Part I

Introduction

1   How International Organizations Promote or Detract from Peaceful Change

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What role do international organizations play in facilitating "peaceful change" in world politics? Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), more commonly known today as formal international organizations (IOs), have been important players in global politics for more than two centuries. Their number, size, and functions have grown since the end of World War II and, more importantly, since the end of the Cold War in 1991. Today, close to 8,000 IOs saddle the world, and their number has significantly increased since 1979. In addition, we have witnessed an exponential increase of informal IOs, such as the G20, in many functional arenas in world politics. Both formal and informal IOs have been encompassing many dimensions of interstate activities and playing meaningful roles in international politics, especially in solving collective action problems, be it security, economic, environmental, or global health challenges. Interstate cooperation and coordination in today's world are unfathomable without taking into consideration the role played by these diverse IOs.

There is a general belief, especially among liberal and constructivist schools of international relations, that these organizations have fundamentally transformed international politics and state identities as they form critical pillars of global governance and the liberal international order (LIO). In the Kantian tripod scheme, international institutions play a pivotal role, along with economic interdependence and democratic institutions, in bringing about peaceful change.[1] In fact, all types

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[1] See, for instance, Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001). For a sweeping historical evaluation of the liberal international order, see G. John Ikenberry, *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020).

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of states, including nonliberal ones, have found them useful for the purpose of negotiation, socialization, and power politics, and as such institutional means and interactions have many a times supplanted coercive bargaining, especially through war. Soft balancing is one such mechanism that secondary states have resorted to through institutional balancing and institutional bargaining.[2] Whereas realists tend to emphasize the instrumental role of IOs, rationalists and liberal institutionalists have focused on how they serve as forums for bargaining and consultations, while constructivists have explored the actorness of IOs and their potential for discursive agenda setting.[3] Recently, a number of studies, agnostic of interparadigmatic debates, have explored how institutional change, innovation, and impact take place in a complex political, legal, and administrative space affected by different types of actors, networks, and issue areas and varying levels of formalization and legalization.[4] While this literature adds important insights and nuances to our understanding of IOs, it also risks losing sight of the fundamental debates and big questions of international relations such as war and peace. In sum, we are yet to obtain a full sense of the actual impact of these institutions on change and how peaceful they are. A critical evaluation is necessary given the plethora of functions IOs are called upon to perform in the contemporary world.

Skeptics from the realist and critical schools contend that IOs reflect the power politics of the day and the interests of hegemonic powers. In other words, IOs are simply instruments for powerful states and their elites to pursue their interests, and they do not have an independent role in shaping interactions among states. Often these powers ignore IOs whenever a collision takes place between their interests and the

[2] T. V. Paul, *Restraining Great Powers: Soft Balancing from Empires to the Global Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Kai He, "Institutional Balancing and International Relations Theory: Economic Interdependence and Balance of Power Strategies in Southeast Asia," *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 3 (2008): 489–518; Anders Wivel and T. V. Paul, "Soft Balancing, Institutions and Peaceful Change," *Ethics and International Affairs* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 473–485.

[3] Classic interventions in this debate include John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 5–49; Joseph M. Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson, and Duncan Snidal, "The Rational Design of International Institutions," *International Organization* 55, no. 4 (2001): 761–799; Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 699–732.

[4] For a discussion, see Anders Wivel and T. V. Paul, "Introduction: Exploring International Institutions and Power Politics," in *International Institutions and Power Politics: Bridging the Divide*, 3–19, eds. Anders Wivel and T. V. Paul (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019).

organization's mandate, thereby producing suboptimal outcomes. The UN Security Council has become the most prominent arena of such power politics, making it unable to perform its originally intended role of maintaining collective security. Critical theorists find these organizations, especially the economic ones, as helping the Western-capitalist order and maintaining the unequal and unjust world order. They do not find change, let alone peaceful change, as a product of the functioning of IOs.

How We Study Peaceful Change and International Organizations

This volume provides both a diagnosis of the ability of IOs to contribute to order transitions and suggestions of "cures" for their current shortcomings in promoting peaceful change. We explore the role of IOs in influencing peaceful change in world politics in different domains. In an era of systemic power transitions and increasing great power rivalry, as we are witnessing today, understanding the conditions for peaceful change is particularly important. The volume shows that while IOs may contribute to peaceful change in important ways, they do so as political actors (even when they shy away from viewing themselves in this way). As political actors, they contribute to the struggle over who gets what, when, and how in international politics, with important consequences for the prospects for peaceful change. This political process is not exclusively a great power game. In contrast, the analyses in the volume show how peace is cocreated (and obstructed) among a variety of actors and how agency is diffused in contemporary world politics.

