Theoretical and Historical Evolution of International Organizations: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

This study focuses on theoretical and historical evolution of International Organizations. It also describes the basic objectives and significant role of international organizations in world politics. One of the most significant features of the twentieth century global politics has been the setting up and establishment of organizations, both at the regional as well as the international level. Their emergence and especially, their proliferation in the 20th century were largely facilitated, rather necessitated, by the rapid industrialization that revolutionized the transportation and communications networks within and among states, thereby reducing the physical world into a small unit and creating an unavoidable network of interdependence among states. Interdependence has stimulated the creation of international organizations and countries continue to come together to use this institutional framework as a means of promoting cooperation in social, economic, and political spheres. International Organizations have played and continue to play an important role in the international community. In the twentieth century two major experiments in global organization have been attempted, the League of Nations in the aftermath of World War–I and the United Nations following World War-II. International Organizations have become indispensable instrument within the International System.

The term international organization is defined as any cooperative arrangement instituted among states, usually by a basic agreement, to perform some mutually advantageous functions implemented through periodic meetings and staff activities.[1] The international organization is the process by which states establish and develop formal, continuing institutional structures for the conduct of certain aspects of their relationships with each other.[2] International Organizations are composed of sovereign, independent states voluntarily joining in a common pursuit of certain goals. International organizations, may be regarded as a process leading to eventual transcendence of the multi state system, yet its immediate function is to reform and supplement the system, so as to make the maintenance of legal, political and administrative pluralism compatible with the requirements of an independent world.[3] Main objectives of international organizations are preservation of peace and promotion of international cooperation.

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Although large, global organizations are twentieth century phenomena, we can trace their ancestors back to the early years of recorded history. This idea of a covenant joining nations together in a group and binding the members not to make war on each other has been the basic principle passed on through the centuries. The foundation of international organization was built in ancient time's one of the oldest forms of political activity has been the alliance formations. The Israelite political system was probably the first example in recorded history of a union of constituent polities based on a sense of common nationality, with national and tribal political institutions and some division of functions between the two party formalized by a written constitution.[4] The principles of strong national federalism were first applied by the ancient Israelites, beginning in the 13th. Century B.C., to maintain their national unity by linking their several tribes under a single national constitution and at last quasi-federal. The record of and rational for their effort is presented in the Bible, particularly in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Ezekiel.[5] It was to have a profound influence on the political principles of later generations, particularly at the time of the revival of federal ideas in 16th and 17th centuries.

In our search for the ancestors of international organizations, we should perhaps turn to the city state system of ancient Greece. This system reflected in miniature most of the essential characteristics of contemporary international politics. The Greek City states also developed the first model of a universal general-purpose international organization.

The Greek cities experimented with permanent Leagues of independent states united by a sense of common need were found in various parts of the Greek world. They were entrusted with certain matters in the realm of foreign affairs and defense but were in every respect accountable to their member states. The classic example of this system was the Achaean League (251-146 BC), a protofederal system often erroneously considered to be the first federal (Polity Freeman l863)[6.] Another example was the Amphictynoic League, and organization of Greek cities between the third and first centuries B.C. This League was originally a religious organization of twelve neighboring tribes, established for the purpose of safeguarding the temple of Delphi. Its functions gradually increased to include the protection of its members from aggressive acts, both within and without the League. Each tribe sent two delegates to League Conferences and was allowed two votes of equal weight. Each Tribe took an oath pledging never to annihilate any of the other tribes during warfare. Those considered guilty of acts of aggression to be confronted collectively and with all available means by the remaining tribes.[7]

The Greeks developed a number of rules, observed in treaties or custom, which regulated diplomatic relations and the conduct of welfare. These gave recognition to the independence and equality of the units and defined the limits of immunities for both diplomats and religious shrines in the time of war, other rules pronounced standard procedures for declaring war, providing asylum, and conferring citizenship.[8] Greeks also developed procedures for resolving conflicts. Arbitration and conciliation, two

procedures for injecting third parties into diplomatic bargaining situations, were among the important contributions, the Greeks made to subsequent diplomatic practices. They employed these procedures for handling disputes, conflicts debts, and quarrels arising from differing interpretations of treaties.[9]

The Greeks procedures and patterns in use among their city-states, as well as their theories of interstate relations, appear strikingly modern. Treaties, alliances, diplomatic practices and services, arbitration and other methods for peaceful settlement of disputes, rule of war and peace, leagues and confederations and other means for regulating interstate relations were well known and widely used. The Europeans, however, developed the practice during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries using Greek experience as a model.

The Roman contribution to international organization was of a different sort. After the final defeat of Carthage and the conquest of the entire Mediterranean world and of most of western and central Europe, Rome established a kind of universal empire.

