conceptualization of IGO openness. The guiding questions are as follows:

*How can we define IGO openness, and how can IGO openness be observed?* I contend that, on the basis of the conceptualization developed below, it becomes possible to assign values of openness to distinct IGOs, thus paving the way for comparative research across time and across units. In sum, part one is about the generation of descriptive knowledge.\(^8\)

In principle, the conceptual framework outlined in section two below can be used to identify and address all of the above stated puzzles. In practice, such a comprehensive approach to the analysis of my dependent variable is beyond the confines of this study. Therefore, I seek to address the third puzzle only, and explore the variation in openness across units of analysis at a fixed point in time. The guiding question in part two will be thus:

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\(^5\) According to Wessels (2000: 18, 432), traditional stylized views of the political process can help in identifying theoretical anomalies. However, beyond this function of providing “heuristic reference points”, their utility as analytical tools must be questioned.

\(^6\) Cf. section 2.3. below.

\(^7\) Cf. section 2.2.3. below.

\(^8\) King, Keohane, and Verba (1994: chs. 2 and 3) elaborate on the distinction between descriptive and explanatory knowledge whereas Wendt (2001: 1022) focuses on the difference between explanatory knowledge (positive theory) and prescriptive knowledge (normative theory). The study of Arts (1998) provides a useful illustration in that it generates all three types of knowledge sequentially.
Acknowledging a general trend towards higher degrees of IGO openness at present, i.e. at the end of 2002, how do we explain that IGOs differ – at times significantly – in their respective degrees of openness? In a nutshell, part two seeks to lay the groundwork for the generation of explanatory knowledge through generalized specific explanations; put differently, it aims at working towards a solution of the third puzzle identified above.9

1.2. Relevance

With Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994: 15), I posit that a research question merits scholarly attention if, and only if, it satisfies two criteria. First, the question should address a phenomenon that is relevant in the real world. Second, working toward an answer of the question should make a contribution to an existing body of literature in a given field. I believe that the present research meets both criteria.

1.2.1. The study of IGO openness and issues of IGO reform

With regard to the first criterion, the issue of IGO openness is of obvious relevance for the practice of global governance. As already mentioned, the public discourse centers on issues of governance structures’ accountability and effectiveness. The tone of reform proposals is generally optimistic with regard to the workability of proposed solutions. What I wish to emphasize is the need to go back a few steps, and reconstruct and reflect on the empirical record.10 Sweeping reform plans may meet with resistance of various kinds. Since IGO openness is commonly associated with higher levels of both accountability and effectiveness (Beisheim 2001; Charnovitz 2001; Scholte 2002: 293f.), the empirical finding of variation in openness across international organizations becomes all the more intriguing.

Too often, reformist rhetoric appears devoid of politics. In the case of IGO openness vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations, such rhetoric oftentimes conceals

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9 Please note that, at this stage of the project, part two will not cover the stages of hypothesis generation and hypothesis testing. I will elaborate on the precise scope of my efforts below.
10 Nölke (2002: 4) makes an identical call regarding transnational policy networks: “Before we can make a comprehensive judgment regarding the desirability of these networks, we first have to systematically identify them.”
the highly politicized nature of IGO-NGO relations. Historical treatments of the issue make abundantly clear that politicization must be considered a constant, not a variable when it comes to the incorporation of NGOs into global policy-making processes (Stephenson 2000: 73f.). Consequently, we have to be careful not to treat the issue of NGO involvement as a mere technicality, not subject to politics. At the same time, the politicized nature of the debate surrounding IGO openness reveals that observable patterns of procedural adaptation on the part of IGOs are consequential and amount to more than a concerted public relations campaign.\footnote{The latter, rather cynical view is propelled by Pratchett (1999: 632), and Tussie and Riggiozzi (2001: 176).}

In sum, reformist rhetoric should not prevent us from realizing that patterns of IGO openness emerge and evolve in a political context, whose elements may defy ready manipulation by theorists and practitioners of institutional politics (Wendt 2001: 1038-1041).

1.2.2. The academic state-of-the-art on IGO openness

With respect to the second criterion, IR scholars have been furiously engaged in understanding the ramifications of pluralized global agency. A plethora of single-case studies has been produced that detail the activities of states, IGOs and NGOs, either intra-sectorally or cross-sectorally. They have labeled emerging forms of multi-actor politics as pluralist, corporatist, or tripartist, borrowing heavily from Comparative Politics without necessarily discussing the implications of transplanting these concepts.\footnote{Contrast, for example, Martens’ (2001) thorough treatment of corporatism as it applies to UNESCO’s relations with non-governmental organizations with Ottaway’s (2001) rather shallow assertion that “corporatism goes global.”} All in all, we lack a coherent empirical record with regard to NGO involvement in IGOs. Descriptive knowledge is piecemeal and inadequate for comparative research. I see the principal reason in the lack of consensual conceptualization.

With regard to explanatory knowledge, the state-of-the-art on both IGOs and NGOs in the field of International Relations has recently been surveyed by Lisa Martin, Beth Simmons, and Thomas Risse. Risse, in his discussion of work on NGOs, identifies two shortcomings. First, the application of a zero-sum logic to global political agency has ignored political realities that exhibit a complex mix of
public and private actors in governance structures. As a remedy, Risse suggests the substitution of the zero-sum “power shift” paradigm (Mathews 1997) with positive-sum models that explore public and private actors’ interactions and interpenetration (Risse 2002: 255; Ansell and Weber 1999 for a more general treatment). While agreeing with Risse, I must point out that the complex models, which have been developed to study these interactions so far, privilege NGOs over public actors. That is, the boomerang and spiral models (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999) which have contributed so much to the study of multi-actor politics work from the bottom up. This finding is in line with and explains Risse’s second criticism: “We know rather little about states and international organizations enabling and/or constraining TNA [transnational actors’, M.S.] activities.” (2002: 259). This is because extant interactive models have treated states and IGOs as rather passive governance structures that mediate NGO impact (Tarrow 2001: 2f.). In order to learn more about these actors’ enabling and constraining modes of behavior, we have to shift our analytical focus. This is especially true in instances where the interactive dynamic between public and private actors is characterized by a significant top-down element. Undoubtedly, the puzzles engendered by IGO openness cannot be tackled without acknowledging the operation of such a top-down dynamic (Reimann 2002: 4, 13-18). While it is often true that NGOs demand access to the policy-making process, it is states and IGO bureaucracies in their capacity as gatekeepers that have to supply access (Raustiala 1997: 725). The empirical record shows that supply is uneven. I contend that uneven supply can only be explained by inquiring into the properties and behavior of the suppliers. In other words, it is imperative to proceed to an in-depth study of the public element (IGOs) in the interactive pair.

Having established the lack of adequate models of IGO-NGO interaction, one has to ask whether the I(G)O literature has devoted attention to the explanation of IGO openness. Simmons and Martin (2002: 193) acknowledge the fact that IGOs increasingly engage non-governmental organizations. Curiously, this leads them to assert independent agentic capabilities of IGOs. Still, their authoritative survey makes abundantly clear that I(G)O theory has not been employed to explain variation in IGO behavior vis-à-vis NGOs. I contend that this is largely due to the state-centrism of its theoretical constructs. Only recently has there been a move, in both rationalist and constructivist camps, to problematize IGO agency. As I will argue
below, this move is imperative when the aim is to construct a coherent explanation of IGO openness vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations.

Reviewing the empirical studies of IGO openness, it is noteworthy that there has been a move away from mere description and towards an explanation of IGO openness. However, empirical studies remain undertheorized, because students of IGO openness have not linked their findings to well-developed bodies of theory (e.g. O’Brien et al. 2000; Tussie and Riggirozzi 2001). Consequently, some intriguing insights have not attracted attention beyond the circle of those interested in the substantive matter at hand. By conceptualizing IGO openness as a mode of IGO behavior, I believe that a link between empirical and theoretical bodies of work can be established. Not only can I(G)O theory help in the systematization of the empirical findings; in the long run, it will allow us to construct and test a set of competing hypotheses about IGO openness. Finally, theory-oriented I(G)O scholars may find that IGO openness provides a test case that can be used in order to further develop and refine theories of IGO behavior.

1.3. Outline of the Study

The purpose of this study is to work toward a generalized specific explanation of IGO openness. This is a humble purpose. Note that I do not intend to develop or even deliver such an explanation. Given the current state-of-the-art on the explanation of both IGO behavior and IGO openness, to claim that a coherent explanation was in reach would be preposterous. A specific explanation consists of dependent, independent, and intervening variables as well as antecedent conditions (Van Evera 1997: 16). In order to be valid, a specific explanation must meet three criteria (Yin 1994). The explanation must employ adequately specified concepts (concept validity). Second, the explanation must be causally complete (internal validity). Finally, the explanation must be generalizable (external validity).

In order to meet the first criterion, part one will define and operationalize the dependent variable of my study: IGO openness (section two). The usefulness of my operationalization will be assessed through a number of brief descriptive accounts of IGO behavior vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations (section three). Since a

13 Cf. section 2.2.1.
specific explanation moves beyond mere description, the question we have to pose is, “Of what is IGO openness an instance?” Connecting the empirical phenomenon, IGO openness, to an analytical concept that preferably has received some theoretical treatment, allows us to think theoretically about the phenomenon. To this end, I seek to make the case for conceptualizing IGO openness as IGO behavior (section two).

Committed to constructing an explanation of IGO openness that is both internally and externally valid, part two seeks to identify the knowledge frontier with regard to two issues. First, section five reviews contributions to the study of IGO behavior. The review will be organized around the rationalist-constructivist divide that currently dominates theoretical debates within IR. Since I conceptualize IGO openness as a form of IGO behavior, my aim is to receive some guidance as to how a coherent causal account of IGO openness might be structured. Second, section six will systematize the findings and conjectures of prior efforts to the study of IGO openness. This will occur within the framework of specific explanations, leading to the discussion of potential antecedent conditions, independent, and intervening variables. Part two will conclude by summarizing the findings and briefly sketching alternative ways of accounting for the variation in IGO openness.

The conclusion will recap what I set out to do, and trace the major steps of the argument.
Part I: IGO Openness – Description

2. Conceptualization

2.1. Preliminaries

In this first part, I seek to make plausible the claim that we can indeed observe different degrees of openness towards non-governmental organizations across the IGO population. To this end, I seek to define the concept of IGO openness, before developing an empirically informed classification.

One preliminary remark is in order. In defining and operationalizing the concept of IGO openness, I will opt for a qualitative approach. My approach is qualitative in two respects. First, I will not express the concept in quantitative, i.e. numerical terms. Second, I will not employ quantitative indicators to assert different degrees of openness. Rather, I am interested in the specific quality that is openness. Let us briefly consider two quantitative indicators that readily come to mind. On the one hand, openness could be measured by counting the number of NGOs that have formalized relationships with a given IGO. The logic is simple: the larger the number of NGOs with formalized relations to an international organization, the more open the IGO. But contrast the OECD with the UN Commission on Human Rights. At present, the UN Commission, during its annual session, engages around 200 NGOs that hold special consultative status with the UN’s Economic and Social Council. In stark contrast, the OECD has maintained intensive formal contacts with only two umbrella organizations, one representing business and industry, and the other representing labor. As I will argue below, the OECD exhibits a qualitatively greater degree of openness than does the Committee on Human Rights.

14 Despite the construction of an ordinal scale, my approach is not quantitative; this is in line with the following assertion by King, Keohane, and Verba (1994: 152): “The differences between quantitative and qualitative measurement involve how data are represented, not the theoretical status of measurement. Qualitative researchers use words […] quantitative researchers use numbers.”

15 For a more detailed account of these organizations’ behavior vis-à-vis NGOs, see sections 3.3.1. and 3.2.1. below.

16 A related problem is that comparative studies will be unable to control for the uneven distribution of NGOs across societal sectors or issue areas. In their sectoral analysis of NGO activity, Boli and Thomas (1997: 183f.) find large discrepancies. For instance, nearly 18 percent of the 1988 NGO population operated in the trade and industry sectors. In contrast, individual rights and welfare NGOs account for only six percent.
to say that the number of NGOs within the political systems of IGOs is irrelevant to the general phenomenon of IGO openness. To the contrary, quantitative data certainly contributes to the study of long-term developments over the entire range of cases. However, when our focus is the variation in openness at a fixed point in time, the just discussed indicator leads to biased results. On the other hand, one could look at the frequency with which a given IGO engages NGOs. Clearly, this indicator could tell us something about the quality of a given IGO-NGO relationship. Although I consider this indicator unbiased and relevant, we lack appropriate statistical data to measure openness this way. The data would have to be distilled from fairly large and differently arranged data sets\(^\text{17}\), if not newly generated. While the present unavailability of adequate data does not deal a fatal blow to the quantitative option, it is for economical reasons that this path will not be probed any further.

### 2.2. Definition

For the purposes of this study, I define IGO openness as a pattern of adaptive behavior.\(^\text{18}\) In its procedural dimension, it denotes the extent to which an IGO’s policy making process and organizational structure are adapted so as to accommodate non-governmental organizations. In its substantive dimension, it denotes the extent to which an IGO’s policies respond to, or reflect the input by NGOs. Let it be noted at the outset that this study is devoted exclusively to the conceptualization and explanation of procedural openness. That said, the above definition merits explication on a number of points.

#### 2.2.1. Openness as behavior

Fundamentally, I conceptualize openness as behavior, i.e. action. This is not mandatory. To the contrary, I contend that the conceptualization of IGO openness as either organizational behavior or property (i.e. structure) are both possible, and need to be justified on the grounds of the research question one is asking. In either case, the focus on procedure and substance makes this definition compatible with standard

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\(^{17}\) Above all, it might bear fruit to consult the data sets that are assembled in the UIA’s *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

\(^{18}\) Aston (2001: 945) and Haas (1990: 70f.) have a similar take on the issue.
conceptualizations of international organizations. It allows IGOs to be treated as political systems (Rittberger and Zangl 2003: chs. 4-7; Willetts 1988; 2001: 375), institutions (Keohane 1989), and organizations (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Ness and Brechin 1988). 19

Consider procedural adaptation which is the focus of this study. Employing the language of political systems, we are dealing with a change in procedural rules (polity) which brings about a change in the character of the policy-making process (politics). To be clear on this crucial point, my dependent variable is neither structure (polity) nor process (politics), but behavior (policy). IGO openness can be considered a pattern of procedural policy. The following illustration visualizes the temporal sequence.

Empirically, IGO openness as behavior rests on a decision by the relevant subsystem of an IGO. This decision results in a change in the formal, quasi-formal, or informal rule structure of an international organization (polity). 20 Actual procedural adaptation occurs when new procedural rules are translated into social practice. In other words, the decision to engage NGOs in some way or another is enacted in the day-to-day operations of international organizations. IGOs do something in that they give NGOs a variety of roles in the policy-making process. At the end of the temporal sequence, the pattern of procedural adaptation is reflected in the nature of the policy-making process as a whole.

Methodologically, the principal advantage of conceptualizing IGO openness in this way lies in separating openness clearly from structure. Consider the implicit distinction that Ernst Haas draws when he discusses the incorporation of NGOs into international organizations. “Representation” is deemed part of organizational

19 With regard to the latter, my definition is equally neutral toward particular research traditions in organization theory, be they legalistic, economic or sociological.
structure or context, whereas “role of NGOs” is considered a behavioral variable (1990: 67, 70f.). For Haas, “[b]ehavior is the pattern of action allowed by the limits set by context and power” (1990: 70). Accordingly, representation tells us whether NGOs are given a role or not, whether they are ‘in’ or ‘out’. It does not tell us anything about what it means for both IGOs and NGOs if the latter are ‘in’. Thus, we need to study how NGO representation as a property of the organization plays out in the political process within IGOs.

What is more, Haas’ definition of behavior hints at the direction that explanations of IGO behavior in general and openness in particular take. Overall, structural factors figure prominently as explanatory variables. Therefore, it is imperative to prevent overlap between dependent and allegedly independent variables.

2.2.2. The patterned and adaptive nature of openness

Moreover, IGO openness must be considered patterned behavior, because we need to be able to assign distinct values of openness to an organization as a whole. In order not to be distracted by unique events, my standard will be a recurring, institutionalized practice of NGO incorporation. This implies a cautious stance about IGO openness. If faced with a choice between speculative overstatement and understatement of the extent of IGO openness, I will opt for the latter.

Additionally, IGO openness is adaptive behavior since it signifies a change in the mode of operation of all IGOs. Historically, the opening up of IGOs towards non-governmental organizations is a departure from the international governance model (Brühl and Rittberger 2001: 2). That is, taking IGOs as traditionally conceived as a baseline, openness is always adaptive. Even those IGO whose constitutions address

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20 Cf. Rittberger and Zangl (2003: 96f.) for the difference between and illustration of changes in the formal versus changes in the informal rule structure of IGOs.
21 Other behavioral variables are voting, budgeting, personnel recruitment, and leadership of executive head (Haas 1990: 70f.).
22 These structural factors take different forms, e.g. the distribution of power, the distribution of preferences, or the rule structure of the IGO in question (see sections five and six below).
23 With Wessels (2000: 30), we can formulate that social action has turned into patterned behavior to the degree that the actors involved expect the IGO to behave in a certain manner. The expectation of patterned behavior by the actors involved can stem from a) contractual agreement, b) a more informal memorandum of understanding, or c) a stable set of informal rules and practice. Regarding the observation of patterned behavior, see below at 2.3.
24 For fairly large and complex organizations such as the UN and the EU, disaggregation into a number of sub-units is advisable.
25 Take the UN Security Council. The fact that, in a few instances, it has consulted NGOs on humanitarian issues does not amount to an institutionalized dialogue.
the issue of NGO involvement at the moment of their establishment, exhibit adaptive behavior since these constitutional provisions have to be specified and implemented (Rittberger and Zangl 2003: 168f.). Only then does the statutory framework constitute a social practice.  

Finally, analogous to Devesh Kapur (2000: 3n.1), I prefer the neutral term “adaptation” over its value-laden alternatives of “reform” and “learning”, since I am not concerned with developing a normative standard against which the realization of higher ends such as fairness can be evaluated (but see Franck 1995).