The overarching research question of the volume is: What role do IOs play in influencing peaceful change in world politics? This question serves as the primary tool for organizing the volume and directs the theoretical discussion and empirical analyses of all chapters. Part I (this chapter) unpacks what we mean by peaceful change and IOs and explains how we organize our analysis and argument. In order to give a comprehensive answer to the overarching question, we break it down to two subquestions, each of them guiding a section in the book. First, in Part II of the book, we ask contributors how to conceptualize "peaceful change" and how IOs fit into this process within the context of world politics, when analyzing from their theoretical perspective. Second, in Part III of the volume, we ask authors to draw upon empirical evidence, both historical and contemporary, to illustrate how particular IOs contribute to peaceful change. The concluding Part IV returns to the overarching research question and uses the theoretical discussions and empirical analyses of the

book as a starting point for a critical reflection on how to understand IOs and peaceful change and the implications for world politics.

Peaceful change, in this volume, is defined as a continuum from a minimalist understanding depicting "change in international relations and foreign policies of states, including territorial or sovereignty agreements that take place without violence or coercive use of force" to an intermediate level perspective of "the resolution of social problems mutually by institutionalized procedures without resort to largescale physical force,"[5] and finally, to a maximalist understanding depicting "transformational change that takes place non-violently at the global, regional, interstate, and societal levels due to various material, normative and institutional factors, leading to deep peace among states, higher levels of prosperity and justice for all irrespective of nationality, race or gender."[6] In the current international order, the main battlegrounds on the timing, content, and form of peaceful change are located at the intermediate level of this continuum. This is also where we would expect IOs to play the most important role – negatively or positively – for peaceful change as they entail more than merely a change in states' foreign policies, but less than an acceptance of a cosmopolitan international society. Moreover, "peaceful change" is not equal to "peace" although we recognize that a perpetual or deep peace might be closely linked to the maximalist understanding of our definition of "peaceful change." Sometimes peaceful change can produce violent or unsavory outcomes.

This definition has now become a starting point for a significant number of contributions in the emerging research program on peaceful change in world politics.[7] Therefore, it allows us to build on and contribute to this research program. It provides a shared starting point and signposts for different "depths" of peaceful change, while leaving it to the contributors to this volume to provide the theoretical arguments and empirical substance for minimalist, intermediate, and maximalist

[5] Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 5.

[6] T. V. Paul, "The Study of Peaceful Change in World Politics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Peaceful Change in International Relations*, eds. T. V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson, Halrd A. Trinkunas, Anders Wivel, and Ralf Emmers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 4.

[7] Among other publications, the definition serves as the point of departure for T. V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson, Halrd A. Trinkunas, Anders Wivel, and Ralf Emmers, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Peaceful Change in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); and Kai He, T. V. Paul, and Anders Wivel, eds., "Roundtable: International Institutions and Peaceful Change," *Ethics and International Affairs* 34, no. 4 (2020): 457–546. It is central to the discussion in the Global Research Network on Peaceful Change (GRENPEC), https://grenpec.com/.

expressions of peaceful change. The final part of the book returns to the definition and discusses it further in the context of the arguments and findings of the volume.

By examining the potential of prominent theoretical perspectives on international relations to unpack the link between IOs and peaceful change and critically scrutinizing how selected global IOs contribute to peaceful change, we aim for this volume to be an invaluable source for students, scholars, and policymakers interested in peaceful change and IOs as well as current changes in the international order more generally. While acknowledging the potential importance of regional organizations for peaceful change, we focus on some key global IOs in this volume.[8] By analyzing the role of IOs in peaceful change from peacekeeping to trade, health, and the environment, and including both formal institutions such as the UN General Assembly and an informal organization such as the G20, we are able to identify the role of IOs in peaceful change across policy areas and to unpack the effects of formal institutionalization. While the role of the UN Security Council as a hub for discussion on peaceful change has waned since the end of the Cold War, the importance of many of the other IOs has increased. Global IOs may have (positive or negative) effects on peaceful change at the domestic, regional, and global levels. They are both products and producers of international order. Exploring how, when, and why they matter for peaceful change provides important clues for the development and outcome of the ongoing crisis in the LIO.[9]

The Increasing Role of International Organizations in World Politics

We begin from an understanding of IOs as "associational clusters among states with some bureaucratic structures that create and manage self-imposed and other-imposed constraints on state policies and

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[8] Military alliances, such as NATO, can be seen as a special type of IO with a regional focus.