The Romans contributed legal, military, and administrative techniques, which in later centuries became fertile source of international law. During the late Roman period the foundation of the Christian Church were firmly established. As Rome declined, the church asserted its claims to temporal as well as spiritual authority. Through the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, and the strong appeal of the faith, the Church of the middle ages provided a kind of universalism which helped to counteract the decentralizing tendencies of feudalism and other forms of political fragmentation and continued to exert an appeal long after the Church itself had split. The Council of Constance (The most Spectacular international congress of history) assembled in 1414 to attempt to resolve rival claims to the papacy and thereby to shape the political as well as spiritual fortunes of Europe.[10] While it was nearly every where defeated in its aspirations to temporal powers, and while it does not command even the spiritual allegiance of a good part of the civilized world, the Roman Church has remained to this day the most powerful of all international non governmental organizations. Throughout the middle ages alliances and associations of political, commercial and religious areas and groups were frequently formed. An outstanding association for the promotion of trade, which became a kind of political organization, was the Hanseatic League. Possibly the most famous confederation of the medieval period was, that developed from a treaty among the Swiss cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden in 1315, joined by five other cantons before the end of the fourteenth century, it became the nucleus of the modern state of Switzerland.[11] With the breakdown of the medieval system and the coming of the Protestant reformation the Catholic Renaissance, the age of discoveries, an expanded trade and commerce, and the present state system in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, international relations assumed a new meaning and character. The theories, practices, and institutions of modern international society began to take shape, although they did not become fully developed with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Machiavelli described the practices, which prevailed in the relations of the

city-states of northern Italy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, and he gave a new realism to the study of interstate relations. Bodin in the sixteenth century formulated the legal concept of sovereignty, generally regarded as the most basic of the attributes of the nation state. Grotius, writing while the thirty years war was ranging, laid the foundation for the evolution of a law of nations. Denying that sovereignty, or sovereigns, were absolute, he argued that there are laws for the community valid both in respect to war, and during war. In addition to political and philosophical writings, an important precursor of international organization has been the practice of multinational conferences, which has paralleled the growth of the nation state system since the peace of Westphalia. The first major European conference to restore order after a war took place in 1648; it was the conference of Westphalia, which ended the thirty years war.[12] To that conference, almost all of the then existing major states sent representatives. There were all states of Europe, the world of international politics then. Thus, the origin of modern international organization can be found in European diplomacy, from which the treaties for a new status quo in Europe emerged. The congress of Westphalia was a notable milestone in the development of international organization. Westphalia set the pattern for similar international gatherings, such as the peace of Utrecht (1713) reaffirmed the principle of balance of power as the only key to peace.

The significance of this great congress has been well recognized because no international organization was established by the peace of Westphalia in 1648. But the joining of practically every European State in a diplomatic conference signed the opening of a new era in international relations. As an international assembly, the congress of Westphalia bore little resemblance to the intricate organization of twentieth century peace conferences of the greatest importance to international organization, however, were the gathering of hundreds of envoys in a diplomatic conference which presented practically every political interest in Europe and the achievement by negotiation, rather than by dictation, of two great multilateral treaties which legalized the new order of European international relations.

Throughout recorded history, the forces of conflict and bloodshed have been matched by the fervent desires of well meaning people for peace, justice and harmony. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some of the best known early plans and proposals for peaceful relations and international organization were presented. During the first period, speculative and philosophical writers published a number of schemes for prevention of war between the princes of Europe. The best known amongst them are; Pierre Dubois (1250-1322), Dante (1307), Marsiglio Padua (1270-1342), The Great design of Henry 1V of France and the Duc De Sully (1620-1635). Emeric Cruce (1623), Grotius look on the law of war and peace (1625), William Penns proposal of parliament of Europe in his essays toward the Present and Future peace of Europe (1693), the Abbe De Saint-Pierre's project to bring perpetual peace in Europe (1712). Rousseau (1761), Jeremy Bentham's plea for a universal and perpetual peace in his principles of international law (1793), Immanuel Kant's famous proposal of the same nature in his essay "Perpetual peace", (Zum Ewigen Frieden, 1795).[13] They advocated various

approaches for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the rule of law, respect for the autonomy of member states, perpetual peace and global government. The significance of such activity lay in its intensity through a well organized peace movement in different countries.

Pacifism was a continuation of the great body of intellectual speculation of preceding centuries. Notable among Pacifist contributors were the English Quaker, Jonathan Demon and Americans such as Noah Wercester and William Ellary Channing, William Ladd, Victer Hugo, John Noble Constantin Pecquer, and others revived the idea of congress of Nations, together with a world court. Some limited the scope of their projects to a united states of Europe. Elihu Burritt, John Stuart Mill, and Richard Cobden argued the case for free trade as a stimulus for international understanding and exchange of peoples and ideas.[14] There can be no doubt that indirectly it has influenced the attitude of millions of persons besides those who consciously profess it. It is not surprising therefore, that these principles have been reflected, to varying degrees, in the League of Nations and in the United Nations.

