
FORUM

International Relations Meets History: Approaching International Organisations as Bureaucracies

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ABSTRACT

Der Aufsatz plädiert dafür, die übliche Kombination von Ansätzen aus der Öffentlichen Verwaltungslehre und den Internationalen Beziehungen in der Untersuchung von Internationalen Organisationen (IO) um eine globale und eine historische Perspektive zu erweitern, um IOs als sich entwickelnde und entfaltende Bürokratien zu erfassen. Um diese Geschichte der IOs als Bürokratien zu erfassen, schlage ich vor, die intellektuelle Geschichte der IOs zu untersuchen, ihre vielfältigen und alternativen räumlichen Horizonte als Forschungskategorien zu benutzen und dadurch neue (globale) Narrative und Periodisierungen der IO-Entwicklung jenseits der konventionellen Historiographie anzustreben.

1. Introduction

Historical studies of international organisations (IOs) can offer more insights into (almost) all areas of global history. By contrast, a history of globalisation or studies of specific global history fields run the risk of disregarding an important element if they neglect the role of IOs. It is surprising that, for instance, historians and International Relations (IR) scholars by and large seem to continue neglecting each other's work. It is the aim of this article to show how a combination of a public administration and international relations approach with global history can enrich our understanding of the history and nature of IOs.

Research on IOs has long been dominated by (western) political scientists and is often theory-driven, focuses on specific institutions or themes, tends to undervalue the long-term historical development of these organisations and frequently neglects global perspectives beyond western views. Not only social scientists, however, also historians have lost their immunity against “short-termism” as Jo Guldi and David Armitage criticise. They therefore suggest going back to the *longue durée* perspective and reinstate the social and critical engagement of historians who should also influence today’s politics.¹

Can IR studies, then, contribute to establishing new narratives of IO history? International Relations research focuses on patterns and principles, which can explain why international organisations react in which way and thus allow us to allocate different roles to IOs. In sum, they often try to respond to the simplified question: Do IOs make a difference? In recent years, a tendency in IR to pay more attention to the “internal view” has led to include approaches from organisational sociology and public administration, but mostly with a focus on western-dominated institutions. To complement this “public administration meets IR” angle with global and historical perspectives is the suggestion of this article.

Thus, a review of the ideas affecting IOs beyond short periods of time could shed light on the way IOs evolve and change (or why they did not). Such a new perspective on the development of IOs as bureaucracies could gain by focusing on two key elements: a fresh inquiry into the intellectual history of IOs and alternative space horizons, with the aim at establishing more global narratives of international organisations. This entails a break with euro-centrism² and, resulting from the elements mentioned above, a periodisation beyond those of conventional historiography that has largely concentrated on state interests and functionalist concerns.³ In the following, I will attempt a definition of IOs and then elaborate on the aforementioned elements.

2. How to define international organisations?

In times in which global entanglements tend to co-determine the experiences of people, historians can provide new insights into the global history of IOs as they could concentrate on the history of global interactions by employing a polycentric approach (in contrast to euro-centrism or other ‘centrisms’) and, more concretely, the institutionalisation of attempts to solve transnational problems, which, more generally, can be traced back to the Roman Empire and colonial systems. In our actual case, attention is drawn

1 See Jo Guldi/David Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, Cambridge and New York 2014.

2 There was, however, no uniform ‘European’ attitude; colonialism, imperialism and world domination was driven by specific regions within Europe. Eurocentric universalism was also directed towards Europe, and towards the ‘rest of the world’ that became ‘extra-European’. Eurocentrism became insofar more dominant as it attained practically global influence, even though Chinese or Arab-Islamic perspectives also had become universalised. Andrea Komlosy, *Globalgeschichte. Methoden und Theorien*, Vienna, Cologne and Weimar 2001, pp. 13-14.