[9] The use of the concept of the liberal international order is relatively recent in academic discourse. We believe that it was first coined by Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry in 1999 to describe an order that did not fit conventional understandings of anarchy or hierarchy, but a "Third Way" between the two, a liberal democratic world. See Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "The Nature and Sources of Liberal International Order," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (April 1999): 179–196. On the historical development and recent challenges of the liberal international order, see G. John Ikenberry, "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 7–23, and various articles in T. V. Paul and Markus Kornprobst, eds. Special Issue on "Deglobalization? The Future of the Liberal International Order," *International Affairs* 97, no. 5 (Fall 2021).

behaviors."[10] Understood this way, IOs are the most important sites for the negotiation and renegotiation of international regimes, that is, "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations."[11] While IOs and regimes are not exactly the same, as the latter contain institutions, treaties, norms, and standards of behavior in specific areas, IOs provide the nuts and bolts of such regimes. For instance, the nuclear nonproliferation regime encompasses the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the key organization, and the norms about nuclear acquisition, proliferation, and civil use of nuclear materials.

We acknowledge our definition is minimal and rationalist in orientation. Reflectivist scholars of both constructivist and critical perspectives may view IOs as not just "constraint" producing agencies, but ones that can create and shape interest and identities and produce maximalist changes. However, our definition will serve as an analytical anchor and starting point for individual chapters. We acknowledge that the theoretical discussions and empirical analyses of the volume may lead chapter authors to refine and even question this fairly traditionalist baseline understanding. However, in contrast to an "all-inclusive" definition, this minimalist understanding will allow authors to tease out what is particular about their theoretical perspective or their empirical case. For instance, the dividing line between formal and informal IOs is increasingly blurred and informal IOs play a still more prominent role in international relations.[12] While this may be seen as challenging our baseline understanding of IOs, the question is not whether it is "falsified" by informality but how and why the prospects for peaceful change are modified or even transformed by the increasing importance of informal IOs. They might not have a permanent bureaucratic structure or leadership. Likewise, the size, role, and significance of these informal IOs can vary depending on issue areas,

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[10] Wivel and Paul, "Exploring International Institutions and Power Politics," 8. For an overview of the historical development of international organizations and different types of international organizations today, see Jacob Katz Cogan, Ian Hurd, and Ian Johnstone, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of International Organizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[11] Stephen Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," in *International Regimes*, ed. Stephen Krasner (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 2.

[12] Felicity Vabulas and Duncan Snidal, "Organization without Delegation: Informal Intergovernmental Organizations (IIGOs) and the Spectrum of Intergovernmental Arrangements," *The Review of International Organizations* 8, no. 2 (2013): 193–220; Felicity Vabulas and Duncan Snidal "Cooperation under Autonomy: Building and Analyzing the Informal Intergovernmental Organizations 2.0 Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no. 4 (2021): 859–869.

and they may be global or regional, issue specific or wide ranging. The question as to whether they help preserve the status quo or support and facilitate change is an important one but is a matter of debate.

According to some analysts, IOs can be important, if imperfect, means of change in international order.[13] At times, they can also prevent peaceful change by favoring the status quo in power politics and supporting the existing orders of great powers or even provoke violent reactions if perceived as instruments of power by rivalling states.[14] The German, Italian, and Japanese responses to the League of Nations during the 1930s are examples of the latter. A critical examination of IOs as agents of peaceful change or the opposite is urgently needed as the existing literature does not deal with this dimension adequately. As noted earlier, this volume undertakes a critical examination on two dimensions. First, we explore how prominent theoretical perspectives on international relations view the connection between IOs (formal and informal) and peaceful change. What do "international organization" and "peaceful change" entail, when viewed through these theoretical lenses and how do IOs facilitate or obstruct peaceful change? Second, we explore a number of case studies focusing on some key global IOs that make up central parts of the institutional infrastructure of the current international order in order to understand how variation in formality, issue area, and membership affects the impact of IOs on peaceful change. Taken together, these two sections provide a highly important mapping of how IOs affect the prospect for peaceful change, which allows us better to understand the future of the rules-based international order currently challenged by a combination of increasing great power rivalry and populist nationalism.

The intellectual roots of peaceful change through international organizations date back to Immanuel Kant's idea of a "perpetual peace" upheld by a federation of republican (democratic) states.[15] From the

13 Clive Archer, *International Organizations*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2015); Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Friedrich V. Kratochwil, "Politics, Norms and Peaceful Change," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 5 (2001):193–218; John M. Owen, "Liberalism and Its Alternatives, Again," *International Studies Review* 20, no. 2 (2018):309–316; Megan Shannon, "Preventing War and Providing the Peace? International Organizations and the Management of Territorial Disputes," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 26, no. 2 (2009): 144–163.

14 Mearsheimer, "The False Promise"; John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin Essays," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014): 77–84, 85–89.