2.2.3. The universe of non-governmental organizations

Finally, let me justify my use of the term “non-governmental organization (NGO).” Its reference group is larger than the pool of actors that is usually referred to as NGOs. At the same time, the term serves to exclude a large number of transnational actors. It follows that the three terms are like Chinese boxes. I define NGOs as private citizens’ organizations, separate from government, not profit making, and with the capacity to operate transnationally. Three elements of this definition can be considered consensual, and are thus unproblematic; they are: the organizations’ private character (stressed by legal scholars such as Hempel 1999: 23), their formal character as organizations, and their non-profit making nature. Two implications of the above definition are more controversial. First, the above definition is blind towards the nature of the goals that these organizations pursue (but see the standard definition of Gordenker and Weiss 1996: 20). That is, NGOs as I use the term comprise those entities that work towards the realization of immaterial goals, e.g. Amnesty International, as well as those that seek to realize material goals, e.g. the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. This broader conception of NGOs mirrors the meaning that the phrase “international private association” carried during the inter-war period (Ronit and Schneider 2000b: 11). While some advocate a return to this label, I

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26 Witness the transformation of the UN Charter’s Art. 71 into social practice through the actions of ECOSOC and the Committee on Non-governmental Organizations; cf. Aston (2001: 946-949).

27 Cf. Risse (2002: 255f.) for a brief discussion of various types of transnational actors based on the dimensions of issue scope, geographic scope, internal structure, and motivation.

28 The last characteristic has recently been clarified. NGOs may earn profits, but, in contrast to transnational corporations, they may not distribute profits as income to owners. Instead, profits remain
acknowledge that the term “NGO” has become so internalized by scholars and practitioners alike that one fares better by sticking with “NGO”, albeit rendering a clear definition of the term. My broader conception of NGOs seems justified in light of the empirical record of IGO-NGO engagement. While IGOs frequently categorize actors according to social sectors or principal areas of activity, they enlist NGOs of all motivations. When an IGO exhibits inclusive behavior towards one kind of NGO, but exclusive behavior towards another, we are confronted with an interesting variation that needs to be explained instead of sidestepped through definitional finesse.

Second, my definition stipulates that NGOs (as transnational actors!) must be capable of operating transnationally. The wording deviates slightly from standard definitions which stress the transnational scope of non-governmental organizations (Gordenker and Weiss 1996: 20). An NGO is said to be transnational in scope when it has a membership base in at least two countries (Hempel 1999: 28). My conceptualization tries to cope with the fact that IGOs have come to enlist both national (one membership base) and transnational (multiple membership bases) NGOs. Thus, in order to be enlisted in IGOs, non-governmental organizations (empirically) need not be transnational in scope. Rather, they need to be able to participate in the workings of IGOs whose headquarters might be thousands of miles away from an NGO’s home base. In other words, NGOs need to have the capacity to be an active and responsive participant in the political systems of international organizations.

Despite this broader approach, my reference group still excludes a host of transnational actors. First, so-called “illicit autogoverning organizations” (Rittberger, Schrade, and Schwarzer 1999: 117), despite sharing many characteristics of the pool of organizations described above, are left out. Obviously, neither do these organizations seek access to global governance structures, nor are members of the establishment eager to enlist them. More importantly, my analysis excludes

within the organization, and are used to further its purposes. Cf. Brunnengräber and Walk (2001: 102), and Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor (2001: 4).
29 Witness the fourth puzzle stated above.
30 In the case of UN’s ECOSOC, only the most recent revision of the statutory framework (UN-Doc. E/1996/31) has opened the UN system for national NGOs.
31 Gordenker and Weiss (1996: 40f.) point out that not all NGOs are transnationally significant. Conca (1996: 106f.) uses the imagery of concentric circles to drive home the point that the center circle of truly transnational non-governmental organizations is occupied by only a small fraction of the NGO population.
transnational *networks* of advocacy and/or service organizations\(^{32}\) as well as social movements. In the aggregate, neither actor is corporate, i.e. an organization. Rather, these are collectivities of actors (Scharpf 2000: 101-107). That is why, by means of institutional matching, IGOs engage distinct organizations only. Whether these organizations are part of larger networks does not matter. In fact, IGOs themselves can be and are members of such networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 9), thus rendering the network concept impracticable for our purposes. Much confusion exists with regard to social movements. Prominent students of these collectivities provide guidance. Sid Tarrow clarifies that social movements, by definition, do not seek access to governance structures. What distinguishes them from illicit autogoverning organizations is their engagement of these structures from the outside by means of “contentious politics” (2001: 11). Clearly, their goal is the transformation of extant governance structures, not isolation from them. Thus, the difference between transnational organizations as conceptualized above and social movements is a behavioral one of pressure through representation versus pressure through protest (Rucht 1996: 187).

### 2.3. Operationalization

This section will develop those elements of the definition which make IGO openness observable in the real world. These elements are “procedural adaptation” and “substantive adaptation”\(^{33}\). Looked at from the other unit of the interactive pair, NGOs, these terms correspond to the keywords of “access” and “impact”, respectively (Beisheim 2001: 125; Charnovitz 1997: 268; Nölke 1997: 23; O’Brien et al. 2000: 206, 228f.; Take 2001: 242n.3). Since my study focuses on procedural adaptation, I will devote myself entirely to the operationalization of this element of the above definition.

Plainly stated, procedural adaptation is measured by the extent to which IGOs allow for institutionalized access of NGOs to the policy-making process. The table below maps out a trichotomous classification of procedural openness.

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\(^{32}\) Cf. Rittberger, Schrade, and Schwarzer (1999: 115f.) for this distinction.

\(^{33}\) In some works, this distinction is not made. For example, Dommen (2002: 41-44) treats both forms of adaptation as issues of “external transparency” (as opposed to “internal transparency” which addresses (un)equal treatment of member states).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>degree of procedural openness</th>
<th>IGO behavior</th>
<th>indicators</th>
<th>examples\textsuperscript{34, 35}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>collaborative with regard to programmatic matters</td>
<td>constitution, rules of procedure, (secondary sources)</td>
<td>OECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>collaborative with regard to operational matters</td>
<td>operational directives, joint monitoring, implementation, adjudication</td>
<td>IBRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consultative on programmatic matters</td>
<td>rules of procedure, hearings</td>
<td>CoE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consultative on operational matters</td>
<td>rules of procedure, joint monitoring, implementation, adjudication</td>
<td>UNCHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>information-sharing</td>
<td>derestriction policies, briefings</td>
<td>WTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exclusive</td>
<td>lack of statutory framework</td>
<td>IMF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accordingly, I measure procedural IGO openness on a continuum, ranging from “low” to “high.” The range defines the realm of possible institutional arrangements of IGO-NGO interaction, looked at from the IGO perspective. Two possible modes of IGO behavior are beyond the range sketched above. While theoretically possible, I claim that IGOs are never autistic. That is, they are in principle open systems (Rittberger and Zangl 2003: 90) that react to and act upon their environment. Specifically, I argue that every IGO in the system, in some form or another, behaves towards non-governmental organizations. The issue of procedural adaptation is never left unaddressed.

\textsuperscript{34} I have assigned these organizations levels of openness based on a cursory analysis of constitutional and other provisions as well as secondary sources. For more detailed accounts of these organizations’ behavior vis-à-vis NGOs, see section three below.

\textsuperscript{35} The acronyms, from top to bottom, refer to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), the Council of Europe, the UN Commission on Human Rights, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the Group of Seven/Eight.
On the other hand, NGOs will never enjoy equal status within IGOs. In other words, IGO behavior will never be *inclusive*. This study addresses the issue of procedural adaptation by genuine international *governmental* organizations. Membership status for NGOs is foreclosed. To date, no genuine IGO has adapted so as to grant equal status to non-state actors. Those hybrid organizations that exhibit mixed membership (the ILO and UNAIDS are cases in point (Willetts 2000a)) were created hybrids. Consequently, hybrid organizations do not qualify for studies of procedural adaptation.\(^{36}\)

That said, I seek to observe a stable social practice of IGOs reaching out towards non-governmental organizations. Building on Wolfgang Wessels’ (2000: 30) conceptualization, we can distinguish three indicators for any kind of social practice: first, contractual institutionalization (highly formal), second, para-institutionalization through memoranda of understanding, and third, informal institutionalization through stable practice and rules. I seek to determine the degree of procedural openness by concentrating on the first two indicators. As a proxy for procedural openness, I am looking at IGOs’ procedural rules as laid out in their respective constitutions, rules of procedure as well as operational directives. In order to avoid too legalistic an approach, I seek to check my formal assessment against evidence of actual practice contained in IGOs’ annual reports and provided by secondary sources (practitioners or researchers who possess inside knowledge).

The continuum sketched above echoes two frequently made distinctions. One relates to the tasks that IGOs perform. Building on a classic distinction by Robert Cox and Harold Jacobson (1973: 5f.), we can describe an IGO’s task portfolio as a specific mix of programmatic and operational tasks. More recently, Volker Rittberger and Bernhard Zangl (2003: 159-180) have turned this general distinction into a comprehensive typology of institutional tasks. They differentiate three programmatic activities (regulative, distributive, and redistributive policy), five operational activities (rule specification, implementation, monitoring, adjudication, and enforcement), and three informational activities (collection, generation, dissemination).\(^{37}\) I assume that, for IGOs, the degree of procedural adaptation is lowest with regard to informational

\(^{36}\) However, hybrid organizations provide interesting cases for the comparative study of substantive adaptation. Indeed, one could ask whether the granting of formal membership increases the impact of NGOs over substantive policy, or is only negligible.
activities, medium with regard to operational activities, and highest in the case of
programmatic activities. The second distinction I draw stems from works on citizen
participation in political processes. It describes three distinct ways in which public
authorities can provide for the inclusion of private citizens. These are labeled
information, consultation, and participation (Pratchett 1999; Scholte 2002: 285).  
Information entails a low degree of openness on behalf of public authorities. The
degree of openness is medium in the case of consultation, and high for participation
(or, to use the terminology in the table above, collaboration).

Combining these taxonomies yields a “hierarchy of [NGO] participation”
(Uvin 1996: 165), or IGO procedural adaptation. Given the assumptions about the
relationship between institutional tasks, participatory provisions and degrees of
openness, the hierarchy does not require further elaboration. However, a final note is
in order. This regards the transitions between low and medium as well as medium
and high levels of openness. Methodologically, the choice of transition points reflects
the goal to empirically observe degrees of openness that are qualitatively different.
The variation across degrees of openness should be significant enough so as to allow
for explanation with the tools of social science. Substantively, I contend that the
transition points I have identified do indeed imply intensive adjustments on behalf of
IGOs. The transitions between the modes of behavior that all characterize a medium
degree of procedural adaptation entail minor adjustments in comparison.

Now that the conceptual work with regard to my study’s dependent variable,
IGO openness, has been completed, it is necessary to gauge the analytical usefulness
and empirical applicability of the above conceptualization. To this end, I will provide
brief analyses of procedural adaptation by seven different IGOs.

3. Empirical Illustration

This section is crucial because it must show that my conceptualization of IGO
openness is not only analytically defensible, but empirically tenable. I will provide a
representative sample of IGO-NGO interaction, focusing on IGO behavior towards

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37 See my more thorough discussion of this typology at 5.1.4. below.
non-governmental organizations. The sample is representative in the sense of covering the entire range of openness I have sketched above. The international organizations below have not been selected randomly. I privilege the analysis of prominent IGOs whose relations with NGOs have been subjected to some form of scholarly assessment.\textsuperscript{39} Serving for illustrative purposes only, the following discussion does not address the issue of which degree of openness occurs most frequently across the IGO population.

3.1. \textit{Low degrees of procedural openness: G7/8, IMF, and WTO}

3.1.1. The Group of Seven / Eight

Of course, the Group of Seven / Eight, unlike the other entities under purview here, cannot be considered an international organization in strictu sensu. Still, in its 28-year history, it has evolved into a well-established, albeit non-permanent, intergovernmental body. While lacking a permanent secretariat, the annual summits are comparable to high level gatherings of other international organizations such as the Ministerial meetings of the WTO. Moreover, NGOs and the general public have discovered the G7/8 system as a potent regulatory force in international affairs.

For 20 years, the Group of Seven did not take notice of NGOs.\textsuperscript{40} A search of official documents reveals that the terms “NGO” and “civil society” were first used in 1995. While early references only alluded to the general significance of these groups to the work of a variety of IGOs and to the solution of a number of pressing global issues such as HIV/AIDS, the Birmingham summit of 1998 marked a “watershed” (Hajnal 2002: 2). For the first time, a host government – in this case: Great Britain’s - directly engaged NGOs during the summit. The Birmingham experience has evolved into a social practice of informal dialogue with non-governmental organizations. In

\textsuperscript{38} Scholte (2002: 285) speaks of “mechanisms of democracy”. In lieu of information, he uses the term “transparency”.

\textsuperscript{39} The narratives that follow are preliminary assessments of these organizations’ degrees of procedural openness. More detailed case studies are necessary to corroborate the respective picture that emerges from the selective consultation of primary and secondary sources.

\textsuperscript{40} Hajnal (2002) divides the history of G7/8 relations vis-à-vis NGOs into three phases: mutual non-recognition from 1975 until 1983, the expansion of the G7 agenda and its subsequent rise to prominence as an NGO target (1984-1994), and what I consider an unstable process of the G7/8 reaching out towards NGOs (since 1995).
the absence of any kind of statutory framework, it has been left to the discretion of the respective host government to establish and maintain communication with NGOs. Firsthand accounts of the summits since Birmingham reveal a highly volatile framework for reaching out to non-governmental organizations. So far, the behavior towards NGOs has not intensified over time. The 2000 Okinawa summit is credited with having provided the best scheme thus far, leaving later summits at Genoa (2001) and Kananaskis (2002) behind (Hajnal 2000; 2002: 3). Above all, the Japanese government enabled NGO-proximity by establishing an NGO center near the summit site. In the other cases, host government representatives selectively engaged NGOs prior to the summit only.

Some observers point out that NGO engagement by the Group of Seven / Eight is “necessarily informal”, given the absence of a permanent governing body (Hajnal 2002: 4). This view obscures the fact that the organization of annual summits is a highly institutionalized enterprise carried out by the system’s members. Given the political will of the Eight, it would be conceivable to standardize the treatment of NGOs by means of a memorandum of understanding that establishes rules for future hosts. Proposals in this regard stress the necessity of providing for an accreditation mechanism as well as the creation of an NGO forum whose meeting with the Group of Eight leaders as a collectivity becomes a mandatory item on every summit’s agenda (Kirton 2002).

In sum, the recent mutual discovery of the Group of Seven/Eight and NGOs, numerous verbal endorsements of NGOs by G7/8 leaders as well as steps by the summits’ host governments to reach out do nothing to distract from the lack of any statutory framework that regulates G7/8-NGO interaction. Rather, the inconsistent practice of host governments underscores commonly held views that behavior towards NGOs is relatively exclusive.

3.1.2. The International Monetary Fund

IMF staff members consider the Fund’s outreach activities the outgrowth of an internal review process that began when the organization failed to adequately cope

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41 Since the inception of the summit system, members have rotated their role as hosts in the following order: France, US, UK, Germany, Japan, Italy, and Canada. In 2006, Russia will host the regular
with the Mexican debt crisis of 1994 and the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 (IMF 2002a). IMF staff singled out the lack of timely and reliable information as the principal cause of the Fund’s inability to respond efficiently. Starting in 1994, the organization has slowly but continuously moved to abandon a policy-making style which exhibited “a level of secrecy that exceeded [those of] military organizations” (Willetts 2000b: 51). Looked at in isolation, the Fund’s move towards external transparency has certainly entailed significant procedural adaptation as compared to prior organizational practice (O’Brien et al. 2000: 183). However, when locating the Fund’s behavior on the continuum sketched above, the organization’s near-exclusive focus on matters of information-sharing with outsiders mandates the assignment of a relatively low degree of openness.

IMF staff and outside observers equally hail the Fund’s move towards transparency as a “revolution” (IMF 2002a; Woods and Narlikar 2001). Again, this verbal enthusiasm can only be attributed to the Fund’s exclusive practice prior to the mid-1990s. Since then, the Fund has engaged in information-sharing behavior on a number of fronts. In its 1997 annual report, the organization justified its outreach activities with recourse to the IMF’s Articles of Agreement. Article VIII (5c) calls on the Fund to “act as a center for the collection and exchange of information on monetary and financial problems, thus facilitating the preparations of studies designed to assist members in developing policies which further the purposes of the Fund.” The establishment of a website, the publication of Public Information Notices following Article IV consultations, and the holding of symposia for parliamentarians in member countries became key elements of the outreach effort that gained momentum in the 1997 fiscal year (IMF 1997: 189f). Since then, efforts to publish documents on the IMF’s programmatic and operational activities have intensified. Most importantly, the Executive Board has taken the lead in an effort to convince member governments to allow for disclosure of documents that regard the IMF’s most intrusive operational activity: surveillance of member policies. In 2001, the Executive Board, after several years of experimentation, decided to formalize a new


“The biggest and strongest push toward greater openness and transparency for the IMF and its members since its founding came from a key lesson driven home from the [crises in Mexico and Asia] […]. A common feature and cause of the crises was the lack of full information – to the IMF, but also to the markets and the public at large – on key aspects of countries’ financial situations…” (IMF 2002a).
disclosure policy (Decision No. 12405-(01/02)). Essentially, every country subject to mandatory and recurring Article IV consultations was given the right to deny public disclosure of the relevant documents. Staff reviews of the new policy nevertheless document that publication of Article IV staff reports has increased significantly under the new procedure. Some sixty percent of all reports were made accessible. Publication rates were lowest for the Middle East, Asia, and Africa (IMF 2002b: 8). Moreover, the IMF bureaucracy itself has become more transparent by providing for the publication of an increasing number of policy briefs and summaries of Executive Board discussions. Most recently, the Executive Board decided to review the 2001 policy of voluntary disclosure. Though a mandatory publication of Article IV reports is envisioned, IMF leadership seems to favor reliance on the “positive peer demonstration effect” (IMF 2002c).