3 Glenda Sluga, ‘Editorial – the transnational history of international institutions’. *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011), p. 222.

to IOs emerging since the 19th century, which possessed transnational features and thus differed from former empires that showed (at least formally) a rather centrist concentration of power. In contrast to IOs of the 19th century, transnationally acting political, social and cultural movements did not establish structures, administrations and fixed goals (for instance, enshrined in a covenant or charter). Here seems to be the difference between the abolitionist and the beginning of the women's or the labour movements on the one hand, and IOs on the other. The latter are equipped with centralised permanent secretariats managing professional administrations or were well-structured international NGOs such as Amnesty International or Greenpeace. However, less formal movements and transnational institutions both certainly belong to international *organisation* as a field of research. The categories 'international organisation' and 'international organisations' provide the opportunity to distinguish between the general framework of attempts to deal with transborder and global problems on the one hand, and the institutional manifestations, the very organisations, on the other hand. The concept of IOs appears to be newer than the organisations themselves – the name only became established and accepted by these institutions themselves with the League of Nations.⁴ While some authors include non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other private transnational networks⁵ or even for-profit organisations (DaimlerChrysler, Microsoft etc.)⁶, others exclude non-state institutions and trans- or multinational companies.⁷ A very common definition of intergovernmental organisations requires three conditions to be met: IOs must include a minimum of three member states, must be active in several countries and established by a formal agreement among governments (treaty, charter, statute).⁸ A more specific, legal definition requires IOs to have international aims, at least three member states with full and equal voting rights, a structure-providing constitution enabling the members to hold periodic elections of the governing institutions and officers as well as a permanent headquarter.⁹ Volker Rittberger and Bernhard Zangl further stress the difference between international regimes and IOs. While the latter can become active concerning specific problems as well as transcending the corresponding areas, international regimes are mostly limited to one policy field. In addition, IOs can function as actors, whereas regimes cannot.¹⁰ Political scientists have analysed IOs as (mostly intergovernmental) contracts, networks, regimes, sceneries, actors and bureaucracies, among other.

4 Volker Rittberger and Bernhard Zangl, *Internationale Organisationen. Politik und Geschichte*, 3rd revised edition, Opladen 2003, p. 21; Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865, Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung*, Darmstadt 2009, p. 2.

5 Akira Iriye, *Global Community. The role of international organizations in the making of the contemporary world*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2004.

6 Volker Rittberger and Bernhard Zangl, *International Organization. Polity, Politics and Policies*, Houndsmills and New York 2006, p. 9.

7 José E. Alvarez, *International Organizations as Law-Makers*, New York 2005, p. 1.

8 Margaret P. Karns and Karen A. Mingst, *International Organizations. The Politics and Processes of Global Governance*, Boulder and London 2010, p. 5.

9 Alvarez, *International Organizations as Law-Makers*, p. 4.

10 Rittberger and Zangl, *Internationale Organisationen*, p. 25.

An extensive literature is attached to each of these assigned roles or perspectives, which cannot be discussed here.¹¹

How do historians then define international organisations? Madeleine Herren speaks of ‘crossborder formalised structures’ that are perceived as actors in the international system of civil societies and/or states.¹² This seems to be a new and inspiring definition, although it seems to address the processes of managing cross-border affairs that is international organisation as a process and less so the institutions. David MacKenzie proposes another definition: IOs ‘...are cooperative ventures between, among others, governments, peoples, businesses, scientists, organized labour, and professionals; they are involved in virtually all aspects of human life from politics, culture, and business to the environment, human rights, and disarmament; and they are found almost everywhere; in the developed and the developing world, among the rich and the poor, and across the political and ideological spectrum.’¹³

As a general rule, intergovernmental organisations show a similar, tripartite structure, which in some ways re-assembles the institutional form of western-liberal democracies: a plenary body representing the member states; an organ with limited membership that exercises some selected powers; and the (secretariat) staff, headed by a ‘Director General’ or ‘Secretary General’. Secretariats are usually made up of the international civil service – in theory this hints at the prototype of an independent international bureaucrat.¹⁴ Nongovernmental institutions or internationally organised networks present differing structures and features. However, one must add, the definitions are certainly not clear-cut and they vary. A closer working definition sees IOs as the institutions that began to be established in the 19th century as phenomena of international cooperation, transcending world regions, and including private organisations and institutions based on intergovernmental agreements but also mixed bodies with private and public staff.

Bernhard Zangl and Volker Rittberger emphasise that ‘international organisation’ has lately been replaced by the notion ‘global governance’.¹⁵ The concept of global governance, a quite disputed term, relies on international forces, rules and actors and encompasses intergovernmental and non-governmental IOs, but focuses more on policy areas, where also other non-state players and the so-called “global civil society” come into play. These “forces and rules” “...might be formal and informal, explicit and implicit, regulative and constitutive, states and non-state actors etc.”¹⁶ Accordingly, we may also see a connection between the term ‘global governance’ and the multitude of international regimes managed by various institutions. If we regard the entirety of global private or

11 For an exclusively IR-theoretical discussion on international organisations, see J. Samuel Barkin, *International Organization. Theories and Institutions*, New York and Houndsmills 2013.

