

Week 1 Lectures

Lecture 1 - Introduction to PO4027

HAND OUT ATTENDANCE SHEET

Hi class and welcome to PO4027 – International Organizations and Global Governance. I'm your lecturer, Scott Fitzsimmons. This introductory lecture is going to outline the major elements of the module. So, I'll go over the module outline, the module objectives, and other administrative stuff. And, after that, I'll finish off with a quick overview of the major assignments for the module.

This and the following lecture probably won't take up our full class time today, which is good in a way because I simply want you to understand what this module is all about and what you're going to be getting yourselves into if you decide to stay in it. International relations can sometimes be a challenging subject, but it can also be very enlightening because it opens up a range of perspectives and viewpoints with which you can try to understand the complex world we live in.

GO TO FIRST SLIDE

Lecturer Introduction

Alright, I guess I'll start off with a bit of info about me:

First off, I grew up in Ottawa, Canada.

I went to Carleton University for a Bachelors of Public Affairs and Policy Management degree, wherein I specialized in security policy, and followed that up with a Masters of Arts in International Affairs at the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs, which is also at Carleton U.

I completed my PhD in 2010 in the Department of Political Science at the University of Calgary, where I specialized in International Relations, Strategic Studies, and Comparative Politics. So, if you want to refer to me as "Dr. Fitzsimmons," you certainly can, but my preference is for you to just call me Scott.

My main areas of expertise include mercenary forces and Private Military Companies, theories of how militaries fight and win wars, and theories of foreign policy decision-making. I have taught and conducted research on these and lots of other topics at the Universities of Calgary, Victoria, British Columbia, and Limerick over the past nineteen years.

I'm also a former civil servant with the Government of Canada. I started my career working as a policy analyst in the Policy Division in the Policy, Planning, and Priorities Directorate, in the Health Policy and Communications Branch of Health Canada. Now, since we didn't have a specific mandate, like, say, the Nursing Division, we pretty much did whatever the Minister of Health was prioritizing at the time.

For most of the time that I was there, my Minister prioritized security and counter-terrorism, so I spent a lot of my time working on Emergency Preparedness policy, which was pretty interesting in the lead up to the War in Iraq when the Government of Canada was trying to decide whether it would join the US-led military coalition.

A little more recently, I worked in the Portfolio Affairs Division in the Strategic Policy Branch of Health Canada, which has been called the "most corrupt agency in Canada."

While there, I mainly helped manage relations between the six departments and agencies that make up the Health Portfolio – which was sometimes a tough job because many of them don't like each other very much.

I also developed a number of "high-level" policy documents, like strategic plans and the Health Portfolio Strategic Policy Framework. Now, these are documents that are considered ridiculously important and vital to the future of the Health Portfolio, but which no one actually uses or even looks at after they have been written. But, I swear to you that they were damn good. I also, unfortunately, spent nearly eight months helping Health Canada fire a group of volunteers, for reasons that were never made totally clear to me.

And finally, I was asked several years ago by the head of one of Canada's intelligence agencies to become a spy. But, because I really like sleeping in, I opted to become an academic instead.

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Overview of the Module

Now, in terms of the basic design of the module, it's a fast paced survey of a range of international organizations and global governance issues. On average, we're going to cover about one major topic area per week, and the module is going to be run in a mixed lecture-tutorial format, which means I'll be delivering a single two hour lecture to you each week to provide you with vital info about the topics and, on top of this, we'll also meet in one tutorial group during multiple weeks throughout the semester.

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Overview of Lecture Topics

Now, with respect to our actual lecture topics, we'll cover several major topics during the module.

Week 1 – Introduction

During the first week of our module, we're going to get better acquainted with what international organizations are in general terms by, for instance, discussing why governments create these institutions and also the functions that these institutions perform.

Week 2 – Theoretical Perspectives on International Organizations

Next up, in week 2, we will be examining a range of theoretical perspectives on international organizations. The purpose and effectiveness of international organizations is actually one of the hottest topics in the theoretical study of international relations. Indeed, as we'll see, major schools of thought, like realism, liberalism, and constructivism, have plenty to say on this.