In sum, the IMF’s outreach activities have intensified since 1997. Their focus has been on providing the public with a high volume of statistics and policy documents. Efforts have also been undertaken to reduce the technicality of the subject matter by phrasing the documents in an accessible way. Moreover, the IMF has recently (June 2002) begun to target NGOs with its Quarterly Newsletter for Civil Society. Beyond information-sharing, IMF leadership and staff claim to have intensified consultative efforts with interested and relevant outsiders. The number of public symposia held has indeed increased. However, a cursory view of issues discussed and participants invited reveals a series of highly technical deliberations which have mainly targeted the academic community. To date, regular IMF behavior towards NGOs has been information-sharing only. IMF staff is eager to emphasize that outreach efforts are “intended to strengthen Article IV surveillance by facilitating better risk assessment and strengthening public support for countries to adopt and maintain good policies” (IMF 2002b: 11). The organization seems determined to retain its monopoly on carrying out programmatic and operational tasks.

3.1.3. The World Trade Organization

In contrast to the Group of Seven/Eight and the IMF, the WTO, since its very inception in 1995, has been scrutinized for its relationship with non-governmental

organizations. To begin with, the WTO followed the lead of many IGOs and paved the way for consultative relations with NGOs by including an explicit NGO-related provision in its constitution. Article V (2) of the WTO Agreement states: “The General Council may make appropriate arrangements for consultation and cooperation with non-governmental organizations concerned with matters related to those of the WTO.” As has been stressed above, constitutional clauses as such need to be specified and acted upon in order to constitute a social practice. Following the lead of a number of influential Western member states, above all the US, the General Council as the top (permanent) decision-making body, in 1996, adopted a set of Guidelines for Arrangements on Relations with Non-Governmental Organizations.44 The Guidelines, still in effect today, are widely considered to allow for only “shallow” inclusion of NGOs, and thus entail no significant procedural adaptation (Charnovitz 2001: 270). The key passage of the Guidelines is worth quoting at length. Paragraph 6 states,

Members have pointed to the special character of the WTO, which is both a legally binding intergovernmental treaty of rights and obligations among its Members and a forum for negotiations. As a result of extensive discussions, there is currently a broadly held view that it would not be possible for NGOs to be directly involved in the work of the WTO or its meetings. Closer consultation and cooperation with NGOs can also be met constructively through appropriate processes at the national level […]

The passage makes abundantly clear that the collectivity of members denies NGOs any significant consultative or participatory role at the international level. Given the outreach activities of other IGOs, the WTO policy has been called “reactionary” (O’Brien et al. 2000: 140). Short of shutting out NGOs completely, the Guidelines encourage the Secretariat to “play a more active role in its direct contacts with NGOs” (para. 4) while stipulating that these contacts should remain ad hoc and informal. So far, the Secretariat has organized a handful of symposia, and provided for NGO access to the plenary sessions of the Singapore, Geneva, Seattle, and Doha Ministerial meetings. In other words, outreach activities with the potential of consultation and participation have been rare and unsystematic – as could be expected in the absence of formal institutionalization. The WTO’s annual reports are self-revelatory in this regard. Between 1999 and 2002, WTO staff essentially reproduced the passage that

44 WT/L/162

In sum, the WTO has mainly exhibited information-sharing behavior vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations. Only a few days prior to the adoption of the 1996 NGO Guidelines, the General Council had decided on Procedures for the Circulation and Derestriction of WTO documents.\textsuperscript{45} In a General Council decision of May 2002, steps have been taken to further disclosure policies.\textsuperscript{46} The organization’s website has become the main carrier of information. In a recent comparative study of the availability of online information on IGOs, NGOs, and transnational corporations, the WTO is ranked second for its comprehensive online coverage (Kovach, Neligan, and Burall 2003: 15). The WTO’s External Relations Division particularly targets NGOs with its Monthly Bulletin for NGOs. Moreover, the Director General, since 1998, has provided for monthly circulation of incoming NGO communications to all WTO members.

Beyond information-sharing, formal provisions for regular consultations with NGOs do not exist. What is more, the organization does not provide for the incorporation of NGOs into its operational activities, above all the adjudication of trade disputes between the WTO’s member states. At first glance, the latter assertion might seem controversial. However, since my standard of reference is a social practice as defined above, the WTO’s treatment of NGOs in its dispute settlement process does not qualify as consultative behavior.

Consider the relevant formal provisions. Article XIII (1-2) of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes read as follows:

Each panel shall have the right to seek information and technical advice from any individual or body which it deems appropriate. […] Panels may seek information from any relevant source and may consult experts to obtain opinions on certain aspects of the matter. […]

The wording of Article XIII DSU gives panels significant leeway in the enlistment of outside expertise. Regarding NGOs, the discussion has revolved around their role as friends of the court, or amici curiae. The discussion was fueled by outreach activities of the Appellate Body in three recent disputes: the 1998 US-Shrimp/Turtle case, the

\textsuperscript{45} WT/L/160/Rev.1
2000 British Steel case, and the 2001 Asbestos Case (Hernández-López 2001: 487-492). In the 1998 case, the Appellate Body rejected the panel’s conservative interpretation of Article XIII DSU, and permitted the submission of (non-requested) amicus briefs (WT/DS58/AB/R, para. 86). The Appellate Body’s broad interpretation of DSU was confirmed in the 2000 case. At the same time, the Appellate Body, in its 2000 report, noted that it had “no legal duty to accept or consider unsolicited amicus curiae briefs submitted by individuals and organizations, which are not Members of the WTO” (WT/DS138/AB/R, para. 42). Finally, in the 2001 case, the Appellate body entered uncharted territory by actively requesting amicus briefs (WT/DS135/9). What emerges from these reports is the picture of a “cautious case-by-case approach” (Reinisch and Irgel 2001: 142). So far, the WTO’s overtures towards NGOs within the dispute settlement framework have remained ad hoc, and met with strong resistance by a large share of the organization’s membership. As of 2002, amicus briefs played a role in only five disputes, four of them involving the United States, the European Union, or both (CUTS 2002). Consistent consultative behavior towards NGOs will be dependent upon a holistic approach of panels. The fact that each panel can draft its own working procedures has led to a piecemeal approach so far, a situation that is acknowledged by the NGO community (Greenpeace International 2001).

3.2. **Medium degrees of procedural openness: UNCHR, CoE, and IBRD**

3.2.1. **The UN Commission on Human Rights**

The UN Charter places the responsibility for human rights oversight with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) under the general auspices of the General Assembly (Articles 55 and 60). In fulfillment of Article 68 UN Charter, ECOSOC established a functional commission to deal solely with human rights issues. Since its establishment in 1946, the UN Commission on Human Rights has moved through two major phases in its work. For at least 25 years, the Commission focused almost exclusively on programmatic activities. In fact, ECOSOC Resolution 75 (V) of 1947 denied the Commission the right to monitor or actively implement any human rights
standards that might be developed. After almost two decades of successful standard-setting activities, a number of decisions by the General Assembly and ECOSOC abolished the restrictions on the Commission’s mandate. Beyond the redesign of the Commission’s task profile, these decisions triggered a change in Commission behavior vis-à-vis NGOs.

Today, while still engaged in standard-setting activities, the major activity of the Commission is operational. Specifically, it monitors the efforts of member states to implement the major UN human rights codes domestically (Gareis/Varwick 2002: 183). The Commission has developed a social practice to formally incorporate NGOs in its monitoring activities. Commission behavior vis-à-vis NGOs is consultative on operational matters.

As a functional commission, UNCHR reports directly to ECOSOC. Consequently, the constitutional provisions of ECOSOC with regard to NGOs apply directly to the Commission. The most fundamental is Article 71 UN Charter which stipulates that ECOSOC “may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence.” Like other IGOs, the UN through ECOSOC drafted up guidelines that detailed how NGO incorporation into the policy-making process was going to occur. Since 1950, when ECOSOC first issued a set of guidelines (E/288B (X)), the statutory framework has been reviewed twice. Today, arrangements for consultation are governed by ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31. ECOSOC recognizes three categories of status with varying rights and obligations. These are General status, Special status, and Roster (Stephenson 2000: 288-290). Generally speaking, the Commission on Human Rights engages NGOs with Special status. This status may be granted to non-governmental organizations “which have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the Council” (E/1996/31, para. 23). The guidelines give NGOs in special consultative status a number of opportunities to contribute to the policy-making process of ECOSOC’s functional commissions and subsidiary bodies. First, NGOs may send representatives to attend

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47 The resolution stated that the Commission on Human Rights “has no power to take any action in regard to any complaints concerning human rights.”
49 In fact, ECOSOC guidelines specifically draw a connection between human rights NGOs and special consultative status: “Organizations to be accorded special consultative status because of their interest in the field of human rights […]” (E/1996/31, para. 25)
public meetings as observers (E/1996/31, para. 35). Second, NGOs are allowed to circulate written statements of up to 1500 words (E/1996/31, para. 36). These statements are published as official UN documents. Finally, NGOs, when called by the commission or subsidiary body, may give oral presentations during official meetings (E/1996/31, para. 38(a)).

This general framework that applies to all of ECOSOC’s functional commissions and subsidiary bodies is complemented by two landmark decisions which pertain directly to the role of NGOs in the Commission of Human Rights. In 1965, the General Assembly decided that the Commission on Human Rights may consider communications by NGOs and individuals regarding human rights violations in member countries (Resolution 2144). Significantly, Resolution 2144 not only authorized monitoring activities of UNCHR; from the beginning, the General Assembly also acknowledged the crucial role that NGOs were to play in these operational activities (Liese 1998: 40). In 1970, ECOSOC followed suit by passing Resolution 1503. It explicitly authorized and invited NGOs (and individuals) to submit well-documented communications about allegedly gross and consistent human rights violations.

On the basis of this elaborate statutory framework, the UN Commission on Human Rights has increasingly opened up to NGOs. Most observers agree that the Commission relies heavily on the information it receives from NGOs. NGOs play a prominent role in all three monitoring procedures. In addition to the so-called 1503 procedure, they frequently take the floor during the annual session of the Commission to identify publicly those country-specific situations that they consider to merit UNCHR’s attention. In its 1999 session, 1824 representatives of 212 NGOs were observing the Commission’s proceedings or participating in them according to the rules specified above (Steiner and Alston 2000: 598). During the course of the 2002 session, NGOs submitted more than 200 written statements (E/CN.4/2002/200). Finally, NGO information has prompted the Commission to appoint the majority of its Special Rapporteurs whose task it is to examine the human rights situation in a given country (Gaer 1996: 53).

50 In contrast, NGOs in special consultative status are limited to 500 words when they seek to submit statements to ECOSOC itself.
51 In the case of the Commission on Human Rights, they are circulated as “E/CN.4/NGO/…”. 
3.2.2. The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe’s framework for reaching out to non-governmental organizations is similar to the infrastructure of UN ECOSOC. Like ECOSOC, the Council bestows upon NGOs the rights and obligations of consultative status. As early as 1951, the Committee of Ministers adopted Guidelines on Relations between the Council of Europe and International Non-Governmental Organizations. These guidelines have been subject to periodical revision (in 1954, 1960, 1972, and 1993). Currently, the rules of NGO incorporation are governed by Committee of Ministers Resolution (93) 38. Any NGO who wishes to obtain consultative status must meet two criteria. First, it must be active on issues within the Council’s fields of competence (Resolution (93) 38, Appendix, para. 2). Second, it must be international, i.e. have offices in more than one member state. Once granted consultative status, NGOs are incorporated into the policy-making process of all of the Council’s bodies (para. 3). Individual committees of the Council’s main organs may consult with NGOs on questions of mutual interest. Consultation can occur in writing or through hearings. The number of NGOs in consultative status has steadily grown. As of January 2003, the Council of Europe formally reaches out to 381 NGOs (SG/Inf(2003)3). In order to still allow for productive working relationships, the Council has encouraged NGOs to set up specialist working groups that can be easily matched with the Council’s committee structure. At present, ten such groups have been formed. Since 1976, an NGO Liaison Committee comprised of 25 members of the NGO community monitors the work of these working groups.

In principle, the Council’s statutory framework is designed to enable consultative behavior with regard to both programmatic and operational activities. I treat the Council of Europe’s behavior vis-à-vis NGOs as an for IGO behavior that is consultative on programmatic matters. While not discounting the role of NGOs in monitoring and adjudication, there is reliable evidence that, besides the participation in NGO working groups, non-governmental organizations most frequently are granted

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52 These guidelines are reproduced in the Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC Resolution 289 (X), 6 March 1950). Instead of General and Special status, the Rules of Procedure use the old labels of Category I and II status.

53 These organs are the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, and the Secretariat.
a formal consultative role in programmatic activities. Nearly a quarter of accredited NGOs were enlisted as consultants in the preparation and drawing up of a large number of the Council’s conventions and charters.\textsuperscript{55} The contribution by NGOs to the standard setting activities of the Council is acknowledged by members of the organization as well as outside observers (Hempel 1999: 186).

3.2.3. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)

Few people are aware of the fact that the drafters of the IBRD’s Articles of Agreement actually provided for a venue to have the Bank consult regularly on issues of general policy with what today would be called stakeholder representatives. Article V (6a) of the World Bank’s constitution reads as follows:

There shall be an Advisory Council of not less than seven persons selected by the Board of Governors including representatives of banking, commercial, industrial, labor, and agricultural interests, and with as wide a national representation as possible. In those fields where specialized international organizations exist, the members of the Council representative of those fields shall be selected in agreement with such organizations. The Council shall advise the Bank on matters of general policy. The Council shall meet annually and on such other occasions as the Bank may request.

Curiously, the Council only met in 1948 and 1949, never becoming a forum for meaningful dialogue. Its fate has been ascribed to the lack of interest of NGOs in establishing relations with the Bank (Willetts 2000b: 49). Roughly fifty years later, it is difficult to obtain a comprehensive picture of Bank behavior towards NGOs. In comparison to other IGOs, the Bank is a colossus which engages NGOs at several levels of activity. Fortunately, my task is not to draw a comprehensive picture of Bank behavior vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations. Instead, I seek to present evidence that supports my assignment of a medium degree of Bank openness towards NGOs. I will sidestep issues of information-sharing\textsuperscript{56}, and focus on the expected variants of IGO behavior.

\textsuperscript{54} NGOs are entitled, among other things, to introduce cases before the European Court of Justice.
\textsuperscript{56} Like the IMF, the World Bank has recently issued a novel disclosure policy. A seven-month public consultation period with member governments, NGOs and businesses led to the agreement on the new policy, effective January 1, 2002 (World Bank News Release No. 2002/070/S).
The World Bank engages NGOs in so many ways that one is tempted to see it as a unique example of exhibiting the entire range of behavior that I claim characterizes medium openness. To begin with, one could interpret Bank behavior towards NGOs as consultative on operational matters. An indicator for behavior of this kind is the existence of the World Bank Inspection Panel. Established in 1993 (IBRD Resolution 93-10 and IDA Resolution 93-6), its mandate is to monitor compliance with environmental standards in funding activities of the Bank itself. To this end, the Panel receives and evaluates submissions by environmental NGOs. However, a recent evaluation of the Panel’s activity nurtures skepticism as to whether this outreach activity has become sufficiently institutionalized so as to constitute a social practice. After all, Bank staff in charge of operations has proven rather reluctant to pay sufficient attention to the Panel’s proceedings. Moreover, in view of the large number of projects that the Bank funds, the minuscule amount of eleven claims filed by NGOs poses the additional question of the value NGOs themselves place on this procedure of internal review (Fox 2000: 289-295).

Alternatively, one could interpret the framework for global policy dialogue as an indicator for Bank behavior that is consultative on programmatic matters. As early as 1982, the Bank established the World Bank-NGO Committee. The early history of the Committee proves that the Bank did not intend the body to serve as a consultative organ. Instead, it was used as a means to directly communicate to NGOs the general mission that the Bank had decided to pursue. Towards the mid-1980s, NGOs began to press for the discussion of core policy issues such as structural adjustment and poverty alleviation. Bank staff reacted rather reserved to the demands of non-governmental organizations. Starting in the early 1990s, Bank staff moved towards a decentralized form of policy dialogue. This meant a move away from seeking dialogue on issues of global policy, and towards consultation on operational instead of programmatic matters. In view of the decline of the World Bank-NGO Committee, it is doubtful whether, today, the World Bank does reach out, or has ever reached out, towards NGOs with regard to programmatic matters (Covey 1998: 95-106; see also Nelson 2000: 422).

Whereas the standard of Bank practice with regard to internal review and global policy dialogue is sometimes called into question, observers unanimously agree that the Bank eagerly and consistently reaches out to NGOs in matters of operational collaboration. Therefore, I characterize Bank behavior, above all, as
collaborative with regard to operational matters. To collaborate with NGOs in operational matters means to involve them in the identification, design, implementation, and evaluation of Bank-funded projects. That is, whereas the Bank is reluctant to formally involve NGOs in discussions on the nature of its global development framework, it reaches out to non-governmental organizations when it comes to the specification of the general framework into tangible development assistance projects to be carried out “in the field”. Until 1989, NGO incorporation into the project cycle was negligible (Covey 1998: 84). This changed after the Bank, in 1989, had adopted Operational Directive (OD) 14.70 (Involving Nongovernmental Organizations in Bank Supported Activities). The OD, as part of the Bank’s Operational Manual for staff, allowed for and encouraged operational collaboration of various kinds. Although it does not require Bank staff to engage in collaborative behavior towards NGOs, the record since 1989 makes abundantly clear that NGOs have come to play a prominent role as field consultants, implementing agencies, construction managers and even cofinanciers (Covey 1998: 84-87; Hempel 1999: 180; World Bank 2002: 2-19).

In sum, while doubts remain as to the quality of Bank behavior with regard to programmatic matters, the Bank, on the basis of OD 14.70, developed a stable social practice of operational collaboration.

3.3. High degrees of procedural openness: the OECD

3.3.1. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Upon transformation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) into the OECD in 1960, the organization’s founding members provided for the possibility of having the OECD engage in consultative behavior toward NGOs. Article 12 of the OECD Convention states: “Upon such terms and conditions as the Council may determine, the Organization may: (a) address communications to non-member states or organizations; (b) establish and maintain relations with non-member states or organizations; and (c) invite non-member governments or organizations to participate in activities of the Organization.” It took just over a year until the Council

57 Currently, more than forty OD’s address the issue of NGO incorporation.
did indeed determine how NGOs were to be involved in the organization’s work. In their March 1962 Decision on Relations with International Non-Governmental Organizations, the Council’s members opted for a corporatist system of NGO incorporation. Unlike the NGO-related formal provisions of other IGOs, the OECD Council’s decision did not encourage NGOs with an interest in the organization’s work to apply for consultative status. The Council went further and conferred consultative status on a handful of umbrella organizations only. To date, no other NGO has been granted the same opportunities to become involved in the OECD’s policy-making process. Of the five NGOs that enjoy consultative rights, two have become key players. First, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) represents the business/industrial sector. Second, the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) is representative of labor. As the official titles suggest, these NGOs constituted themselves for the sole purpose of representing their national clients at OECD headquarters in Paris.