12 Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865*, p. 6.

13 David MacKenzie, *A World Beyond Borders. An Introduction to the History of International Organizations*, Toronto 2010, p. 2.

14 Alvarez, *International Organizations as Law-Makers*, p. 9.

15 Rittberger and Zangl, *Internationale Organisationen*, p. 22.

16 Ian Hurd, *International Organizations. Politics, Law, Practice*, Cambridge et al. 2011, p. 11.

inter-governmental institutions, networks and other forms of organisation as ‘global governance’, the notion has certainly become very important when describing the worldwide inter-connectedness particularly since the 1970s and 1980s. However, in my view, the process started much earlier. I would not go as far back in history as others, but the mid-19th century was certainly an important starting point for international organisation/global governance. Even though one also might recognise the Congress of Vienna as the embryonic version of international organising despite its rather loose structure as conference system, the more institutionalised unions seem more fitting to be described as formal manifestations of international organisation as a process. In accordance with Craig Murphy and Madeleine Herren, I also consider the mid-19th century as the beginning of ‘global governance’.¹⁷ For Herren, 1865 was the *annus mirabilis* for IOs.¹⁸ Personally, I deem it more helpful to use the term international organisation than global governance, although we may also consider global or transnational organisation as a more fitting notion. In contrast to the positive connotation carried by global governance (despite its controversial nature), “international organisation” also includes fruitless efforts to organise globally as well as supposedly ‘good’ (UN) and ‘bad’ (organised crime, transnational terrorist networks) organisation. Furthermore, global governance suggests that there is governance (an impact to create order) to a certain extent – this is a claim that does not necessarily hold true for the concept of “organisation”, as the set-up of international/global organisations or bureaucracies (and the maintenance of outdated or useless institutions) can be regarded as a goal in itself (at least for some).

3. International organisations as bureaucracies

José Alvarez, Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore assign law-making and norm-generating capacities to IOs.¹⁹ These authors attribute actor-like competences to IOs as these influence the world by issuing laws, norms, standards and regulations that claim universal application for what constitutes a ‘normal’ behaviour in international relations. Without a doubt this constitutes an influential interpretation of IOs (although these studies also refer to similar ones in the past) that also offers new research perspectives for historical approaches. In recent years, the traditional evaluation of the League of Nations as a tremendous failure (as it did not succeed to prevent the Second World War), has been revised with regard to its partial successes in other areas such as health or technical standardisation.²⁰ Consequently, in IR terms we can group this sort of revisionism into the camp of scholars who emphasise IOs’ norm-generating powers that support their ac-

17 Craig N. Murphy, *International Organization and Industrial Change. Global Governance since 1850*, New York 1994; Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865*, p. 12.

18 Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865*, p. 18.

19 Alvarez, *International Organizations as Law-makers*; Barnett and Finnemore, *Rules for the World*.

20 Susan Pedersen, *Back to the League of Nations: Review Essay*, in: *American Historical Review*, 112: 4 (2007), pp. 1091-1117.

toriness. Barnett and Finnemore remain within a fairly western narrative but do open the internal space of IOs as bureaucracies. However, they rather investigate the functioning, behaviour and outcome of these administrative spaces than the spaces themselves. But their study enables us to look at IOs as having different authority spaces – not only the rational-legal and delegated authority from states, but also value-based moral and expert authority. The opening of IOs as idiosyncratic bureaucracies also includes spaces comprising expert networks that do not match with the traditional dichotomy of national and international spaces. They implicitly suggest re-evaluating the (very recent) history of IOs in line with their so far underestimated achievements such as establishing norms in the areas of human rights, refugees or standards in loan procedures of the IMF. This could include a new narrative and possibly a new periodisation of the history of IOs as well. The work of Barnett and Finnemore can be regarded as pioneering for the study of IOs as bureaucracies and thus a new spatial dimension – the internal view.