The conference system had been significant feature in the development of modern international organization. In addition to political and philosophical writings, an important precursor of international organization has been the practice of multinational conferences. Major conferences have been convened in every century since the Westphalia Conference. The congress of Vienna (1815), the first of a series of international conferences that played an important part in nineteenth century European politics. It also structured the nineteenth century balance of power system and contributed to the existing leading of international law. Among other rules, the congress established categories of diplomatic envoys, general principles for the navigation of international rivers, and provisions for the suppression of the slave trade. The congress of Vienna adopted the principle of the sovereign equality of states. It had important consequences for procedure at future international conference and congress, for it mean that governments could no longer claim special privileges based on the ranking of status, but of the experience of the years that followed the congress of Vienna emerged the informal pattern of conferences and consultations and occasional consorted action is known as the Concert of Europe. It scored a resounding success at the congress of Berlin in 1878, which dealt with the Turkey and the so-called eastern question. The concert of Europe at least prevented or limited some potential armed conflicts. It was, however, unable to cope with the nationalistic rivalries and other devise tendencies, which eventually led to world war. The concert of Europe laid foundations for later, more institutionalized forms of international cooperation.[15]

Outstanding among the conferences of the years prior to World War-I were Hague Peace Conference 1899 and 1907. The two Hague Peace Conferences represent a further contribution to the system of international organization developing in the nineteenth century. For the first time, virtually all states in the world (Twenty six in 1899, forty four in 1907) met on equal terms to consult together on mutual problems of international concern.[16] The Hague conferences established rules that were designed to regulate the

international system and to remove the causes of crisis and war. The Hague Conferences attempted to place arbitration procedures on a more formal and more generally acceptable basis. These conferences were more preventive and regulatory in nature. Two important conferences aimed at improving international relations in general by such means as disarmament and establishment of permanent court of Arbitration also contributed to the growth of international organization. In all these respects, the Hague Conferences were the prelude to the building of the League of Nations, a sort of interim stage in the development of international cooperation, designed to bring about a greater measure of security within the system of nation states. The conference system, which had been a significant feature of eighteenth and nineteenth century played an important role in the evolution of international organization. According to one tabulation, the number in each decade from 1840 through 1909 was, 9, 22, 75, 149, 284, 469, and 1,082.[17]

Another development of major importance for the formation of international organizations took place during the later part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. By that time, it had become clear to governments that international cooperation was necessary to carry on activities in such fields, as postal and telegraphic services, meteorology, public health, and international transport. The creation of international public or administrative unions represented the concrete steps towards such permanent facilities. Not less than 33 of the international unions were established between 1865 and 1914. 'Among the organizations set up were the European Commission for Danube (1856); the international Geodetic Association (1864); the international Bureau of Telegraphic Administrations (1868); the Universal Postal union (1675); the International Copyright Union (1886); the International Office of Public Health (1903); and the International Institute of Agriculture (1905).[18] Early form of contemporary international organization, the public unions had limited purposes. Their structures however, were similar. The experts and technicians, who participated in their meetings usually represented governments. Their subdivisions bureaus, council, and conferences served as institutional prototypes for the League of Nations and the United Nations. Beyond this, the public international unions contributed to the development of international administrative law in the so called functional, (That is technical, economic and social) areas. The public union has served as a central, focal point for collecting information and discussing mutual problems as well as for establishing minimum or uniform standards and coordinating common policies. Valuable experience was gained in developing procedures for handling many conferences and for perfecting the multilateral treaty or convention which established the union and assigned it duties and functions. In this way these unions developed the model for the structure of the modern international organizations.

Co-operation by private persons through transnational organizations, developed to coordinating activities in many countries, came into being, in nineteenth century. The World Alliance of YMCA founded in 1855, has been considered to be the first modern private international organization. Example of this type of activity included the Red Cross Movement, founded in 1864 by the Swiss, Henri Dunant; The Institute of

International Law (1873); the Interparliamentary Union (1888); the International Olympic Committee (1894); and the International Association for Labor Legislation (1900).[19] Between 1865 and 1914 a total of 182 such organizations were created by non governmental sponsors.[20] These organizations of course, often dealt with issues closely related to the work of governmental agencies. Individuals who worked with non-governmental agencies sometimes transferred their interests to governments. Thus the non-governmental organizations stimulated the growth of international institutions.