The behavior of the OECD towards BIAC and TUAC can best be described as collaborative with regard to programmatic matters. Although NGOs are not granted the right to vote, their participatory rights are relatively extensive. The OECD provides two main channels for access. In line with most IGOs which engage non-governmental organizations in a consultative or collaborative manner, the OECD organizes annual meetings within the framework of a Liaison Committee. What makes the OECD a special case is the openness of its committee structure. Both BIAC and TUAC regularly send expert groups to committee meetings. OECD documents reveal that deliberations are of a technical and programmatic nature (OECD 2000: 111f.; 2001: 90f.). Moreover, OECD leadership is regularly accessible to both NGOs. Even the OECD annual ministerial summit allows for their direct input.

58 OECD Doc. C/M (62) 7
59 Schmitter developed the authoritative definition of corporatism as a “system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories…” (cited in Martens (2001: 395)). The ease with which the concept of corporatism can be adapted so as to render an adequate description of OECD-NGO relations is striking.
60 In addition to BIAC and TUAC, the Council recognized three other NGOs: the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, the European Confederation of Agriculture, and the International Association of Crafts and small and medium-sized Enterprises.
Most recently, the organization has undertaken efforts to provide for the inclusion of non-governmental sectors beyond those of business and labor. Essentially, these contacts have remained ad hoc and informal since the 1962 Guidelines have not been revised so as to allow for a well-structured dialogue. Analogous to IMF and WTO, the OECD has organized an increasing number of conferences and workshops with these “new stakeholders” (OECD 2002).

3.4. Reflections on the sample

The conceptual trias of information, consultation, and participation has proven analytically useful in determining different degrees of IGO openness. The conceptualization is general enough to accommodate the great diversity of task profiles across the IGO population. In my view, this is a strong indicator for construct validity. The assignment of low and medium levels of openness proved fairly straightforward. What is more, the transition from information-sharing to consultative behavior, i.e. from low to medium levels of openness, is tangible in reality. In contrast, it proved much more difficult to capture the transition from medium to high levels of openness. This is because it is hard to observe empirically the difference between consultative and collaborative behavior. Analyses of formal provisions alone do not suffice to categorize IGOs. More detailed case studies and reliance on secondary sources appear mandatory.

Its shortcomings notwithstanding, I conclude that my conceptualization does indeed provide a useful standard against which the degrees of procedural adaptation of a wide variety of IGOs can be assessed and compared. In conclusion, the variation that is my dependent variable can indeed be observed empirically.
4. Explanatory Pathways

The analytical tools developed in part one have enabled us to empirically track down variation in IGO openness towards non-governmental organizations. Having found a way to intersubjectively demonstrate that variation in my dependent variable indeed can be claimed to exist, I will now address the more complicated (but also more intriguing) task of accounting for it. For starters, rarely if ever do scholars in search of explanation find themselves without prior knowledge of their object of study (Jupille, Caporaso, and Checkel 2002: 12). That is, their causal assessments are (heavily) influenced by theoretical debates within their respective discipline, or by prior contributions to the specific problem. It follows that any attempt at explanation can be structured in multiple ways. Let me briefly reflect on three such ways before I justify my preference on this issue:

1. Regarding IR’s fundamental theoretical debates, the discipline’s present divide between rationalist and constructivist solutions to substantive problems leads scholars to pit theories embedded in one framework against rival explanations lodged in the other.61 This disciplinary divide is mirrored in contending approaches to the study of IGOs, thus providing us with a rationale for organizing the explanation of IGO openness around a discussion of competing rationalist and constructivist predictions.

2. With regard to substantive contributions to IGO openness, a survey of the relevant literature reveals what one could loosely call a frequency distribution of distinct explanations. Although the relevant studies lack theoretical explicitness, it is possible to identify a small number of preferred or dominant implicit explanatory accounts in the literature. One could make these accounts explicit and comment on their relative validity.62

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61 After initial ambiguities, both camps have repeatedly clarified that neither rationalism nor constructivism can be considered theories, but must be understood as methodological approaches with distinct affinities regarding the nature of science and the kinds of problems that deserve scientific study (Fearon and Wendt (2002: 52); Finnemore and Sikkink (2001: 393)).

62 With Yin (1994), we can distinguish three dimensions of validity: i) construct validity (the correct putting into operation of concepts), ii) internal validity (the establishment of correct and complete causal relationships), and iii) external validity (the potential for generalization).
3. Finally, one could select one explanatory pathway over another with reference to the kind of variation one tries to account for. In other words, the inherent qualities of a dependent variable can make one set of potential explanatory factors seem more applicable than others. In the present case, since variation over units (IGOs) is the focus, it appears plausible to argue that attributes internal to an IGO (i.e. features of institutional design) are likely to co-vary with and - by specifiable mechanisms – cause the variation that is my dependent variable. By this logic, factors that are external to an IGO (e.g. member state preferences) could be dismissed as irrelevant.

In sum, one can justify one’s explanatory pathway by referring to 1) prevalent disciplinary conventions, 2) the direction of prior substantive efforts, or 3) the inherent qualities of the study variable. I will structure my account by combining the first and second procedures while strongly rejecting the third. I reject the third procedure on the count that one set of explanatory variables can only be privileged over another set by making implicit theoretical assumptions. That is, under conditions of absolute ignorance of or neutrality towards existing theory, there is no way to discriminate between the explanatory potential of different variables just by looking at the study variable. In our case, factors internal to the IGO can only appear to be more promising in accounting for the variation in IGO openness when one assumes that external factors (e.g. the distribution of member state preferences) do not vary across units (IGOs). Clearly, this assumption does not hold in any IR framework.

My combination of the first and second procedures can be justified by pointing to the current state-of-the-art:

In view of the state-of-the-art on the theory of IGO behavior, it is beyond the scope of this study to advance and test alternative rationalist and constructivist predictions of IGO openness. This is because prior research has not advanced alternative predictions on IGO openness and, in fact, IGO behavior in general. The study of IGO behavior has only recently begun to move beyond a battle of competing stylized accounts that viewed IGOs essentially as epiphenomena of environmental conditions of various kinds.63 Since an explanation of IGO openness as behavior

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63 This is indeed a major point. The study of IGO behavior has progressed significantly only after scholars refocused on the organizational characteristics of IGOs, thus moving beyond the Realist-Institutionalist debate over IGOs’ (and other entities’) institutional characteristics. Cf. Barnett and
must rely heavily on theoretical treatments of IGO behavior, my first goal is to identify the knowledge frontier with regard to this analytical concept. To this end, section five will review and critique theoretical contributions to the study of IGO behavior, grouping them around the rationalist-constructivist divide. Specifically, I am concerned with extracting information on two issues that I deem central to an explanation of IGO openness as behavior. First, my review seeks to identify the standard causal logics that are said to underlie IGO behavior. Second, my discussion of theoretical contributions seeks to determine whether rationalist and constructivist accounts actually problematize the range of IGO behavior. In other words, it is worth knowing whether rationalist and constructivist frameworks can actually incorporate IGO behavior vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations into their models.

Due to the undertheorized nature of studies that address IGO openness, the identification of a frequency distribution with regard to causal accounts becomes feasible only after we have acquired theoretical reference points that tell us what to be on the lookout for in the empirical studies of IGO openness. Therefore, section six draws heavily on the insights of the review of theoretical contributions to IGO behavior. I will extract those explanatory factors that figure most prominently in the empirical studies of IGO openness and place them in a framework that reproduces the logical structure of generalized specific explanations. In other words, I will assign these factors the causal status of either antecedent condition, independent, or intervening variable. The goal of section six is to reveal the implicit knowledge frontier with regard to IGO openness. Finally, section seven ties together the key findings of my theoretical explorations and sketches ways that aim at the extension of the present knowledge frontier.

5. The Explanation of IGO Behavior: Rationalism versus Constructivism

If state-of-the-art overviews are an indicator of where theoretical cleavages run in a discipline, IR undoubtedly finds itself moved by the debate between rationalism and

constructivism. This divide is reflected in two broad strands of theorizing about IGOs: a rationalist approach whose current specifications are rooted in the new institutional economics and a constructivist approach which builds upon the new institutionalism in sociology. Each strand is characterized by a distinct vocabulary to describe their common object of study (organizations). In employing either of these vocabularies, scholars single out a different set of factors that are deemed relevant in the description of organizations and in the explanation of its origins and effects. In order not to get tied up in an extended review of metatheoretical commonalities and differences between the two contenders, I will focus on how each general framework has been specified into substantive theories that have dominated IR scholarly discourse. This is all the more advisable since recent reviews of the rationalist-constructivist debate have convincingly argued that ontological and epistemological differences are frequently overstated (Fearon and Wendt 2002). Rather, significant differences emerge only when substantive theories (or frameworks) are formulated. When reviewing these theories (or frameworks), two issues must be addressed for our purposes: First, what is the respective causal logic underlying IGO behavior? Second and more specifically, what is the conceivable range of IGO behavior that the respective theory (or framework) addresses? With regard to my dependent variable, we need to determine whether the phenomenon of IGO behavior vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations is reconcilable with the core propositions of a given theory or framework. When this is not the case, the phenomenon I seek to explain is beyond the scope of the substantive theory or framework in question.

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64 Cf. the contributions to Carlsnaes, Risse, and Simmons (2002); also Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krásný (1998: 670-682).
65 The prefix “neo” denotes the obvious fact that the dominant strands of institutionalism today had predecessors. For a brief and insightful statement of the “old” institutionalism, cf. Peters (1999: 6-11).
66 When we define theories as “general statements that describe and explain the causes or effects of classes of phenomena [...], being] composed of causal laws, or hypotheses, explanations, and antecedent conditions” (Van Evera 1997: 7f.), we must conclude that a well-developed theory of IGO behavior does not exist. Rather, scholars who try to account for IGO behavior loosely derive hypotheses from prominent IR theories. To me, this practice seems problematic given the fact that, due to their state-centrism, well-developed IR theories lack a coherent conception of IGO agency. Taken at face value, a causally complete account of IGO behavior is beyond the scope of most IR theories.
67 Since the IR literature does not address these questions explicitly (see my note 56 above), I seek to distill arguments in this direction by extending on some of the field’s key contributions to the study of international institutions and agency.
5.1. A Rationalist Vocabulary for the Study of International Organizations

In essence, the rationalist study of international organizations departs from the following scenario of (social) interaction: A set of resource-endowed actors simultaneously seek to realize their individual interests in an efficient, i.e. utility-maximizing way under environmental constraints. In the words of Duncan Snidal, (social) outcomes are explained in terms of “individual goal-seeking under constraints.” (2002: 74) Stripped to the bones, this rationalist conception of social interaction can be filled in various ways so as to become a testable theory. However, while actors, interests and the environment can be subject to various specifications (view below), two elements remain constant: First, individual actors are the starting point for any kind of social scientific analysis (individuality assumption). That is, individuals form the basic analytical unit, and any (social) outcome can be traced to individual properties. Second, whatever interests individual actors have, they are capable of choosing and do choose the subjectively best means available to realize them (optimality or efficiency assumption) (Jupille, Caporaso, and Checkel 2002: 6). In other and more canonical words, actors follow a logic of consequentiality (March and Olsen 1989: 22f.).

Substantive theories thus need to specify the set of actors and their interests as well as the nature of the environment. For nearly two decades, two specifications of the rational choice framework have been dominant in IR: Neorealism (section 5.1.1.) and Neoliberal institutionalism (section 5.1.2). Their nearly identical mode of specification led to a marginal role for international organizations. Only very recently have novel specifications emerged which grant IGOs a prominent place in their models (section 5.1.4).

5.1.1. The Neorealist vocabulary

For Neorealists, social interaction within the international system is essentially one of nation-states striving for security (i.e. survival) under the constraints of anarchy. While the existence of a large number of IGOs and NGOs cannot be denied for obvious empirical reasons, Realists maintain that these entities need not be considered independent actors in their theoretical models of international politics. This state-centrism can largely be attributed to Realism’s materialist ontology. That is, the
relevance of actors is measured with recourse to the material resources that they possess. While all major Realists feel tempted to enumerate both material and immaterial resources in their respective works, the following four, all material in character, clearly dominate their thinking: population, territory, economic and military strength. At present, nation-states are the only actors to which all of the above can be attributed.

Due to its state-centrism, one could be tempted to dismiss Neorealism for its inability to theorize about IGO behavior. This, however, would do injustice to Neorealist treatments of IGOs. All state-centrism does is to deny IGOs independent agentic capabilities. By implication, the causal locus of IGO behavior must lie outside the organization. IGOs, then, are the dependent agents of states. Any argument that traces IGO behavior to states needs to cope with the fact that international organizations are collectivities of states. On the surface, state preferences explain IGO behavior (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 717). However, this causal logic remains incomplete unless it is accompanied by a cogent argument about whose preferences exactly determine IGO behavior, and what fundamental interests inform state preferences regarding IGO behavior. Neorealism offers a distinct perspective on these issues.

With regard to the selection of state preferences, John Mearsheimer’s conceptualization of IGOs is revealing. For him, these organizations are “a reflection of the distribution of power in the world. [IGOs] are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behavior.” (1994/95: 7; emphasis added) This formulation is crucial to an understanding of Realist thinking on the subject. Far from denying that international institutions (or organizations) have any effect, Neorealism maintains that these effects are wholly derivative of the international distribution of power. Since my aim is to

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69 Given their preoccupation with material capabilities, it comes as little surprise that Neorealists singled out transnational corporations (TNCs) as the only non-state entities worth considering. Of course, Neorealists affirmed their state-centrism by arguing that TNCs were less resilient in the face of pressure. Take Waltz’s (1979: 95) candid words: “Few states die; many firms do. Who is likely to be around 100 years from now – the United States, the Soviet Union, France, Egypt, Thailand, and Uganda? Or Ford, IBM, Shell, Unilever, and Massey-Ferguson? I would bet on the states, perhaps even on Uganda.”

70 While Mearsheimer focuses on international institutions, his elaboration of the concept reveals that he subsumes international organizations under that heading. For him, international institutions as sets
account for the behavior of distinct IGOs, the relevant causal variable becomes the
distribution of power (material capabilities) among the members of a given IGO.  
Mind the difference to Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore’s account of  
Neorealism and IGO behavior: In a rationalist framework, we can safely assume that  
all members have well-defined preferences over IGO behavior.  What we need to  
explain is how an IGO’s members and its bureaucracy come to behave coherently in  
the face of competing member state preferences.  Neorealism’s solution is to view  
IGOs as efficient tools of a hegemonic state (or a coalition of dominant states).  Prior  
to decision-making on an issue, the quality of being efficient “tools” turns  
international organizations into bargaining arenas where actors with superior resource  
endowments will prevail.  The specific design of these arenas need not be analyzed  
since organizational behavior is attributed to the preferences of the hegemonic state  
(or the coalition of dominant member states).  After decision-making, IGOs as “tools”  
Both the  
collectivity of members (minus the hegemon or the dominant coalition of states) and  
the bureaucracy are sufficiently responsive to the preferences of the hegemonic state  
(or the coalition of dominant states).  A change in IGO behavior (as collective action  
by both members and the bureaucracy) must then be attributed to a change in the  
distribution of power among an IGO’s membership.  
Again, the impetus for change  
lies outside of the IGO.  In sum, Neorealism asserts that the relative size of members’  
material capabilities determines whose members’ preferences prevail in any  
bargaining game within IGOs.  

With regard to the source of preferences, Neorealism stipulates that a  
hegemonic state (or a coalition of dominant states) utilize(s) IGOs in order to seek  
influence.  
That is, preferences over actions (in our case: IGO behavior) reflect the  
fundamental motivation of states to provide for their own security.  Thus, any IGO  
behavior that is prescribed by the organization’s dominant member state (or coalition  
of member states) is ultimately tied to security concerns.  

of rules are “usually embodied in organizations with their own personnel and budgets” (Mearsheimer  
1994/95: 9, 9n.18).  
To my knowledge, the standard imagery of IGO’s as either instruments, actors, or arenas was  
Waltz provided the authoritative Neorealist conception of international (material) structure.  It is  
made up of three elements (1979: 88-99), only one of them being a variable, namely the distribution of  
capabilities.  
Baumann, Rittberger, and Wagner (2001: 52-56) lay out the (modified) Neorealist position on IGOs  
as vehicles for influence-seeking policy.
In conclusion, Neorealism offers a parsimonious account of IGO behavior. In its strong variant, Neorealism asserts that IGO behavior reflects the influence-seeking policy by its dominant member state (or coalition of member states). Variation in IGO behavior is attributed to changes in member states’ relative capabilities, a process that – as Mearsheimer reminds us - is entirely delinked from membership in the organization. In its weaker version, Neorealism is silent on what informs preferences, and stresses the hegemon’s (or the dominant coalition’s) control of IGO behavior. This weak argument enables Neorealism to account for any kind of IGO behavior as long as it can plausibly be tied to the preferences of the dominant state (or state coalition). In contrast, tying IGO behavior convincingly to the security concerns of member states significantly narrows the conceivable range of IGO behavior. Unfortunately, adherents of Neorealism have not busied themselves to resolve these ambiguities.

5.1.2. The Neoliberal institutionalist vocabulary

On the surface, Neoliberal institutionalism does not differ from Neorealism in its account of IGO behavior as the result of state preferences (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 717). After all, Robert Keohane challenged Neorealism on the basis of a nearly identical ontology. Still, a closer look at the framework of Keohane and his followers reveals an account of IGO behavior that differs from the one Neorealism advances.