15 Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1917 [1795]); Bruce Russett, John R. Oneal, and David R. Davis, "The Third Leg of the Kantian Tripod for Peace: International Organizations and Militarized Disputes, 1950–85," *International Organization* 52, no. 3 (2003): 441–467.

nineteenth-century European Concert onward, military conflict has often provided state leaders with the rationale and incentive to establish organizations and avoid a repetition of the horrors of the most recent war.[16] After World War I, Kant's vision was reiterated by US President Woodrow Wilson, who while addressing the US Congress in January 1918 outlined a set of principles for the postwar order, including "a general association of nations" aimed at securing the independence and territorial integrity of states no matter their individual capabilities.[17] Since the end of World War II, economic globalization and the presence of nuclear weapons have increased economic and security interdependence, thereby underpinning the growing importance of effective institutional infrastructures for keeping and making peace.[18] At the same time, the reluctance of great powers to commit to institutional bargains – or even to implement whatever bargains they previously agreed to – undermines the effectiveness of institutions.[19] Even many small states, while generally supportive of international organizations, often free ride on the provision of collective goods – such as peace – by the great powers.[20]

For most of the twentieth century and in the first decade of the twenty-first century, international organizations continued to play an important role in peaceful change. The result was a post-Westphalian, post–Cold War international system with increasingly intrusive international organizations, especially regimes in the economic and security areas.[21] Since the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, traditional Western proponents of liberal internationalism have joined post-Communist states and developing countries in challenging the role and influence of international organizations on peaceful change.[22] Populists in liberal democracies as well

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[16] Volker Rittberger, Andreas Kruck, and Bernhard Zangl, eds., *International Organization*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 37.

[17] Woodrow Wilson, "President Wilson's Message to Congress, January 18, 1918," 1918, www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-woodrow-wilsons-14-points.

[18] John R. Oneal, Bruce Russett, and Michael L. Berbaum, "Causes of Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations, 1885–1992," *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (2003): 371–393.

[19] Sebastian Rosato, "The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers," *International Security* 39, no. 3 (2015): 81–82.

[20] Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 48, no. 3 (1966): 266–279.

[21] John G. Ruggie, "Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution," *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (1992): 561–598; G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order," *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 1 (2009): 71–87; John J. Mearsheimer, "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," *International Security* 43, no. 4 (2019): 7–50.

[22] Rita Abrahamsen, Louise Riis Andersen, and Ole Jacob Sending, "Introduction: Making Liberal Internationalism Great Again?" *International Journal* 74, no. 1 (2019): 5–14.

as in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes interconnect in their challenge of the liberal and normative institutional order.[23]

The international institutional order has proved remarkably resilient in the face of these challenges.[24] Many of the day-to-day workings of organizations such as the UN, World Trade Organization (WTO), and NATO continue as before. However, this institutional activity has become increasingly marginalized in the workings of great power politics and consequently ineffective in influencing the big questions on peace and war. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the war in Syria are only two of the more notable recent examples of this trend.

Today, the so-called liberal international order is experiencing three unprecedented challenges related to the future development of IOs in world politics. First, the international power hierarchy is changing. The United States came out of the Cold War as the strongest power in the history of the modern state system[25] but has since suffered a long-term relative decline, in particular vis-à-vis the rising China.[26] Europe has also seen a relative decline compared with Asia in general. China has increasingly been playing a key role in many international organizations by offering both financial and political support as well as engaging in intrusive policies. Other rising powers such as India and Brazil have also actively competed for power and influence through engaging in existing IOs and creating parallel institutions. The nexus between the IOs and the existing liberal order seems to be weakening. International organizations have become a new arena to reflect power politics among great powers during the period of potential order transition.

Second, these changes in the international distribution of power have been accompanied by increasing contestation of norms and institutions underpinning the so-called liberal international order.[27] Rising powers

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[23] Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Ayşe Zarakol, "Struggles for Recognition: The Liberal International Order and the Merger of Its Discontents," *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 611–634; J. Lawrence Broz, Jeffry Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth, "Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash," *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 464–494.

[24] David A. Lake, Lisa L. Martin, and Thomas Risse, "Challenges to the Liberal Order: Reflections on International Organization," *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 225–257.

[25] William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 5–41.

[26] Christopher Layne, "The US–Chinese Power Shift and the End of the Pax Americana," *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 89–111; Mearsheimer, "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order."

[27] On these, see the various articles in Paul and Kornprobst eds., Special Issue on "Deglobalization? The Future of the Liberal International Order." For previous scholarship, see Julia C. Morse and Robert O. Keohane, "Contested Multilateralism,"