Research in public administration (PA) and international relations (IR) has largely focused on or often takes a starting point in inquiries on the European institutions, particularly the European Commission. In general, Bauer and Ege classify three major interrelated themes in PA research: international civil service; management reforms and organisational change; and the influence of international bureaucracies on policy-output.²¹ As regards IR scholarship dealing with international bureaucracy, these authors identify two tendencies: principal agent approaches and sociological institutionalism. Bauer and Ege also point out the flaws of IR and PA approaches: “Whereas principal agent studies usually view the IO as being made up solely of political institutions, sociological institutionalists refer to the bureaucracy when they speak about IOs, but neglect its interaction with the political arm within the organization.”²² The inspiring ‘international relations meets public administration’ approach presented by Trondal, Marcussen, Larsson and Veggeland suggests new research options for the study of IOs: These Nordic scholars regard international bureaucracies as ‘compound systems of public administration’ that combine departmental, epistemic, supranational and inter-governmental decision-making dynamics.²³ They argue that the ‘international bureaucracies’ perspective should be followed by a new generation of IO studies that analyses the ‘criteria for and the patterns, dynamics, conditions, varieties and dynamics of international bureaucracies’.²⁴ The distinguished IO scholar Bob Reinalda reacted to this suggestion by dedicating three out of six parts of his ‘Routledge Handbook of International Organization’ to the study of IOs as bureaucracies and actors. In the handbook, the aforementioned Jörn Ege and Michael E. Bauer review the ‘intersection’ between international relations and

21 See Frank Biermann and Bernd Siebenhüner, Problem solving by international bureaucracies, in: Bob Reinalda (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of International Organization*, London and New York 2013, pp. 149-161.

22 Jörn Ege and Michael E. Bauer, International bureaucracies from a Public Administration and International Relations perspective, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 136-142.

23 Jarle Trondal, Martin Marcussen, Torbjørn Larsson and Frode Veggeland, *Unpacking international organisations. The dynamics of compound bureaucracies*, Manchester and New York 2010, p. 3.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

public administration scholarship on IOs as “international bureaucracy research” and conclude: ‘Simply put, IR usually is better in explaining why IOs are created, whereas PA is better suited to analyzing the policy-making role of IOs and their bureaucracies in day-to-day politics’.²⁵ Ege and Bauer propose that “...the more IR becomes an analysis of international policy making, the more important it becomes to systematically consider the bureaucratic dimension of governance, in particular the role of the international bureaucracies themselves. Bureaucracy, not anarchy, is likely to be the defining feature of the international system in the twenty-first century.”²⁶

While historical studies on the history of IOs do not systematically address the development of IOs as bureaucracies, political science scholars dealing with international bureaucracies rather neglect the historical dimension (and the global angle). Accordingly, there is no encompassing global history of IOs as bureaucracies. In general, an extension of the Public Administration-inspired IR research on IOs as bureaucracies with a global history view promises fresh insights into the nature of these institutions.

4. Analysing the history of international organisations as bureaucracies

In the following, I suggest reviewing the intellectual history of IOs, the respatialisation of IOs (mainly as bureaucracies) and propose the investigation of the international civil service with a historical and global perspective.

1) An intellectual history of international organisations

The following questions appear relevant with regard to ideas: What were the influential assumptions at the conception and equipment of these new institutions? Which factors had an impact on the original concept and development of IOs? A closer look at influential discourses on civilisation, modernity, technological progress, rationality, bureaucracy, development or human rights in various world regions promises new insights. What were the driving forces, the dominant and the not prevailing concepts? How did these ideas and concepts change over time and space, particularly when ideas ‘travelled’? How did this influence the outlook of the secretariats, the formation of its employees and the development of the international civil service?

To study the intellectual origins of IOs and their development, we should also look at the most influential (though sometimes less visible) actors: Who were the transnational actors, which were the professional and activist networks that influenced or transformed the concept of IOs; that enabled changes or maintained the status quo? Political science and sociological studies on IOs as bureaucracies investigate them as organisations (and thus as actors). In this context, the project on biographies of IO secretaries-general run by

25 Ege and Bauer, *International bureaucracies from a Public Administration and International Relations perspective*, p. 135.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

Bob Reinalda and Kent Kille²⁷ and oral history projects including other leading figures²⁸ are helpful to investigate the intellectual history of IOs. But we should also consider less known employees in IOs, national delegations or solidarity organisations as being quite enriching research subjects. Some historians regard a prosopographical approach to the intellectual and transcultural history of IOs as very promising.²⁹ This is particularly true with regard to the staff's ideas that often were highly influenced by internationalism.