For Neoliberal institutionalists, social interaction within the international system is essentially one of nation-states striving for security and wealth under conditions of anarchy and interdependence. This account differs from Neorealism in its more complex description of the environment in which social interaction takes place. Much emphasis is placed on an additional structural element that is often referred to as “complex interdependence” (Keohane and Nye 1977: 8-11). In short, an increase in mutual dependence of states when it comes to the attainment of individually valued goals frequently creates so-called “problematic social situations” (Zürn 1992: 153-161). In these situations, states share common interests which can only be realized through cooperation (Keohane 1984: 243f.). However, absent centralized enforcement capability in an anarchical environment, states need to
overcome a major impediment to cooperation: uncertainty or lack of reliable information about the others’ real intentions (prior to agreement) and actual performance, i.e. compliance (after the agreement). This is where international institutions (or organizations) come in. Contrary to Neorealist expectations, institutions are claimed to help states buck the logic of anarchy and instead follow what one could call the logic of interdependence. That is, their primary function lies in the reduction of uncertainty through the provision of information, thus increasing transparency and raising the costs of non-compliance (Keohane 1984: ch. 6). In other words, institutions exert an independent effect on state behavior in that they tie rules to sanctions (Lane and Ersson 2000: 23). In sum, international institutions (or organizations) as rule structures enable states to engage in behavior (above all: institutionalized cooperation) that Neorealism would deem impossible. This is because Keohane introduces the distribution of information as a systemic variable.75

With regard to IGO behavior, two points deserve mention. First, Neoliberal institutionalism is a significant departure from Neorealist theory in that it more thoroughly defines the range of IGO behavior. Since the main function of IGOs is to ensure an information-rich environment, IGO behavior is confined to the realm of information-gathering and to the provision of a stable forum of interstate communication and negotiation.76

Second, the emphasis on the independent effects of IGOs as rule structures (i.e. institutions) does not shift the locus of causality away from states! That is, Keohane’s thin institutionalist account reproduces the basic causal logic of Neorealism’s explanation of IGO behavior. Stated bluntly, just because IGOs are said to perform a specified set of functions in a wide variety of issue-areas does not turn them into something other than their members’ instruments. To the contrary, the fact that IGOs are the passive instruments of their members makes up their functional value. Analogous to Neorealism, IGOs do not possess independent agentic capabilities. That said, Neoliberal institutionalism produces an account that is distinct

74 In what follows, the label ‘Neoliberal institutionalism’ refers to Keohane’s contractualist theory of international regimes. Later modifications and extensions of Keohane’s theory are discussed in section 5.1.4.
75 “Human beings, and governments, behave differently in information-rich environments than in information-poor ones.” (Keohane 1984: 245).
76 Keohane (1984: 94) is very explicit on this point: “Regimes may also include international organizations whose secretariats act not only as mediators [forum function, M.S.] but as providers of unbiased information […]”.

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from Neorealism. The sources of state preferences with regard to IGO behavior lie in member states’ interest in maximizing individual welfare and security under conditions of functional interdependence. Since the lack of reliable information – due to anarchy - is the major impediment to the realization of individual goals, states share a common interest in IGOs as collectors and providers of information. Thus, IGO behavior does not reflect one member state’s quest for influence, but every member’s interest in maximizing individual utilities.

5.1.3. Intermezzo: The classics fall short

Naturally, any search for an explanation of patterned behavior within the international system begins with a review of the “classics”. With regard to IGO behavior, both Neorealism and Neoliberal institutionalism employ a nearly identical logic: Since nation-states are the only relevant actors in international politics, the behavior of international organizations must be explained with recourse to the properties of states. To the extent that IGOs can be said to act, it is states acting through them. IGO behavior, in fact, becomes aggregate state behavior. In the case of Neorealism, IGOs serve as instruments of the most powerful member states in their pursuit of influence. IGO behavior is responsive to the preferences of the hegemonic member state (or the dominant coalition of member states). In the case of Neoliberal institutionalism, IGOs function as managers of decentralized cooperation under conditions of complex interdependence. IGO behavior is responsive to the preferences of its membership base.

In sum, although the absence of independent IGO agency does not preclude these approaches from theorizing about IGO behavior, their state-centric focus prevents them from developing a “richer”, more substantive analysis of international organizations, and, in turn, IGO behavior. First, in the light of the empirical record of IGO behavior, both theories run into difficulties. They cannot account for IGOs’ many active and independent functions and their corresponding institutional forms (Abbott and Snidal 1998: 7). This point needs to be driven home especially with regard to Neoliberal institutionalism. Based on the thin institutionalism of economics, it does not provide the tools to theorize adequately about the organizational aspects of
Keohane’s main concern are the institutional aspects of IGOs. For strong adherents of Neoliberal institutionalist thinking, IGOs are institutions, not organizations. This is directly related to my second remark. To theorize about IGO behavior in the absence of any conception of independent IGO agency appears to be somewhat of a stretch of the classics’ theoretical frameworks. This is especially true given both theories’ focus on the explanation of state behavior under the conditions of anarchy (and interdependence). But even when this focus is deemed unproblematic, the question becomes one of causal completeness. It seems doubtful that we can satisfactorily explain the behavior of an entity whose institutional and organizational peculiarities we have to bracket for lack of a coherent framework, with recourse only to generic environmental conditions such as the relative capabilities of its member states (Neorealism) or the nature of social situations (Neoliberal institutionalism). As I will argue later, these environmental conditions have to be taken into account. However, the link between the environment and organizational behavior must be theorized as well.

While the above critique touches upon the issue of accounting for IGO behavior in general, the classics must also be criticized for being unsuited for the explanation of the specific kind of behavior that is the focus of this study. To state the obvious, it is beyond the scope of a state-centric theory to account for IGO behavior towards non-state actors (Breitmeier and Rittberger 2000: 132; Brühl 2001: 143f.). However, the discussion above serves to make the point that it would not suffice to drop the assumption of state-centrism so as to allow for the inclusion of non-state actors into the classics’ theoretical models.

In conclusion, the rationalist classics in IR must be criticized on two major counts: Regarding causal logic, the classics’ parsimonious accounts of IGO behavior remain incomplete since they essentially blackbox international organizations. Secondly and relatedly, the classics’ state-centrism precludes a “richer” analysis of organizational politics as well as the explanation of the wide range of observable IGO behavior, including outreach activity towards NGOs. The 1990s saw efforts to extend on Keohane’s Neoliberal institutionalist framework in order to develop an analytical

While Neoliberal institutionalists sidestep the tension between the institutional and the organizational characteristics of IGOs, declaring it largely irrelevant for empirical research (Simmons and Martin 2002: 194), scholars of international organizations voice their discontent and call for a conscious effort to address these differences. For example, Abbott and Snidal (1998: 10-23) single out two
toolkit that would be better suited to reflect empirical realities. It is to these rationalist efforts that I now turn.

5.1.4. Towards a richer picture of international organizations: An extension of Neoliberal Institutionalism

The rationalist study of international organizations has recently made significant progress in matching theories of IGO behavior with the empirical record. Far from dismissing the general causal logic of member state preferences accounting for IGO behavior, contributions have instead pursued a number of avenues to “fill the gap” between independent and dependent variables, thus rendering an account that is more causally complete. In general, the institutional context that IGOs represent has been described in more detail, acquiring the logical position of an intervening variable. Specifically, scholars have struggled with the phenomenon of IGO autonomy or independent agency as one defining characteristic of institutional context. The rationalist solution to the puzzle of IGO autonomy has been the adoption of principal-agent analysis that was pioneered in the field of American politics (Pollack 2002).

Let me review these strands of research in order to determine their value when it comes to the explanation of IGO openness. Again, I seek to distill information on two issues: the causal logic that underlies IGO behavior and the range of IGO behavior that is envisioned.

Research which seeks to develop a richer picture of IGOs’ institutional context marks a new appreciation for the formal or legal study of international organizations that dominated IR research on IGOs in the 1950s and 1960s (Abbott and Snidal 1998: 7). Of course, contemporary research is much more ambitious in that it does not stop at offering descriptive accounts of the history and institutional architecture of IGOs. Instead, it uses detailed descriptive knowledge to generate and test hypotheses about why “major institutions are organized in radically different ways” (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001: 761). Although contributions to this agenda

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characteristics that differentiate (formal) organizations from (informal) institutions, namely centralization and independence. See section 5.1.4. below.

78 Of course, IR scholars do not have to rely on these earlier studies alone. International legal scholarship has continued to produce exhaustive, well-structured comparative studies of institutional forms. The authoritative surveys are Schermers and Blokker (1995) as well as Seidl-Hohenveldern and Loibl (2000).
come from a wide variety of sources, scholars seem to agree on a limited number of relevant dimensions along which institutional contexts can vary. Let me discuss these dimensions in some detail, as they carry special significance for the explanatory accounts of IGO openness that will be reviewed later.

The Rational Design (RD) project singles out five dimensions of institutional variation. First, there are membership rules that stipulate who may or may not join an international institution (or organization). Most significantly, the authors broaden their conception of agency when they speak of “states and other international actors” (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001: 762). Traditionally, membership has been analyzed in numerical terms, leading to distinctions between open or universal and more closed or particularistic IGOs (Jacobson 1984: 12; Rittberger and Zangl 2003: 29). For example, the United Nations must be considered open or universal since all entities that meet the standards of modern statehood can apply and are eligible for membership (Art. 4 UN Charter). In contrast, the Council of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) extends formal invitations to non-members to join the organization (Art. 16 OECD Convention). In the OECD’s case, the criterion for membership is economic. The cases of the European Union and ASEAN demonstrate that membership in an IGO can also be subject to regional criteria.

The second dimension of institutional context is scope. Simply enough, it denotes whether the institution or organization is confined to the regulation of one issue area, or whether its members design it so as to structure its members’ interaction in multiple issue areas (Jacobson 1984: 12; Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001: 770f.; Rittberger and Zangl 2003: 29). Third, the RD project addresses the flexibility of the rule structure. The authors distinguish between adaptive and transformative rule structures, arguing that designers knowingly create rule structures that are more

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79 A recent review of the early literature on international organizations seeks to qualify this statement, arguing that theoretical treatments were undertaken even then, albeit not meeting contemporary standards of scientific explanation; cf. Martin and Simmons (1998: 730-733).
80 In some instances, different labels distract from the fact that they denote analytically identical concepts.
81 The preamble to the OECD Convention states that “the economically more advanced nations should co-operate in assisting [...] countries in [the] process of economic development”. The membership composition reveals that this has been interpreted to mean that only countries with free market economies and democratic forms of government are eligible for membership.
or less easy to change at a later point in time (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001: 773).  

Whereas the specification of membership rules, scope, and degree of flexibility seems to be fairly straightforward, 83 much research has tried to come to terms with the last two dimensions of institutional context. Using the terminology of the RD project, these are *centralization* and *control*. Both dimensions are closely related to the principal-agent problematique in international organizations. 84 Fundamentally, *centralization* refers to the degree to which institutional tasks are performed by a single focal entity (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001: 771). The concepts of institutional tasks and focal entity require some elaboration.

In order to fully explore centralization as a descriptive and analytical variable, we need a typology of institutional tasks. Volker Rittberger and Bernhard Zangl (2003: 159-180) provide such a typology which builds on a classical distinction between forum and service organizations (Cox and Jacobson 1973: 5f.). With these authors, we can distinguish programmatic activities, operational or service activities and informational activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional tasks</th>
<th>programmatic</th>
<th>operational</th>
<th>informational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>regulative (A)</td>
<td>rule specification (D)</td>
<td>collection (I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distributive (B)</td>
<td>implementation (E)</td>
<td>generation (J)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redistributive (C)</td>
<td>monitoring (F)</td>
<td>dissemination (K)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adjudication (G)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enforcement (H)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

82 What emerges here is a rationalist explanation for the likelihood of institutional (or organizational) change. In contrast to the cultural explanations of constructivism that stress socialization effects, rationalists emphasize the path-dependent effects of formal structure (see the concise juxtaposition in Krasner (1999: 226f.)).

83 As will be seen below, the specification of the behavioral implications of these three dimensions is everything but a walk in the park.

84 Rooted in organization economics, agency theory was developed as a solution to the substantive puzzle of why ownership and control in large corporations were frequently separated. Rather than looking at the entire organization, the theory focuses on agency relationships. These occur “whenever one partner in a transaction (the principal) delegates authority to another (the agent) and the welfare of the principal is affected by the choices of the agent” (Barney and Hesterly 1996: 124). When applied to IGOs, the member states as principals possess the authority to constitute or not constitute supranational agents in order to perform a variety of specified institutional tasks (Nielsen and Tierney forthcoming). The logic behind this constitutive act is functional, in that principals expect a variety of benefits from delegation (Thatcher and Stone Sweet 2002: 4).
Only in the unlikely case of an IGO being established for the performance of a single institutional task can we assign a single measure of centralization. In reality, IGOs engage in multiple tasks. Therefore, individual IGOs can exhibit both centralization and decentralization. Two examples will serve to illustrate the point. Inside the World Trade Organization, the judging of trade disputes (G) is centralized in the Dispute Settlement Body. However, the resulting judgments need to be enforced (H) in a decentralized manner, i.e. by each member state individually. The Chapter VII procedure of the UN Security Council follows the same pattern. Adjudication is a task that the Security Council performs collectively. Specifically, it decides whether a given situation or action constitutes a threat to international peace and security (Art. 39 UN Charter). In the case of continuous non-compliance by those responsible, the Council can authorize member states to enforce its will to restore peace and security, either through non-military (Art. 41) or military action (Art. 42).

In principle, all of the above tasks can be performed in a more or less centralized manner. However, to reiterate a crucial point, IGOs enjoy a comparative advantage over alternative institutional forms in that they enable states to perform any of these tasks in a more efficient way, i.e. by means of centralization (Abbott and Snidal 1998: 9). That is, the member states of the organization, in their capacity as principals, agree on which focal entity will be charged with performing what specific institutional task. Thus, centralization addresses the *formal principal-agent relationship* within an international organization, or the *de jure autonomy* of the agent(s) vis-à-vis the principal(s). The principals decide to which degree they wish to centralize the performance of institutional tasks. The following table visualizes what I consider to be the plausible range of the principals’ options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>degree of centralization</th>
<th>low</th>
<th>medium</th>
<th>high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>decentralized cooperation</td>
<td>sovereign</td>
<td>pooling</td>
<td>delegation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equality</td>
<td>of sovereignty</td>
<td>of sovereignty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Selbstkoordination”</td>
<td>“Verbund”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Most importantly, centralization does not equal delegation. Instead, the delegation of task performance represents the highest degree of centralization possible. Most frequently, centralization takes place by designing a specific kind of intergovernmental, not supranational body of an international organization. Consequently, the concept of focal entity captures both kinds of bodies. In order to pinpoint the difference between the various degrees of centralization, let me introduce the last dimension of institutional context: control.

The control dimension addresses the issue of how collective decisions among principals are made. Specifically, two issues are at stake: First, we need to determine which principals in the organization are entitled to vote on a given issue, i.e. we need to differentiate an IGO’s membership from its franchise (Rogowski 1999: 120). In most IGOs, membership does not guarantee equal participation on any issue. Take the UN Security Council. Only five members enjoy the permanent right of representation and voting; another ten members are each rotated in and out every two years. Second, we need to capture the voting procedures among the franchise. Without going into too much detail\textsuperscript{85}, we can distinguish three major types: sovereign equality, majoritarian, and weighted voting (Steinberg 2002: 339).

Under sovereign equality, the performance of an institutional task – say: regulative policy – is centralized within an intergovernmental body in which all members are equally represented (one state, one vote)\textsuperscript{86}, and in which any positive decision requires the unanimous support of the collectivity. In contrast, majoritarian and weighted voting mechanisms violate the principle of sovereign equality. In the former case, member states are equally represented, but run the risk of being subjected to a decision that does not reflect their preferences, since the unanimity requirement is replaced by some form of majority quorum. In the latter case, equal representation is given up, because some members control a greater share of the total amount of votes than others. Take the IMF’s Board of Governors and Executive Board. Both organs use a weighted voting formula, according to which the largest financial contributors to the Fund also have the greatest number of votes.\textsuperscript{87} The size

\textsuperscript{85} An in-depth analysis of voting mechanisms in international organizations is delivered by Efraim (2000).

\textsuperscript{86} In the case of the ILO’s General Conference, the organization’s unique tripartite structure leads to the variation of ‘one state, four votes’, thus preserving the general principle of sovereign equality.

\textsuperscript{87} Article V (5a) of the IMF’s constitution provides that “[e]ach member shall have two hundred fifty votes plus one additional vote for each part of its quota equivalent to one hundred thousand special drawing rights.”
of financial contributions, i.e. the “quota” of each member, is expressed in Special Drawing Rights, and is calculated via an economic formula based on each member’s GNP, currency reserves, and prospects for international trade (Art. III (1-2) IMF Articles of Agreement).

Finally, delegation as the highest degree of centralization occurs when “supranational actors are permitted to take certain autonomous decisions, without an intervening interstate vote or unilateral veto” (Moravcsik 1998: 67). The empirical record shows that IGOs’ member states have created various kinds of agents. For example, the European Union’s members have delegated agenda control powers regarding first pillar legislation to the Commission, thus constituting a legislative agent. In contrast, WTO and NAFTA members have created judicial agents. Upon the request of the parties to a dispute, these panels are activated and authorized to adjudicate the dispute.

Taken together, the mix of centralized and decentralized task performance and the voting rules among the franchise determine the de facto autonomy of an IGO’s supranational agents (Cortell and Peterson 2002: 8). Let me explicate the reasoning behind this key argument of the principal-agent literature. At heart, the principal-agent framework is intended to give a more nuanced view of authority relationships within international organizations. To begin with, every act of delegation involves what is called agency losses. That is, principals are neither able nor willing to delimit their agent’s discretionary space ex ante (Pollack 1997: 108). Consequently, de jure autonomy of the agent will never exactly match its de facto autonomy. Consider the classics’ perspective on this issue. When we look at the frameworks of Neorealism and Neoliberal institutionalism in its original formulation from a principal-agent perspective, we learn that agency losses are deemed impossible. This is because IGOs as agents are wholly responsive to their principal(s). Thus, the classics essentially subscribe to what students of American politics have dubbed the “congressional dominance thesis”, i.e. complete dominance of the principal(s). In contrast, recent principal-agent analyses of IGOs, while equally rejecting the “runaway-bureaucracy thesis” as the other extreme, describe actual authority structures as more complex. In order to do so, scholars have to assign preferences to agents that are to some extent independent of the preferences of their principals.