International cooperation was the least way to avoid future conflict. Most citizens and world leaders became convinced that international organizations could help preventing future military conflicts. The practice of joint deliberation established in the nineteenth century continued in a more concise and meaningful fashion during World War 1. During war in the United States the most important private group was the League to Enforce Peace, founded in Philadelphia in June 1915, William Howard Taft was a major leader of this movement. Woodrow Wilson had announced his peace programme to the United State Congress on January 8, 1918. He declared in the important fourteen points that a general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small state alike.[21] David Lloyd George, the British Prime minister had presented a peace programme included a number of similar proposals. Colonel E. M. House was authorized by Wilson to consolidate the various ideas and drafts of British and American plans. Two events of great importance in league history occurred at this time; the issue of General Smuts famous Pamphlet, 'The League of Nations' a practical suggestion, and the appointment of Cecil to take charge, in the British delegation. Smuts work was from every point of view, the climax of all the thoughts and labor expanded on the league idea before the Paris Conference. The Schemes of the Phillimore and Bourgeois Committees, the draft of Wilson and House were therefore played very important role for the creation of first international organization.

Planning during 1914-1918 for a League of Nations demonstrate the variety of contributions. Although President Wilson was credited with being the main champion of this development, private and public groups and individuals in many countries deserve recognition for playing highly significant role. The final draft of the covenant was laid before a plenary session of the peace conference on April 28, 1919, and the covenant and all the supporting agreements were approved unanimously. Since the League Covenant was a part of the treaty of Versailles. The treaty was ratified and took effect on January 10, 1920 and that date is therefore the official birthday of the League of Nations. A permanent general international organization of a nearly universal character came into existence for the first time after World War 1. This development marked another stage in the history of international organizations.

The most important set of goals of the League of Nations related to promoting peace and preventing wars. Although the major emphasis in the covenant was upon peace maintenance, some recognition was given to the desirability of international

economic and social cooperation. The success of modern international organizations (such as the League of Nations or United Nations) is most often judged on the basis of their handling of disputes and their utility in avoiding war. Many reasons have been advanced for the Leagues failure to survive. The absence from membership of major states such as the United States and during shorter period, the Soviet Union and Germany was a handicap to concerted action, the covenant suffered from some gaps and technical weaknesses, but, in, the critical tests, it was the lack of will of the members rather than of available devices that accounted for ineffective measures. Basically, the League of Nations failed because it was ill equipped to accomplish its goals[22.] The lessons of the League's twenty years of experience also served well to modify and strengthen the pattern of the United Nations. The League however, left us with an institutional legacy upon which the United Nations experiment has been elaborated.

Just as World War-I led to the formation of the League of Nations, World War-II led to the establishment of the United Nations. In each case, both states people and scholars tried to develop ways of maintaining peace and stability when the war ended. During the war many meetings, conferences, and declarations had laid the foundation for the United Nations and had prepared the way for final agreement on the terms of the charter.

The San Francisco Conference (April 25, June 26, 1945) was the culmination of the steps leading to the emergence of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations was accepted on June 25, 1945 on the following day, the representatives of the 50 conferring states formally signed it. It came into force on October 24, 1945; after the five Great Powers and a majority of the signatory states had ratified it.[23] The Charter of the United Nations clearly reveals the purposes and general nature of the new organization.

This remarkable document contains more than ten thousand words, with 111 Articles divided into 19 Chapters.[24] The four purposes of the United Nations set out in Article 1 of chapter 1 are to maintain International Peace and Security ; to develop friendly relations among nations; to achieve collaboration in solving global problems and the promotion of fundamental freedoms; and to act as a center for harmonizing these efforts.[25] Much of the activity of the United Nations becomes visible in the work of its six main organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, Secretariat and the International Court of Justice.

The above mentioned analysis shows that both interdependence and shrinking of global dimensions will require adjustments and will enhance the role of International Organizations. The short history of International Organizations is on demonstration of human ingenuity and adaptability. Their rapid develop is a prime example of how humanity response to changing needs. But International Organization points in that direction, even though, as a human institution, it continues to reflect the divisions and follies of the world in which we live.26

The United Nations is neither a superstate, nor a form of world government in any real sense of the term. It dose not seek to supplant the normal channels of international relations or to supersede bilateral or multilateral arrangements of a local or regional character. Moreover, since the United Nations was designed to maintain peace rather than to make it, its emphasis is on accommodation rather than coercion. It evolves when political consensus and cooperation evolve, and it retrogresses when political disagreement and conflict arise. The problem of providing means for peaceful adjustment as a substitute for military conflict remains a dilemma of international organizations today. Economic rivalries, differences in languages, culture, levels of prosperity and political systems, prejudice, and a lack of trust stands as a barriers to the creation of the kind of international system that may be required to make a league of Nations or United Nations a more effective instrument for dealing with world problems.

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