Internationalism in its different guises was certainly one of the major intellectual bases for the creation of most IOs. Research on internationalism related to IOs has mostly focused on the North American and European variations and tended to overlook alternative internationalisms and non-western narratives. One major question in this regard is to what extent diverging and alternative internationalisms such as anti-colonial internationalism, regional internationalisms such as Japanese-led Pan-Asianism, Third World solidarity after decolonisation, 'black internationalism'³⁰ or religious forms of internationalism³¹ influenced the institutions of 'global governance' in the 19th and 20th century. Assuming that alternative internationalisms had their adherents³², we also need to take other angles on IOs than the western narratives into account, as competing and diverging interpretations on the history of IOs and world order from non-western world regions.

With diverging narratives I aim at perspectives that neither retell the western 'success story' of IOs nor the mechanised criticism of IOs as western tools used to exploit and dominate the rest of the world but nuanced accounts that acknowledge non-western impact on the very concept of IOs and move from the willingly accepted notion of the 'Third World' as a mere 'victim' to the notion of an (occasional and often fragmented) actor.³³ For instance, Roland Burke showed how non-western states contributed (at least in rhetoric) to universalising the human rights idea in the first years of the United Nations.³⁴ To delve deeper into this line of research requires more global academic cooperation due to the various languages and academic traditions to be mobilized in that perspective. If we only recur to publications in English and French (or Spanish), we risk to only cover a partial angle. Non-western approaches to IR are welcome to play a more prominent role in the political science debates on international organisations.³⁵ In recent

27 See: <http://www.ru.nl/imr/@702700/io-bio-biographical/>. Accessed on 21 March 2016.

28 There are various oral history projects by Yale University, the United Nations Intellectual History Project or the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, for instance.

29 Amrith and Sluga, 'New Histories of the United Nations', 271. See, for instance, Glenda Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley'. *Journal of World History*, 21 (2010) 3, 393-418.

30 Roderick Bush, *End of White World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line* (Philadelphia 2009).

31 Abigail Greene and Vincent Viaene (eds.), *Religious Internationalists in the Modern World. Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750*, Houndsmills and New York 2012.

32 Ronald Dore, *Japan, Internationalism and the UN*, London and New York 1997, originally published in Japanese in 1993; Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, pp. 34, 41, 44-50, 59-63, 120/1, 134/5, 162.

33 Klaas Dykmann and Katja Naumann (eds.), *Changes from the "Margins: Non-European Actors, Ideas and Strategies in International Organizations* (= *Comparativ* 23 [2013] 4/5).

34 Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, Philadelphia 2010.

35 See Shilliam (ed.), *International relations and non-western thought*; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *Non-Western international relations theory. Perspectives on and beyond Asia*, London and New York 2010.

years, for example, Chinese scholars of international relations have been eager (and encouraged) to create a ‘Chinese IR theory’, even a ‘Chinese IR school’.³⁶ To what extent this contributes to a new interpretation of the emergence and historical development of international organisation(s) remains to be seen, but this ‘school’ might argue against the suggested western dominance in these institutions.

It is further important to discuss the western origins and the supposedly global character of IOs. To what extent did IOs perpetuate a western discourse under an ‘international’ label? Even if the preservation of a western world order was the goal, did the IOs contribute to reaching it? Did IOs generate debates on the desired features of international cooperation after 1945? Was there dissent in the aftermath of decolonisation on the mega-narratives of international organisation or did these discussions always take place within the framework of western reference systems and predetermined terminologies? Scholars like Mazlish have argued that IOs served as a catalyst to tame non-western uneasiness with western concepts and practices. They conveyed reform-oriented European ideas (social democratic labour, social medicine etc.) and saw themselves as agents and distributors of civilisation: gradual changes and reforms, not revolutions and violent ruptures were the civilised solution to societal problems.³⁷ Moreover, the reading of IOs as function-generating and thus self-legitimising organisations supports the interpretation of IOs as agencies that appropriated civilising missions (not only of western origin). We could use thorough investigations to determine the extent to which negotiations that took place at and through IOs led to new concepts that in the end might be legitimised – at least to some extent – as ‘truly’ global agreements. In this connection, can we describe IOs as genuinely secular (and rather protestant) institutions and if so, how much does this matter for their relation to world (and other) religions? How can we analyse the assumed hybridisation of IOs and their policies from a global (in contrast to centrist) perspective? For this, we could review the departmental, epistemic, supra- and international dynamics in international organisations³⁸ in a long-term and more polycentric perspective. To analyse at least some of these questions, we should reconceptualise the spatial dimensions of IOs, particularly with regard to the ‘internal view’.