In their efforts to assign independent preferences as a prerequisite for independent agency, students of IGOs have again turned to a body of literature
developed in the field of American politics. Specifically, students have relied on the insights of the study of US bureaucracies. Accordingly, IGOs as bureaucracies are assumed to strive for the maintenance of or an increase in their resource base and turf. In the words of Roland Vaubel, “international bureaucrats have the same utility function as national bureaucrats” (1991: 39). This is why they, too, seek to maximize power in terms of budget size, staff, and freedom of discretion (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 181; Nielson and Tierney forthcoming; Vaubel 1991: 39).

The result of member states and IGO bureaucracies pursuing different sets of preferences is a distinct authority structure that lies somewhere between the extremes of the omnipotent principal(s) and the runaway staff. Andrew Cortell and Susan Peterson (2002: 3f.) conceive of three scenarios to map the space between the extremes. In the case of agency accountability, IGO behavior is inconsistent with member states’ preferences, but member states are able to correct IGO behavior. In situations of both agency capture and agency discretion, IGO behavior is consistent with the preferences of only a share of the organization’s member states. In the case of capture, IGO behavior does not reflect the agent’s preferences, whereas organizational behavior does also reflect staff preferences in the case of agency discretion. In order to close the argumentative circle, let us reintroduce the dimensions of centralization and control. Obviously, staff autonomy is only conceivable in situations where the degree of centralization is high. In other words, when analyzing complex multi-task organizations, we need to differentiate between individual tasks. When we can affirm a high degree of centralization in organizational task performance, i.e. high de jure autonomy of the agent, an IGO’s voting rules are said to have a decisive influence on the resulting pattern of de facto autonomy (accountability, capture, or discretion). This is because member states as a collectivity have to aggregate their preferences vis-à-vis the agent. To take one example, in the case of diverging preferences of the agent, its accountability is dependent upon the capability of member states as multiple principals to collectively reverse the agent’s actions, i.e. to reach consensus on whether and how to respond (Cortell and Peterson 2002: 14; Nielson and Tierney forthcoming). All else being equal, collective action by multiple principals is facilitated by a small franchise and/or voting rules other than unanimity. Conversely, the larger the franchise and the more veto players, the more difficult it becomes to formulate and carry out a policy vis-à-vis the agent.
The toolkit of organizational forms that I have reviewed is the result of a cumulative effort by a number of scholars sympathetic to Neoliberal institutionalism to extend Keohane's account of the “why” of institutions (and to a limited degree: organizations) to cover the “how” of institutions and organizations.\(^{88}\) The main argument of the RD project (and, in fact, that of other students of rationalist institutionalism before) is that differences in institutional and organizational form “are the result of rational, purposive interactions among states and other international actors to solve specific problems” (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001: 762).

Whereas Keohane’s contractualist theory centers around one type of problem (collaboration problem), a new generation of scholars has applied game-theoretic reasoning to distinguish at least four different problematic social situations (Martin 1993; Zürn 1992: 165-220). In a nutshell, these social situations are characterized by the relative presence or absence of a combination of enforcement and distribution problems. The significance of international organizations as task performers is said to increase with the severity of these problems in a given setting (Rittberger and Zangl 2003: 42).\(^{89}\)

The added value of this modified Neoliberal institutionalist account is to provide for a sophisticated account for the many facets of relatively centralized organizational task performance in and through international organizations. The range of conceivable IGO behavior is extended significantly. What is more, organizational tasks are clearly laid out. Finally, the encompassing concept of international actors pays heed to the fact that, in the contemporary system, international political agency is fragmented. IR theory in the rationalist framework, at least in principle, has ceased to be state-centric. That said, the new generation of rationalist institutionalism so far has been busy with the explanation of institutional (and organizational) form. In other words, scholars have treated IGOs as their dependent variable.\(^{90}\)

\(^{88}\) Nielson and Tierney (forthcoming) speak of first generation and second generation Neoliberal institutionalists.
\(^{89}\) For a list of the RD project’s conjectures, cf. Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal (2001: 797).
\(^{90}\) Tsebelis and Garrett (2001: 385) reach the same conclusion after a survey of the intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist literature on institutional choice in the process of European integration.
When the goal is to explain IGO behavior, we must take the logical next step and address the behavioral implications of the variation in institutional context. The key question becomes how we link variation in institutional context across IGOs to variation in IGO behavior. Rather than treating institutional context as a dependent variable, we need to treat it as an explanatory one (either with independent or intervening status). In a recent survey, Rogowski concludes that “[r]esearch and theorizing on this topic are in their infancy” (1999: 135). He urges students of institutions to develop conjectures about how different formal arrangements produce distinct kinds of “policy bias” (1999: 116). To reiterate, the literature on institutional design focuses on five variables: membership rules, scope, flexibility, centralization, and control. Since well-developed conjectures about behavioral implications are missing, what follows must be considered preliminary. My argument is consistent with various strands of rational choice institutionalism that focus on the selective and aggregative qualities of political institutions (March and Olsen 1989: 118, 122). These arguments revolve around the context variables of centralization and control.

Again, institutional context must be conceived of as a variable that intervenes between member states’ preferences and IGO behavior. Specifically, context serves as a selection and aggregation mechanism for member states’ (and potentially agents’) preferences to bring about a specifiable kind of behavior. First, institutional context selects in the sense of designating the franchise of an IGO as “the group whose preferences ‘count’ in any meaningful sense” (Rogowski 1999: 119). Moreover, it determines whether IGOs as agents enjoy a certain measure of de facto autonomy so as to merit attention. Second, institutional context aggregates the preferences of the franchise by means of various decision-making rules. Consequently, institutions carry behavioral implications in their capacity as “a set of agreed upon rules that map preferences into outcomes” (Peters 1999: 49). They affect the relative weight and position of the actors that participate in the policy-making process within international organizations by making (Tsebelis and Garrett 2001: 358).

91 The initiators of the RD project justify the selection on three grounds: First, these variables are deemed substantively important by practitioners and scholars alike. Second, they can be measured, and third, they apply to all international institutions. Cf. Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal (2001: 763).
5.1.5. Summary

Let me tie together the above discussion by distilling a roadmap for a rationalist explanation of IGO behavior. Rationalist treatments of IGO behavior start with member state preferences. Neorealist and Neoliberal institutionalist accounts differ on the origins and content of these preferences. I will specify competing accounts when I construct potential specific explanations of IGO openness (see section 6.2.1.). Rationalist theories then go on to advance a more or less complex account of how state preferences translate into IGO behavior. Employing the language of the principal-agent framework, rationalist accounts have taught students of IGOs the important lesson that international organizations are sites of common agency. In other words, every causal logic needs to specify mechanisms by which (potentially) conflicting member state preferences (and possibly those of the IGO bureaucracy) are aggregated into consistent IGO behavior. Again, I will specify mechanisms put forward by rationalist frameworks below (see section 6.2.2.)

5.2. A Constructivist Vocabulary for the Study of International Organizations

In essence, the constructivist study of international organizations departs from this alternative scenario of (social) interaction. A predominantly social structure of shared knowledge (environment) constitutes the identities and interests of a set of actors who then each try to match individual behavior with their respective social obligations, the obligations resulting from individual identities and the respective position (or role) vis-à-vis other actors. By means of this process of matching expectations to actual behavior, the set of actors reproduces the structure. As with rationalism, this basic framework needs some filling in order to become substantively relevant. I have tried to use identical terminology in order to allow for ready comparisons. Again, actors and the environment can be specified in various ways (see below). However, constructivism fundamentally differs from rationalism in two ways.

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92 I acknowledge that the constructivist camp is too heterogeneous to allow for the formulation of some sort of consensus regarding the nature of social interaction. Therefore, the following portrait sides with a particular type of constructivism in IR. This type has been called “modernist” and aims, as does rationalism, at the scientific explanation of social reality. Specifically, it seeks to uncover the causal social mechanisms that operate in international relations (Adler 2002: 97f.).
First, it rejects rationalism’s individuality assumption. Rather, constructivism claims
that structure is not reducible to individual action (holism assumption). Its social
content constructs the identities and interests of actors, ultimately guiding their
behavior (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001: 393). In addition, structure and agents are
tied up in a process of mutual constitution. Moreover, the social nature of structure is
a guiding assumption of constructivism.93 To be sure, constructivism does not deny
the existence of some material content. But adherents of this approach argue that
what many perceive as being brute material facts must be understood as social facts
that “depend, by way of collective understanding and discourse, on the attachment of
collective knowledge to physical reality” (Adler 2002: 100; also Wendt 1999: 95f.).

Second, constructivism rejects rationalism’s optimality assumption, and
instead advances what one could call an appropriateness assumption. By doing so,
constructivism offers a different conception of actors’ motivations. Here, actors are
role players who derive behavioral expectations from their identities and positions
within social structure and seek to act accordingly. In the words of James March and
Johan Olsen, “[w]ithin a logic of appropriateness, a sane person is one who is ‘in
touch with identity’ in the sense of maintaining consistency between behavior and a

Although I focus on a particular strand of constructivist work, contributions have not
matured enough to constitute distinct bodies of thought. Contrary to rationalism,
scholars in the constructivist tradition do not seem to busy themselves with advancing
competing constructivist claims that can be tested against one another. Instead, they
focus on issues of substantive or theoretical importance such as mechanisms of social
construction, and point to a variety of plausible ways to tackle them (Finnemore and
Sikkink 2001: 396). Analogous to my discussion of rationalist contributions, I will
look into alternative specifications of – above all – the environment and the set of
actors. In line with a growing number of scholars, I will organize the discussion
around two distinct specifications of social structure: the structure of international

93 While specifications of the rationalist framework mainly espouse a materialist view of structure,
rationalism’s minimalist framework allows for non-material constraints as well. Cf. Snidal (2002: 75)
and Wendt (1999: 31), the latter commenting on the ambiguous stance of Neoliberal institutionalism.
society and the domestic structure, not of states, but of international organizations themselves.  

5.2.1. The vocabulary of ‘international society-centric constructivism’

At first glance, the causal logic of international society-centric constructivism regarding IGO behavior is straightforward. IGO behavior can be traced to standards of appropriate behavior that international actors derive from international social structure. However, this simple logic entails a number of methodological challenges.

The first one, the problem of common agency in international organizations, confronts constructivism as well as rationalism. IGOs are not single and coherent actors; on the contrary, they are composed of what is usually a large membership and a bureaucracy. Consequently, constructivism needs to be more specific as to who exactly the role players are that count in a constructivist explanation of IGO behavior. Constructivist approaches have always stressed their models’ tolerance towards all international actors, both public and private (Boniface 2002: 367f.). In practice, however, constructivism has tended to equate IGOs with their respective bureaucracies, thus leaving member states out of the picture.

The second challenge facing constructivists is to intersubjectively track down international social structure which allegedly matters in accounting for “international behavior” (Finnemore 1996b: 326). Among the many ideational variables that have been identified, norms have been singled out as the appropriate causal variable in a constructivist account of international behavior. Martha Finnemore reiterates a widely accepted definition of norms as “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a community of actors” (1996a: 22). Thus, in contrast to other ideational variables, norms carry immediate behavioral implications. Tracking down social structure turns into the task of identifying norms. International society-centric constructivism has adopted three strategies for doing so (Herrmann 2002: 129). First, international norms can be traced in legal codes such as general international law, the

\[94\] Only rarely do scholars refer to the internal structure of an IGO – whether material or social – as domestic structure (Rogoswki (1999: 115n.1) being an exception). Nevertheless, doing so can be analytically rewarding. The move is simple. Instead of reserving the label ‘domestic structure’ for the internal structure of states, we use it to denote the internal structure of any unit of analysis, in our case IGOs.

\[95\] The term is borrowed from Hobson (2000: 149).
legal acts of international organizations and final acts of international conferences (Boekle, Rittberger, and Wagner 2001: 124-128). Second, international norms leave their marks on discursive activities of international actors. Actors explicitly justify their actions (whether consistent or inconsistent with a given norm) by making reference to norms (Klotz 1995: 30). A final strategy lies in the observation of behavioral patterns across distinct units of analysis. Instances where (materially) dissimilar actors behave in similar ways are deemed especially relevant in identifying a given norm.

Admired by IR constructivists for its coherence and sophisticated elaboration (Finnemore 1996b: 327), the sociological institutionalist approach by a Stanford-based group of sociologists around John Meyer has produced pioneering studies by adopting a combination of the third and first strategies. Their initial observation, structural isomorphism regarding the governance structures of societies, defined the group’s puzzle that called for a solution. The group’s lasting contribution lies in their effort to explicate the substantive content of one comprehensive international social structure they dub world culture. First of all, world culture is a Western culture, originating in Western Christendom and Western capitalism. The core features or norms are rationality, defined as the “structuring of action in terms of ends and means” (Finnemore 1996b: 331), and individualism. The Stanford group has filled this frame by specifying two ends: progress and justice. Progress is defined in material terms, which means the increase of individual wealth or a rise in GNP for states. Justice is defined in terms of equality. Rational means to the goals of progress and justice are bureaucracies and markets. Meyer and his colleagues have substantiated their account of world culture by referring to the emergence of more than 130 new nation-states since 1945 (i.e. the spread of bureaucratization), the similarity of constitutional provisions regarding governance goals (collective progress and individual rights and development), and these nations’ endorsement of a market economy (Meyer et al. 1997: 153, 158). Thus, states look and act in remarkably similar ways, although they differ with regard to levels of socioeconomic development, religious commitments, geographic location and cultural heritage. For the Stanford group, this is a clear indication for the invalidity of the standard

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96 Cf. the distinction between ideas, principled beliefs, causal beliefs, and world views in Goldstein and Keohane (1993).
A functionalist account of state formation and behavior. Instead of task demands or functional needs internal to a given society, Meyer and his colleagues explain the formation and behavior of states through processes of external cultural legitimation and a logic of appropriateness.

Finnemore, who can be credited for having brought the insights of Meyer’s sociological institutionalism into IR, essentially reproduces his specification of the substantive content of international social structure. Still, her account of the “normative anatomy of international society” (Finnemore 1996a: 130) differs in one respect. For her, the social structure of world culture is not internally consistent. Normative contestation does exist, especially with regard to justice or human equality (Finnemore 1996a: 133). Thus, international actors are frequently faced with competing standards of appropriate behavior.

Let us now screen the world culture model and its offspring in IR (above all Finnemore 1996a) for their actual and potential contribution to an explanation of IGO behavior. On the positive side, IGOs and non-governmental organizations play a prominent role in international society-centric constructivism. Moreover, constructivists like to stress these organizations’ active role as enactors and promoters of norms (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 713; Boli and Thomas 1997: 180). However, a closer look at the framework reveals that those who wish to use it to explain IGO behavior face at least three serious obstacles. *First* comes a pressing methodological problem. In a nutshell, causal analysis of IGO behavior is complicated by the fact that IGOs are conceptually integral to social structure. While international society-centric constructivism à la Meyer and Finnemore is not state-centric in an ontological sense,\(^98\) it is designed to explain the properties and behavior of only one type of international actor, states. To be sure, members of the Stanford group themselves claim that this is not the case. Consider John Boli and George Thomas’ treatment of non-governmental organizations. Their analysis is meant to track down the component parts (i.e. norms) of transnational social structure while at the same time explaining what NGOs do. Boli and Thomas refer to NGOs as “carriers” of world culture, inferring the latter’s substantive content from the “characteristics and operations” of these organizations (1997: 180). This is fine as long as one’s aim is to

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97 Building on Wendt, world culture is indeed a social structure, namely knowledge that is socially shared worldwide. Culture takes many forms, among them norms, rules, and institutions (1999: 141).
look for manifestations of social structure. However, the observation of world culture with recourse to organizational behavior makes any explanation of the same behavior tautological.

Finnemore’s adaptation of the world polity framework results in a non-tautological explanation, because her dependent variable is the behavior of states, not of IGOs or NGOs. In effect, she pursues the second strategy outlined above by tracing the process through which individual states came to conform to standards of appropriate behavior that were suggested to them by their external (social) environment, i.e. other states and IGOs. This focus on the explanation of state behavior makes IGOs an intervening variable between what can be called the “deep structure’ of international society” (Hobson 2000: 149), i.e. fundamental norms, and state behavior. Curiously, international society-centric constructivism views international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, as the surface component of this social structure (Hobson 2000: 150)\textsuperscript{99}, i.e. as norm carriers. Both norms and norm carriers are part of social structure. The relationship between them is constitutive, not causal.\textsuperscript{100} Consequently, in order to establish causality between international social structure (our independent variable) and IGO behavior (our dependent variable), we have to conceptually delink the two.\textsuperscript{101}

Second, the world polity model, in encouraging studies of similarity (structural and behavioral isomorphism), appears ill-suited to deal with significant variation across units of analysis.\textsuperscript{102} In the case at hand, if we can plausibly demonstrate that international social structure defines an appropriate standard of IGO behavior vis-à-vis NGOs, it is puzzling why international organizations would exhibit different degrees of procedural adaptation. Constructivist efforts point to three ways of tackling the problem of variation.

Building on Finnemore (1996a), one possibility is to point to normative contestation. In my case, the claim would be that the constituencies of different IGOs (be they member states or IGO bureaucracies) derive different standards of

\textsuperscript{98} For the sake of completeness, I refer the reader to Bull (1995) who formulated a version of international society-centric constructivism that is state-centric in an ontological sense.
\textsuperscript{99} Finnemore is very clear on this point: “[T]he international system, here in the form of I[G]Os, changes and reconstitutes states.” (1996a: 5; emphasis added)
\textsuperscript{100} Wendt (1999: 79-88) develops the difference between causal and constitutive relationships.
\textsuperscript{101} As Wendt (1999: 167) reminds us: “Causal relationships can exist only between independently existing entities.”
\textsuperscript{102} Thus, the world culture model might be a promising way to tackle the second puzzle, i.e. an overall increase in openness across the entire population of IGOs over time. See section 1.1. above.
appropriate organizational behavior from the same international social structure. In my view, this explanatory pathway cannot work without taking into account the properties of member states or IGO bureaucracies, a theme to which I return below.