2) Alternative space horizons of IOs as bureaucracies

Herren, Rüesch and Sibille correctly identify ‘methodological nationalism’ and Eurocentrism as two of the most significant problems for global historical methodology.³⁹ To extend the national and European-centric spatial dimension thus appears to be essential to reach a more global view. Michael Geyer addresses the importance of spatial regimes

36 Peter M. Kristensen and Ras T. Nielsen, *Constructing a Chinese International Relations Theory: A Sociological Approach to Intellectual Innovation*, In: *International Political Sociology* (2013) 7, pp. 19-40.

37 Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and its Contents*, Stanford 2004, p. 49.

38 Trondal et al, *Unpacking international organisations*.

39 Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch and Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural History. Theories, Methods and Sources*, Berlin and Heidelberg 2012, pp. 71-2, 76.

for global history. The modern ‘time-space compression’ indicates the restructuring of the globe and is linked to the regional and cross-regional increase of transport and communication systems: ‘The radical transformation of space is commonly associated with globalization, the ever widening, deepening and speeding up of interconnections among states, peoples, and places. (...) Spatial regimes are finite and bounded, although they have a way of reaching, overreaching, to cover the entire world (as in empire).’⁴⁰ Andrea Komlosy introduces a variety of space horizons as methodological tools of global history: natural spaces, political spaces (governing and administrative spaces), cultural spaces, interaction spaces, identity spaces and scientific space constructions.⁴¹ Furthermore, she names five global history space horizons: cultural spaces (defined through expansion of common cultural features and practices), civilisations (delineated through landscape, history, or greater spaces marked by a variety of cultures), states and empires/kingdoms, world economies and world systems with centres and peripheries, and national economies.⁴² If we take these space horizons as the starting point, we regard international organisations as entities with a quite limited (actual) natural space (headquarters, regional and local offices, often considered as ‘international territory’), while the political space is disproportionately bigger and covers many nation-states, practically entire continents, if not the world. However, several political spaces co-exist and compete with each other – by far not only national interest spaces and more international-minded IO spaces. These can comprise also regional, religious, gender-related or linguistic-cultural spaces that can be interpreted as additional political spaces.

We should further ask what spaces do IOs use as references (how do they define world regions, for instance) in different periods of time. How do they establish health, religious, cultural, political, ethnic, gender, linguistic spaces throughout the world and within their own microcosm? For instance, the interim commission that prepared the establishment of the World Health Organisation in 1946/47, established eleven health regions according to the corresponding geography, climate, sanitary conditions and the situation concerning epidemic and endemic diseases.⁴³

In view of this fundamental criticism of rather static spatial concepts in traditional international relations literature or diplomatic histories, a re-evaluation and further ‘provincialisation’ of the nation-state as still sacrosanct primary category in IO research seems helpful. The aforementioned space horizons have the potential to challenge the national-international dichotomy for the study of international organisations. To add various

40 Michael Geyer, *Spatial Regimes*, in: Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier (eds.), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, Houndsmills 2009, pp. 962-966, here: pp. 962-3.

41 Komlosy, *Globalgeschichte*, p. 18.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

43 Report of the Executive Secretary, WHO.IC/61. 25 March 1947. In: *Minutes of the Third Session of the Interim Commission, Held in Geneva from 31 March to 12 April 1947*. United Nations, World Health Organization, Interim Commission, New York/Geneva, August 1947, 75-76. See Klaas Dykmann, *Internationale Organisationen und ihre Zivilisierungsbestrebungen. Die Geschichte der Weltgesundheitsorganisation*, Vienna/Zurich/Muenster 2017.

space horizons to the research design of the “international organisations as bureaucracies” camp promises to enrich our understanding of IOs.

In sum, alternative and multiple spatial categories of research will help us to analyse the history of IOs, especially as bureaucracies, from various new and interconnected angles and thus much more thoroughly.