Alternatively, constructivist scholars can drop the assumption of a single international society, i.e. a single social environment of IGOs, and identify so-called “subsystemic communities” (Klotz 1995: 28). In this vein, Frank Schimmelfennig asserts that, according to sociological institutionalism, “the goals and procedures of international organizations are more strongly determined by the standards of legitimacy and appropriateness of the international community to which they belong than by the utilitarian demand for efficient problem solving.” (2001: 58; emphases added) In Schimmelfennig’s study of EU enlargement, the EU is the expression of such an international community. Its members are the 15 states as well as the EU’s supranational bodies. Strictly speaking, the community approach suffers from the same deficiency as the world culture model. As the works of Audie Klotz and Schimmelfennig demonstrate, community and IGO are coterminous.

A final way for constructivists to cope with variation in IGO behavior is to take recourse to variation in domestic social structures of international organizations. These efforts will be reviewed in section 5.2.2.

A third serious obstacle is the specification of the substantive content of international social structure. To date, it is unclear how to frame the mechanisms that translate the fundamental norms of rationality, individualism, progress, justice, bureaucratization and marketization into international behavior. In her critique of the world culture model, Finnemore asserts that “[d]etailed process-tracing and case study analysis to validate and elaborate the inferences based on correlation are missing” (1996b: 339). Such a process-tracing exercise would certainly have to show how the fundamental norms of world culture translate into norms of sufficient commonality and, above all, specificity in order to serve as motives for behavior (Legro 1997: 33f.).

The discussion of international society-centric constructivism has exposed a number of weighty obstacles to the explanation of IGO behavior. What follows is a set of suggestions that I believe will allow scholars to realize the potential of this particular strand of constructivism for the explanation of IGO behavior. My first suggestion seeks to address the problems of conceptual delinking and variation; my second suggestion speaks to the issue of specifying common and specific international norms.
A nontautological explanation of IGO behavior needs to analytically separate international social structure from IGOs. This is difficult since a dominant strategy to identify tangible elements (norms) of this structure is to analyze legal codes that either constitute IGOs (such as charters and articles of agreement), or are produced by them. Nevertheless, separation is possible if we problematize the link between IGOs as covenants\(^{103}\) and – watch the problem of common agency resurface - IGOs as a collectivity of actors (member states plus bureaucracy). Since constructivism has focused on the explanation of state behavior outside of international organizations, it treated IGO behavior as an enactment of the IGO covenant. The nature of the link between the IGO covenant from which appropriate standards of behavior can readily be derived and IGO behavior was bracketed. To problematize this link means to analyze communicative processes that reveal how the relevant participants in the political system of IGOs, i.e. member states and IGO staff, justify their view of appropriate organizational behavior.

In this regard, one shortcoming of recent constructivist analyses of IGO behavior is their near-exclusive focus on the IGO bureaucracy as actor. These analyses safely assume that for IGO leadership and staff, the organization’s covenant is the social structure that generates appropriate standards of behavior (Barnett and Finnemore 1999). Above all, the covenant defines an organization’s *mission*. What is obscured is the role of the principals (see the critique in Cortell and Peterson 2002: 9). Since constructivism assumes that member states follow a logic of appropriateness as well, we need to determine from which social structure member states ultimately derive standards of appropriate behavior.

In his study of EU enlargement, Frank Schimmelfennig advances a constructivist argument that speaks directly to the issue at hand. For Schimmelfennig, the European Union’s covenant along with its supranational bodies is the embodiment of a knowledge structure that is shared by the collectivity of the Union’s members. In a nutshell, the EU is a liberal community because its members all adhere to liberal principals both in the domestic and the international realm. Domestically, these principals are social pluralism, the rule of law, democratic political participation and representation, private property, and a market-based economy. Internationally, the liberal order is based on the democratic peace and multilateralism (Schimmelfennig

\(^{103}\) Cf. Abbott and Snidal (2000: 424f.) on rationalist and constructivist understandings of IGOs’
Note that Schimmelfennig’s specification of the content of social structure is compatible with but much more tangible than the world culture propagated by Meyer and his followers. However, another claim places Schimmelfennig squarely at odds with the world culture model. For him, the international rules of state conduct – the democratic peace and multilateralism – are externalized from the domestic sphere of the EU’s member states. Thus, the content of international social structure is merely derivative of the properties of domestic social structure. Schimmelfennig’s account suggests that the standards of legitimacy and appropriateness of the international community are in fact the standards of the collectivity of states that constitute this community. These standards find their expression in the constitution of IGOs. Thus, member states ultimately derive their standards of appropriate behavior from their respective domestic social structures.

Finally, with regard to the specification of common and specific standards of appropriate IGO behavior, constructivist scholars are well-advised to differentiate between international norms of procedure and international norms of substance. When the task is to account for procedural adaptation by IGOs, scholars should strive to capture the totality of the international social structure of procedural norms. To capture the totality is advisable since single standards of appropriate behavior may be challenged by other standards that are either broader in scope or more specific.

5.2.2. The vocabulary of organizational anthropology

A second constructivist variant focuses on the domestic social structure of international organizations. The conception of social structure in these accounts differs fundamentally from the conception in international society-centric constructivism. Whereas the latter views social structures as normative systems, the adherents of organizational anthropology frame their object of study, bureaucratic or, more generally, organizational culture, in cognitive terms. According to Richard Scott, “[c]ognitive systems control behavior by controlling our conception of what the world is and what kinds of action can be taken by what types of actors.” (1995: xviii) The eminent analyst of organizational culture provides the following definition: “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the [organization’s members] learned as [they] solved [their] problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has constitutions (, and international agreements in general) as contract and covenant, respectively.
well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.” (Schein 1992: 12). For Edgar Schein, organizational culture has three layers. At the very bottom, shared basic assumptions are the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of a group. They are the ultimate source of both organizational values and action, the other layers of culture (1992: 21-26).

If researchers find it dreadful to trace the social structure of international society-centric constructivism, they will certainly turn their backs on those who seek to decipher an organization’s cognitive system and report it to outsiders. After decades of firsthand experience in deciphering the culture of organizations, Schein concludes that “only a joint effort between an insider and an outsider can decipher the essential assumptions and their patterns of interrelationships” (1992: 169). This is for two reasons. First, subjectivity bias must be avoided, and second, the insider’s lack of awareness of the deepest level of organizational culture must be overcome (1992: 170). Interestingly, Schein advises against any bold shortcuts such as the analysis of formal organizational structure (e.g. hierarchical versus decentralized), or examinations of organizational mandates (1992: 180f.). Those students of organizational culture that resort to these measures do essentially reproduce an analysis of organizations as normative systems.

Besides pointing to the cognitive nature of organizational culture, Schein has also provided analysts with a descriptive code. Reconsider Schein’s definition of organizational culture. In it he claims that all organizations face a dual problem: they must adapt to their external environment and ensure internal integration.

Let me focus on issues pertaining to the adaptation of organizations to their external environment. In order to operate coherently in the face of a changing environment, any organization must develop shared assumptions with regard to mission and strategy (i.e. core mission and primary task), goals (as derived from the core mission), and means (such as division of labor, reward and authority systems) (Schein 1992: 52). Schein’s analytical code underscores that the domestic social structure of IGOs is not coterminous with an IGO’s constitution as covenant. In contrast, culture is the expression of how the covenant of an organization is interpreted by its members. For Schein, organizational culture in the fundamental sense of shared basic assumptions, is, once in place, highly resistant to change. Once
shared assumptions regarding mission, goals, and means have developed, they acquire a taken-for-granted quality and become part of organizational reality.

With regard to IGO behavior, anthropological studies of IGOs certainly contribute to a richer picture of the inner workings of international organizations. The mindset of leadership and staff is a plausible explanatory factor in an account of IGO behavior and, in turn, IGO openness. That said, the anthropological method is difficult to follow. Studies on organizational culture in IGOs are nearly non-existent (see Haas 1964; Nelson 1995 for important exceptions). While studies on IGO openness do utilize the concepts developed by Schein and others (see section 6.2.2.2. below), it is more than doubtful that researchers actually followed the blueprint that Schein devised.

5.2.3. Summary

Let me tie together the above discussion by distilling a roadmap for a constructivist explanation of IGO behavior. Constructivist accounts of IGO behavior start with social structure. They differ on whether this structure is normative and supplies actors with standards of appropriate behavior, or whether it is cognitive and supplies actors with scripts to comprehend and react to their environment. Moreover, constructivist accounts that focus on normative structures differ on the relative importance of international normative vis-à-vis member states’ domestic normative structures. Finally, constructivist studies are rather silent on the issue of international organizations being sites of common agency. Their contribution seems to the problem seems to lie in what can be called the distribution of knowledge among an IGO’s member states. In other words, constructivist scholars focus on the degree to which states agree on the standards of appropriate behavior in a given situation.

5.3. The explanation of IGO behavior: Two reminders

In conclusion, I think the review of this section pointed us to two issues that have to be explicitly addressed in a specific explanation of IGO behavior and, in turn, IGO openness. The first relates to the status of explanatory factors that are external to an IGO relative to those that are internal. I will argue below that an explanation of IGO openness has to privilege external factors by making them independent variables
while granting internal factors the status of intervening variables. Second, an explanation of IGO behavior and, in turn, IGO openness must address the issue of common agency in international organizations. Too often, “the IGO” is said to want or do certain things. A thorough explanation needs to unpack the complex organization and inquire into the component parts of what Cox and Jacobson have christened the “participant subsystem” of IGOs (1973: 17).

6. IGO openness towards NGOs: The development of causal logic

This study embraces a view of science that is committed to use evidence to adjudicate between rival knowledge claims. Consequently, the goal of scientific inquiry must be to formulate and test competing propositions with regard to the presence or absence of an empirical phenomenon. In section two, I argued that the empirical phenomenon of IGO openness best be conceptualized as a form of IGO behavior. In section five, I surveyed theoretical contributions to the study of IGO behavior in order to obtain points of reference for the construction of causal arguments. The present section seeks to utilize the theoretical concepts put forward in the last section in order to sketch ways in which specific explanations of IGO openness might be constructed. To this end, I merge the theoretical study of IGO behavior with the empirical study of IGO openness.

The study of IGO openness has increasingly moved beyond mere description by inquiring into the causes of different degrees of openness. A number of plausible explanatory factors can be extracted from the explorative (multi-) case studies that have been produced to date. However, scholarly contributions to the problem of IGO openness must be criticized on two grounds: First, all studies proceed inductively, and fail to link their findings to theory so as to allow for systematization and generalization. This explains why a number of idiosyncratic variables such as individual IGO leadership (O’Brien et al. 2000: 215f.) figure prominently in these studies. Secondly, since the case studies are undertheorized, it becomes difficult to decipher a causal logic that satisfies the criterion of internal validity (causal completeness). Generally speaking, empirical studies deliver single clues or pieces of the larger puzzle that need to be put into a coherent framework in order to acquire
meaning. Finally, the lack of theory in accounts of IGO openness makes it impossible to generalize from their findings. Consequently, they fail to meet the criterion of external validity.

In sum, substantive contributions to the study of IGO openness lack a coherent theoretical framework and are, by themselves, causally incomplete. Consequently, a conventional literature review that discusses each contribution in turn will not prove rewarding and appear incoherent. Since my goal is to identify the current knowledge frontier with respect to a valid social scientific explanation of IGO openness, I will organize this section around the structure that such a valid explanation is commonly expected to have. In other words, my systematization follows the logical structure of specific explanations. These consist of antecedent conditions\textsuperscript{104}, independent, dependent, and intervening variables (Van Evera 1997: 16). In part one, I addressed my study’s dependent variable (IGO openness). This part complements part one by inquiring into the nature of antecedent conditions, independent and intervening variables. I will begin with a discussion of antecedent conditions which take on a broadly structural character (section 6.1.). Next, I will discuss the explanatory variables that emerge in the case studies of IGO openness (section 6.2.). My aim is to assign causal status to these variables. To grant variables independent or intervening status, I apply the insights of rationalist and constructivist approaches to the study of IGO behavior (section five). Beyond the assignment of causal status, it will be possible to highlight how the empirical arguments resonate with theoretical treatments of international organizations. More importantly, I seek to determine whether the implicit logics that emerge from the (comparative) case studies are actually congruent with or significantly transcend the generic arguments about IGO behavior that dominate the IR literature.

6.1. Antecedent conditions: variables exogenous to individual actors

When trying to develop a comprehensive explanation for IGO openness, it is important to specify necessary background conditions. The following agentic and structural conditions need to hold regardless of whether one pursues a rationalist or

\textsuperscript{104} Antecedent conditions are phenomena whose presence activates or magnifies the causal action of the independent variable. Cf. Van Evera (1997: 16).
constructivist explanation. In order to activate a causal process leading to IGO openness of varying degrees, both (international) public and private entities need to emerge as political actors. That is, both IGOs and NGOs need to proliferate. The proliferation of IGOs and NGOs has been amply documented. As of 2001, 243 IGOs are reported active (Union of International Associations 2001/2002). The NGO population has been steadily growing after World War II, with a puzzling surge in the 1970s. As of today, the authoritative count is at roughly 38,000, not including the myriad local grassroots organizations (Union of International Associations 2001/2002).

Now that I have specified necessary background conditions on the agentic side, let me turn to the structural side. Fundamentally, the international system needs to be stable. The importance of this structural condition has been verified by Charnovitz. He finds that, historically, periods of intense IGO engagement of NGOs coincide with periods of international peace and stability (1997: 268f.). However, international peace and stability per se do not guarantee the existence of IGO-NGO relations. Since Charnovitz’s focus is on the period between roughly 1850 and today, he presupposes a certain kind of international system. Daphne Josselin and William Wallace explicate the systemic conditions which have to hold in order for IGOs and NGOs to engage in an institutionalized dialogue. Only in a society of states are political exchanges at the transnational level able to flourish (2001: 4).

In the same vein, Risse (2002: 259) affirms that “[t]he very concept of transnational relations [i.e. interactions between public and private actors, M.S.] implies an international system composed of nation-states as well as the distinction between state and societal actors within a given nation-state.” Thus, the present IGO-NGO framework rests on what Christian Reus-Smit (1997) has called a set of “fundamental institutions”. At the global level, this is multilateralism as the accepted mode of international interaction; at the domestic level, the legal distinction between public and private, the latter

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105 Since I am concerned with the explanation of IGO behavior towards NGOs, I will not delve into the contested issue of what macro-processes drive the emergence of both IGOs and NGOs. For a concise discussion of the major macro-processes (such as globalization and technological innovation) and how they impinge on international actors, cf. Brühl and Rittberger (2001: 7-19).

106 The term 'society of states' was coined by Bull (1995: 13) and refers to “a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, [which] form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.”
resting on limited government as the legitimating principle for state units, must be firmly institutionalized (Josselin and Wallace 2001: 4).\(^{107}\)

6.2. Potential explanatory factors: variables endogenous to individual actors

IGO openness has been defined as a pattern of adaptive behavior. It entails an instance of reasoned choice. Those variables, which have just been labeled exogenous, cannot explain the variance that is my dependent variable. The above conditions are characteristic of the contemporary environment in which all IGOs are embedded. Therefore, we have to be on the lookout for variables that are endogenous to individual actors, be they states as members of international organizations or IGO bureaucracies. The following framework builds on my discussion of theoretical approaches to IGO behavior. Most importantly, it serves to assign individual variables the causal status of either independent or intervening variables. Following the logical structure of specific explanations, I begin with a review of potential independent variables (section 6.2.1.) before distilling intervening variables (section 6.2.2.). Extending on my review of theoretical contributions to IGO behavior, the following discussion asserts the primacy of the external environment in an explanation of IGO behavior. Since I understand IGO behavior to be a pattern of adaptive policy vis-à-vis non-governmental organizations, I claim that member states preferences (whether derived from technical or social environments) are the adequate starting point for an explanation. By implication, factors internal to an IGO (whether material or cultural), mediate the distribution of member state preferences. They acquire meaning as intervening variables. Such a claim seems justified in the light of the empirical record. Decisions on matters of procedural policy are considered of the utmost importance by member states, and are not made by highly autonomous agents. Principals are in charge, and any explanation of IGO openness must begin with those entities who are in charge.

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\(^{107}\) Ronit and Schneider (2000b: 27n.1) deliver a concise account of crucial historical transitions: “The secularization of societies, demise of absolutism, emergence of a modern state system and development of capitalism disentangled the political, economic and religious spheres of power and led to a differentiation of state, market and civil society as specific sub-systems of societal governance.”
6.2.1. The search for independent variables: Competing accounts of state motivation

In constructing a causally complete account of IGO openness, one must begin with the specification of potential independent variables. Again, in what follows, I contend that IGO behavior can be traced to properties of the external environment of international organizations. Such an account places the locus of causality firmly outside of IGOs. The discussion in section five revealed that rationalist and constructivist specifications differ on their depiction of the external environment of IGOs. Rationalism advances a technical view of the environment. States are depicted as rational utility-maximizers that place a high value on the efficient realization of their preferences. In contrast, constructivism advances a social view of the environment. States engage in analogous reasoning with the goal of meeting social obligations. Here, states struggle to match obligations and actual behavior. The standard of evaluation becomes the social fit of individual and collective behavior (Weber 1994: 4f.). These differences between rationalism and constructivism find their expression in two distinct sets of environmental variables.

6.2.1.1. Rationalist accounts of member state motivation: influence-seeking, gains-seeking, and domestic politics

(1) Extending on Neorealism, IGO behavior towards NGOs can be traced to the distribution of power among an organization’s members. To reiterate an important point, it is beyond the scope of Neorealism as originally constructed to explain the variation that is my dependent variable. That said, the general causal logic still stands. States try to use IGOs as devices for influence-seeking policy. Consequently, IGO behavior towards NGOs must be an expression of influence-seeking behavior of an organization’s hegemonic member state or coalition of dominant states.

The only account that is remotely compatible with such a modified Neorealist argument is thirty years old. In 1973, Samuel Huntington interpreted American transnationalism as an expression of American empire. He saw the latter “characterized not by the acquisition of new territories but by their penetration” (1973: 344). Huntington’s main focus is on the presence of non-state actors (NGOs and firms) in foreign countries. Economic aid missions, military bases, and corporate investments are viewed as the tangible expressions of American empire. Still, his
argument sees US NGOs as devices of influence-seeking policies, albeit not in relation to IGOs. Although Huntington’s argument has recently resurfaced in a review on transnational politics (Tarrow 2001: 4), it has not inspired studies of IGO openness.