3) An investigation of the international civil service

The next step could be to apply the analysis of intellectual origins and a respatialisation of IOs in a concrete investigation of the international civil service (ICS) as a place of cultural encounters since the beginnings of the League of Nations. Here we can apply the different space horizons and analyse how they were introduced, changed over time, influenced each other and produced new, possibly *sui generis* IO spaces. The employees of the League and the UN experienced their work place as a plethora of mixed cultures, supposedly held together by an organisation culture to smooth relations between different cultural practices. Several scholars – most of them previously employed at IOs themselves – for instance Egon Wertheimer-Ranshofen (1945 for the League of Nations⁴⁴), the contributors to a special issue of the journal *Public Administration Review* in 1970⁴⁵ or Yves Beigbeder (UN and WHO in particular⁴⁶) – have analysed international bureaucracy and the related civil service, but did not focus much on the global politics and the (long-term) historical perspective. How did the ICS tackle these multiple cultural encounters in different historical periods? Is the ICS a European concept that gradually became global? What are common features and differences and what changes did they undergo? Did the ICS as a specific microcosm of cultural encounters increasingly reflect a “global community” with a collective identity? Or did these inter-cultural encounters generate multiple identities over time – a multiple “we”?

IOs often struggle with different national, cultural, religious, gender and political identity spaces of their officials. Interaction spaces are, for instance, the meeting venues at IOs or at conferences and other summits or gatherings arranged by one or several IOs. The resulting decisions, however, potentially concern a considerable part of the world and thus broaden the spatial dimension, which raises the question of legitimacy. IOs as imagined cultural spaces (defined through expansion of common cultural features and practices) certainly play an important role as negotiations about the right approaches take place on basis of cultural understandings. Civilisations, states and empires, world economies and world systems are important references for IO employees, sometimes only unconsciously though. Different (and competing) reference systems, identities and corresponding loyalties can change over time.

44 Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat*, Washington 1945.

45 *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (May-June 1970).

46 Yves Beigbeder, *Management Problems in United Nations Organizations. Reform or Decline?* London 1987; Beigbeder, *Threats to the International Civil Service*, London/New York 1988.

In accordance, to study IOs as bureaucracies we need to analyse the historical development of various cultural spaces: the prevailing management culture, different national backgrounds, the working languages, work ethics and codes of conduct as well as the hierarchy and composition of staff (gender, age, ethnicity, class etc.) constantly contribute to changing and competing cultural spaces within IOs as intergovernmental actors (at the level of Member States, executive bodies and national delegations) and with regard to the standing staff at the organisation's secretariat. The latter corresponds to what Inis Claude termed the first (member states) and second UN (secretariat).⁴⁷ This notion can also be transferred to some extent to previous IOs like the League or more contemporary institutions such as the European Union ('Eurocrats'). Here, the concept of the 'Third UN', comprising 'outside' actors not officially counting as UN but affecting it – such as NGOs, academics, consultants, experts, independent commissions etc. – may also be operationalised to contribute to a (global) historical perspective.⁴⁸

Conclusions

Research on the history of IOs as bureaucracies should combine interdisciplinarity, archive research, a long-term view, and provide different perspectives going beyond established categories. A first concrete study could take the 'IR meets PA' approach as a starting point and provide a more global and historical perspective in order to inquire the history of the international civil service since 1920.

To develop a new history of IOs as bureaucracies, based on research trends in political science, complemented with a global view and a *longue durée*-perspective through the inquiry of alternative space horizons of the international civil service, could contribute essentially to the formulation of different narratives of IOs as such. This could enhance and complement classical existing studies on diplomatic history, individual organisations or specific events or topics. Research in Latin American, Asian and African official, semi-official or private archives will further illuminate non-western actors' relations to and attitudes and perceptions of institutions such as the League of Nations or the UN. This may well contribute to other chronological turning points and thus require a new and diverging periodisation of IOs. To analyse ideas of non-western forms of regional cooperation (regional Leagues, for example) and the set-up and historical development of non-western forms of organisation and related institutions is of particular interest. We could conceptualise this complex endeavour by relying on existing research on international organisations' intellectual history and internationalism, IOs as bureaucracies, and by exploring various space horizons especially within international organisations. A first step would be to analyse the historical development of the international civil service as

47 Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares. The Problems and Progress of International Organization*, New York, 1971, 4th ed.

48 Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis, Richard Jolly, *The Third United Nations*, in: *Global Governance* 15 (2009) 1, pp. 123-142.

the assumed main driving force for IOs as international bureaucracies. These new perspectives will also matter for other scholars of the study on IOs and likely challenge the way we have analysed IOs so far.