(2) In stark contrast to the defiance of Neorealist interpretations, students of IGO openness have heavily relied on a modified version of the Neoliberal institutionalist account. Recall that Neoliberal institutionalists posit that states operate through IGOs in order to reap joint gains, i.e. to maximize individual utilities under conditions of interdependence. In a traditional Neoliberal institutionalist account, states rely on IGOs mainly as generators, collectors, and disseminators of information. This is because the anarchical character of the international environment was deemed responsible for an interactive space that is information-poor relative to the domestic arenas of nation-states (section 5.1.2.). A number of students of IGO openness give this Neoliberal institutionalist argument an interesting twist. To begin with, these students equally point to member states’ lack of policy-relevant information and expertise. However, this lack of information is associated, above all, with the increasing complexity of the task environment in which states operate, and not with anarchy. Kal Raustiala (1997) and Ingo Take (2001) explicate this argument in a very coherent manner (see also Brühl 2001). In seeking to understand the frequency of what he calls transnational alliances, Take identifies three interrelated trends. First, substantive governance issues have become globalized and increasingly complex in character. Second and as a direct result, the collectivity of member states lacks sufficient resources to address these issues without support from non-state actors. Third, what emerges is a picture of functional interdependence between states and non-state actors. In other words, in order to reap joint gains, member states do not only have to cooperate with their kind; they are required to reach out towards NGOs as well. As utility maximizers, member states have an incentive to do so because they can “maximize policy information and research while minimizing expenditures” (Raustiala 1997: 727). Most accounts of IGO openness are compatible with Neoliberal institutionalism’s emphasis on the provision of information. They see the

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108 His concept is broader than IGO openness since it captures the entire range of co-operative ventures between public (states and IGOs) and private actors beyond the confines of the nation-state. Cf. Take (2001: 242-252).
principal added value of reaching out towards NGOs in obtaining valuable information and expertise.\textsuperscript{109} However, a number of empirical studies extend the catalogue of policy-relevant resources of NGOs to personnel (for the purposes of monitoring or direct implementation), and political support. While the former resource is compatible with a modified Neoliberal institutionalist account, the latter bears resemblance to a two-level game explanation.

In sum, students of IGO openness frequently apply a two-step logic that has a strong functionalist flavor. In the words of Kal Raustiala, due to the globalization and resulting complexity of governance tasks, “international cooperation is now a functional imperative” (2000: 418). The argument continues by asserting the functional interdependence between states and non-state actors. Since states are interested in governing efficiently, they need the resources that NGOs possess. In exchange for these resources, they grant NGOs access to global policy-making bodies.

(3) Empirical studies of IGO openness also espouse a third rationalist account of the external environment of IGOs. In contrast to both Neorealism and Neoliberal institutionalism, a Liberal argument traces member state preferences not to security or functional imperatives of international structure, but to the preferences of domestic constituencies. Geared towards IGOs, member states “represent some subset of domestic society, on the basis of whose interests state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics” (Moravcsik 1997: 518). Such a Liberal argument makes domestic constituencies the ultimate principals of IGOs, not member state representatives (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 705). Studies of IGO behavior in the Liberal tradition all share one thing in common. They focus exclusively on the domestic politics of the United States. Especially with respect to the multilateral economic organizations (World Bank, IMF, WTO), the US domestic arena is considered the “key battleground” to influence IGO behavior (O’Brien et al. 2000: 227). Consequently, from the perspective of the US government, the US is in a unique role since it can “filter worldwide NGO impact” (Uvin 2000: 22).

\textsuperscript{109} Raustiala is the only scholar who explicitly roots his analysis in Keohane’s version of Neoliberal institutionalism (1997: 720).
6.2.1.2. Constructivist accounts of state motivation: International or domestic norms as motives for IGO openness

After having discussed three variants of rationalism, let me now review the efforts that consider IGO openness as the behavior of member states conforming to the normative requirements of social structure. In line with the discussion of constructivist approaches to IGO behavior, the independent variable is the distribution of knowledge among an IGO’s member states. In other words, constructivist scholars advance alternative predictions as long as they can plausibly demonstrate that member state, and by implication, IGO behavior, is congruent with standards of appropriate behavior that are shared by the relevant actors. Building on my discussion of international society-centric constructivism as the constructivist account that focuses on the external environment of IGOs, it becomes possible to distill two distinct pathways by which such a shared knowledge structure can be identified and their causal role asserted.

(1) The first constructivist account derives standards of appropriate IGO behavior vis-à-vis NGOs from the international social structure of legal codes. On the one hand, Charnovitz (2001: 272) and Peter Willetts (2000a) argue that Article 71 UN Charter has become part of customary international law. Whereas Willetts does not move beyond a general assertion, Charnovitz is more specific. For him, Article 71 contains a sufficiently specific norm, namely for states to provide a channel for NGOs whenever they establish an international organization which is entitled to carry out legislative or executive functions. His argument is weakened when he contends that this norm does not apply to financial institutions (2001: 272n.62). Even if we do not want to judge the idea of such a norm’s existence as “faintly ridiculous” (Kapur 2000: 17), such an account raises a number of questions. To begin with, Article 71 UN Charter does indeed contain a specific procedural norm. However, it seems more than doubtful that this norm constitutes the universal behavioral standard that the authors claim it does. To begin with, a literal reading of the norm reveals that it pertains to the UN’s Economic and Social Council only. Member state practice demonstrates that the “pro-NGO norm” inherent in Article 71 does not guide UN behavior in other

110 See section 5.2.1. above.
111 See my discussion of the UN’s statutory framework with regard to NGOs at 3.2.1. above.
major bodies. With regard to a possible consultative status with the General Assembly, the majority of members denied the applicability of such a norm (Paul 1999). Since IGO behavior is at odds with the norm even within the confines of the UN system, it is inconceivable why Article 71 should provide a standard of appropriate behavior for other IGOs. In sum, while the “pro-NGO norm” of Article 71 is very specific, it lacks scope and commonality. The formulation of a constructivist prediction in this fashion does not hold great potential.

A more convincing attempt at identifying a “pro-NGO norm” at the international level is made by Kim Reimann. In her paper, she seeks to develop a top-down perspective on the growth of the NGO population. Reimann traces the emergence of the “pro-NGO norm” to the late 1980s and early 1990s that saw a paradigm shift in the agenda of global development agencies towards participation and ownership. This channel, since the early 1990s, has allegedly joined forces with the UN world conference marathon in contributing to a systemic “pro-NGO norm” taking hold (Reimann 2002: 20-25, table 6). Especially with regard to the latter channel, Reimann is very thorough about assembling evidence for her claim. She carries out an extensive analysis of primary UN documentation, using a combination of the first and second procedures (analysis of legal codes and process tracing) to identify “her” norm. Two critical points must be raised though.

First, Reimann herself plays with the possibility of having neglected more fundamental international norms of which the NGO norm is merely derivative. Specifically, her discussion of the neoliberal agenda points to alternative norms (privatization and the devolution of public governance agencies), that call the autonomy of the “pro-NGO norm” into question. In other words, Reimann needs to specifically address the complex nature of international social structure, a point emphasized by Finnemore (1996a) and the world culture school.

Following my suggestion to clearly distinguish procedural from substantive norms, these scholars should broaden their view in order to scan international legal codes for procedural norms other than Article 71 UN Charter and the many conference documents. Adopting the research strategy by the world polity school, a convincing constructivist account must try to trace the totality of procedural rules in international society. It is puzzling why scholars who identify a number of “pro-NGO norms” neglect the obvious alternative candidate for a procedural norm of high
specificity and commonality: the norm of international legal sovereignty. The sovereignty norm defines a clear standard of appropriate behavior according to which non-state entities of any kind should not participate in the system of international governance. It follows that, at first glance, the “pro-NGO norm” finds itself in a normative contest with the still ubiquitous sovereignty norm.

Second, Reimann must be subjected to the same criticism as Charnovitz and Willetts. The identification of an international structure of procedural norms can only be the first step in an explanation of IGO behavior. It is important to plausibly assert its causal role in an account of IGO behavior. To this end, scholars need to problematize the mechanisms by which these norms do or do not translate into IGO behavior. After all, IGOs exhibit significant variation in openness. My critique of international society-centric constructivism has shown that we need to take a closer look at communicative processes. It seems probable that the impact of international social structure on IGO behavior is mediated by factors internal to an IGO. (see section 6.2.1. below).

(2) A more popular and promising constructivist account focuses on an alternative social structure that is external to IGOs as well. Here, member states do not derive standards of appropriate behavior from international legal codes enshrined in IGO covenants or conference documents, but from their respective domestic social structures. In contrast to the rationalist domestic politics argument, state actors are claimed to externalize domestic procedural norms regarding the appropriate role of NGOs in the policy-making process. Through analogous reasoning, domestic procedural norms serve as behavioral motives for member states towards NGOs in intergovernmental bodies.

In her study of multilateral processes and organizations in the Americas, Yasmine Shamsie conjectures that procedural adaptation of IGOs is, above all, driven by the change in governance norms throughout the domestic political systems of the Western hemisphere (2000: 3). Specifically there is now a “strong consensus on the importance of representative democracy and citizen participation in political life”

112 According to Krasner (1999: 4), the rule for international legal sovereignty is that recognition in the international system is extended to territorial entities that have formal juridical independence.

113 With regard to TNO involvement in IGO’s, Woods (1999: 41) prompts scholars not to dismiss the sovereignty norm as anachronistic.

Thus, states are said to apply a consistent set of procedural standards to both domestic and inter-/transnational governance mechanisms. Diana Tussie and Maria Riggiorozzi, in their comparison of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), rely on the same causal logic. They trace the variation in openness vis-à-vis NGOs to member states’ views on the appropriate relationship between state and society in the policy-making process. According to Tussie and Riggiorozzi, the World Bank is guided by a market-centric engagement with NGOs. In contrast, the IDB relies on a state-centric conception of state-society relations which leads to a much more curtailed role for non-governmental organizations. The difference is traced to domestic social structures, specifically to procedural norms with regard to patterns of state-society relations, of the organizations’ member states.

While this alternative constructivist account is able to provide for a fairly accessible specification of member state preferences, explanations in this direction do in fact rely on intervening selection and aggregation mechanisms (of the rationalist variant!) to do the job.

In conclusion to this section, let me comment on the frequency distribution of the accounts that I have distilled from the case studies. Case studies implicitly or explicitly rely on three of the five distinct independent variables presented here, the first of which appears most frequently:

1. the distribution of preferences resulting from the perceived degree of functional interdependence between member states and NGOs
2. the distribution of procedural norms in international social structure
3. the distribution of procedural norms of domestic social structure of member states

### 6.2.2. Intervening variables: Power structure versus organizational culture

A causally complete account needs to identify the mechanisms through which any of the three independent variables outlined above produces the outcome that is my dependent variable: a certain degree of IGO openness. Section 6.2.2.1. builds on my discussion of recent extensions of the Neoliberal institutionalist framework. Section 6.2.2.2. presents an alternative constructivist mechanism: organizational culture.
6.2.2.1. Centralization and control as mediating factors

Recalling the review of the elaborate analytical toolkit of institutional forms (section 5.1.4.), empirical studies of IGO openness clearly favor the two most complex dimensions along which institutional context can vary: centralization and control. The sole exception is the article by two WTO staff members, Gabrielle Marceau and Peter Pedersen. They refer to the scope dimension by arguing that single-issue organizations exhibit lower degrees of openness than multi-issue ones (1999: 44). It is safe to assume that this assertion was made under the heavy influence of their professional background. I do not see a plausible connection between the number of issues an IGO tackles and its degree of openness. In order to construct such a logic, one would have to make additional claims. For instance, the performance of an organization that has recently moved rather rapidly from a single-issue focus to a more encompassing mandate might suffer from a lack of routine and experience in the new fields of activity. Indeed, a frequently made argument links IGOs’ levels of openness to the rapid task expansion of IGOs. Steve Charnovitz (1997: 269), Daniel Esty (1998), and Andreas Nölke (2000: 341f.), among others, observe that an IGO’s principals have frequently broadened their organizations’ mandates without providing for the necessary allocation of additional resources. This situation generates incentives for IGO leadership and staff to reach out to NGOs for support.

More importantly, the power structure of an IGO serves to select and aggregate membership preferences or convictions regarding IGO openness, thus producing distinct kinds of “policy bias” (Rogowski 1999: 116).

Diana Tussie and Maria Riggiorozzi, in their comparison of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), assert the World Bank’s higher level of openness. This finding is traced to differences in membership and franchise between the two development agencies. Specifically, the greater influence of Latin American states within the IDB’s institutional structure explains its more reserved behavior. Based on their analysis of the WTO, they further argue that consensus-based decision-making within the organization’s General Council produces lower levels of openness towards transnational organizations (1999: 44; cf. also O’Brien et al. 2000: 11f.). Although the US and other member states have been trying to open the WTO further, their initiatives have met severe opposition. In their study of the international financial organizations, Robert O’Brien and his collaborators propel the
argument that an IGO’s level of openness increases as decentralization increases (O’Brien et al. 2000: 26f., 51-55; also Potter 1996: 36; Tussie and Riggiozzi 2001: 174). Finally, the relationship between an IGO’s principals and its agents is deemed significant. Curiously, the literature advances competing arguments. Andreas Nölke hypothesizes that an IGO’s level of openness is lower as the autonomy of the organization’s agents increases (1997: 23f.). However, a comparison of principal-agent relations of the World Bank and the WTO leads to contrary judgments: The more leeway an IGO’s leadership has, the higher the organization’s level of openness (O’Brien et al. 2000: 53, 141, 218f.; also Nelson 2000: 412f.; Tussie and Riggiozzi 2001: 173).

6.2.2.2. Organizational culture as a cognitive filter for IGO openness

Finally, the impact of external factors on IGO behavior can be mediated by organizational culture. It must be emphasized that for such an account to hold, IGO leadership and staff must have acquired a significant degree not of formal, but of de facto autonomy vis-à-vis their principals. If this were not the case, member states could energetically intervene into the working procedures of the organization. As has been described above (section 5.2.2.), organizational culture varies with organizational mandate. That is, an IGO’s mission defines the worldview of its leadership and staff. If this worldview is at odds with norms such as transparency and participatory governance, an organization will be characterized by a low level of openness. However, the potential for cultural change is acknowledged. It hinges on three factors: the degree of cultural homogeneity within the organization, recruitment policies, and staff turnover (Schein 1992: 16).

Empirical studies on the World Bank, the WTO, and the IMF have taken recourse to such a cultural explanation. The Bank’s higher level of openness is attributed to its heterogeneous knowledge structure as bank plus development agency (O’Brien et al. 2000: 26; but see Nelson 1995: ch. 7). In contrast, both the WTO and the IMF are organizations characterized by a monolithic knowledge structure of neoclassical economics (O’Brien et al. 2000: 141, 191; Scholte 1999: 121). Moreover, the IMF is referred to as an “insular agency” due to its low degree of staff turnover which contributes to the reproduction of the same set of cognitive scripts over time (O’Brien et al. 2000: 191f.).
6.3. **Summary**

The explanatory accounts distilled from empirical studies of IGO openness are strikingly compatible with the theoretical approaches that have been developed to study IGO behavior. In the larger scheme of the project, this is a good sign. It demonstrates that the conceptualization of IGO openness as behavior was not some spur-of-the-moment act. At the same time, it is noteworthy that the empirical studies (unknowingly) transcend some of these approaches, and thus make them more suitable for their object of study. Two acts of transcendence are particularly noteworthy. First, the Neoliberal institutionalist logic of functional interdependence among states has been extended to include NGOs. Second, Schimmelfennig’s argument about the primacy of domestic social structure in accounting for state preferences and in turn behavior has been adapted.

The systematization of prior efforts in studying IGO openness reveals a truism: Any empirical phenomenon can and indeed will be tackled in a large variety of ways. Still, on the basis of the preceding systematization, I contend that the following general framework serves as a good starting point for generating and testing a variety of hypotheses with regard to IGO openness. Its principal advantage lies in integrating both rationalist and constructivist insights. I have visualized the framework in the following chart:
To the left, we find three competing accounts of member state preference formation. The independent measurement of member state preferences allows us to assess the degree of preference or knowledge convergence among the collective membership of an IGO. Between the distribution of preferences or knowledge among the membership and the outcome of a single procedural policy lies institutional context. In any case, the power structure selects and aggregates member state preferences or knowledge. If and only if de facto autonomy of leadership and staff are sufficiently high, either the bureaucracy’s preferences or the attributes of organizational culture impinge on the outcome. In sum, the present framework allows us to engage both rationalist and constructivist strategies in an attempt inquire into the proper relationship between the two.

7. Conclusion: Towards generalized specific explanations of IGO openness

The main goal of this study has been to take a small number of big hurdles on the way toward a generalized specific explanation of IGO openness. At the outset of the study, I proposed three validity criteria for explanations of this kind. First, the concepts that figure prominently must be defined and operationalized properly.
Above all, the dependent variable of the generalized specific explanation requires careful conceptualization and measurement. Sections two and three attempted to meet this criterion of concept validity.

Second and third, the explanation must be causally complete and generalizable. In section two I linked up the empirical phenomenon of IGO openness to the analytical category of IGO behavior. Section five identified the knowledge frontier with respect to the study of IGO behavior. On the basis of this information, it was possible to infuse empirical works on IGO openness with theoretical content. Section six yielded a preliminary framework that can serve as a guide to further research into the causes of varying degrees of IGO openness. The framework is deliberately inclusive of both rationalist and constructivist variables. The study of IGO openness provides an intriguing area of research to further engage the pressing question of how the insights of both camps can be brought to bear on issues of theoretical and practical concern.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIAC</td>
<td>Business and Industry Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTAA</td>
<td>Free Trade Area of the Americas</td>
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<tr>
<td>G7/8</td>
<td>Group of Seven/Eight</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGO</td>
<td>International Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAFTA</td>
<td>North American Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organization of American States</td>
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<tr>
<td>OD</td>
<td>Operational Directive</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNC</td>
<td>Transnational Corporation</td>
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<td>TUAC</td>
<td>Trade Union Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>UIA</td>
<td>Union of International Associations</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNCHR</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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References