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Week 3 – The United Nations

Now, in week 3, we'll have our first in-depth discussion of an international organization. And, since the United Nations has been hailed as the most important and best known of all international organizations, I think that it makes sense to start with it. We will specifically be talking about issues related to the UN's role as a global provider of peace and security and the ongoing debate about whether and how the UN's most powerful decision-making body, the Security Council, can be reformed to make it more representative and responsive to the security concerns of the international community.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, the UN Security Council has only five permanent members, which are the United States, Russia, China, the UK, and France. The reason why these particular countries enjoy permanent membership is because they are considered to be the primary victors of the Second World War, which ended back in 1945. But during the past two or three decades, other countries, some of which are quite powerful, like Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil, have started to argue that they should also be granted permanent membership on the Security Council. Likewise, there have been calls for the Islamic countries of the world to have a permanent seat on the Council and for African countries to have a permanent seat as well.

With this in mind, in our lecture on UN Security Council reform we will talk about a number of proposals for reforming the Council, and their pros, cons, risks, and potential benefits.

Unfortunately, I am going to need to pre-record and post the lectures for Week 3 on our module's Brightspace website because I am going to be away in Germany at a conference to try to set up a new European Studies programme that will allow students to attend four different universities during their undergraduate education.

Week 4 – The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Then, in Week 4, we're going to talk about the world's most powerful military-focussed international organization, which is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO for short. NATO was founded in 1949, during the Cold War era, as a military alliance, led by the

United States, that prepared to defend the countries of Western Europe from a military invasion by the Soviet Union.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, NATO has not only expanded its membership, by inviting many of its former enemies in Eastern Europe to join it, but has also expanded its functions to include conducting peace enforcement operations in Europe and Afghanistan.

Taking this into account, this week's first lecture is going to focus on the concept of military alliances and the possible advantages and disadvantages of being a member of the NATO alliance.

And in our second lecture, we are going to examine whether the growth of NATO into Eastern Europe has helped spread respect for the principles of democracy. NATO is supposed to be an alliance of democracies, so some scholars and politicians feel that one of its purposes should be to enhance democracy in its new members, most of which had been ruled by dictatorial governments until the end of the Cold War in 1991.

Week 5 – The European Union

Following this, during Week 5, we will have a couple of lectures on debates and controversies pertaining to the evolution and functions of the European Union.

In this week, I will need to pre-record and post the lecture again because I, unfortunately, need to be away at another conference. I'm very sorry about this, since I definitely greatly prefer teaching you in person. This is the last time I will need to be away during the semester.

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Week 6 – University Open Days – No Lecture

We won't have a lecture in Week 6 because of UL's Open Days where undergraduate classes are cancelled while secondary school students are taking tours of the campus to decide whether they want to attend UL next year.

Week 7 – Humanitarian and Technical Organizations

Next up, in Week 7, we'll have some lectures on humanitarian and technical organizations, like Interpol, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and the World Health Organization.

Weeks 8 and 9 – Sanctions

Next up, we're going to chat about the effects and effectiveness of sanctions. Sanctions are one of the most popular foreign policy tools that governments use to try to convince other governments to change their behaviour.

Sanctions involve denying something to a foreign country. So, for instance, Ireland could choose to deny a foreign country access to our economy by cutting off trade relations with that country.

Alternatively, Ireland could deny a foreign government political recognition by removing our diplomats from that country and kicking their diplomats out of our country.

Moreover, Ireland could deny a foreign country access to weapons or military technologies that could be used to fight a war or perpetuate an arms race inside that country or between that country and one of its neighbours.

Beyond this, Ireland could deny foreign aid to a country by stopping the flow of money or aid workers to that country.

Sanctions tend to be used when a government does not want to use military force to try to accomplish its foreign policy objectives, but also feels that relying on diplomatic negotiations alone will not likely accomplish its objectives.

So, in this sense, sanctions are a middle-of-the-road foreign policy tool that, in the words of one scholar, fall “between words and wars” because they are not as destructive as using military force but can, at least in theory, have a stronger impact than words alone.

With this in mind, this week's lectures will specifically examine whether sanctions are effective at accomplishing the goals of the countries that impose them and whether imposing sanctions can encourage wars to break out, which is NOT one of their intended effects.

In Week 9, we will also have a midterm exam that will cover material from the lectures up to this point.

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Week 10 – International Associations and International Economic Organizations

Alright, now, during our first session in Week 10, we're going to talk about three international associations that several dozen countries around the world are a part of.

The G20 is considered the premier economic association in international politics, where important economic, political, and security issues are discussed by the leaders of the twenty largest industrialized economies in the world.

The Commonwealth is largely made up of countries that used to be part of the British Empire, including several countries that have had hostile relationships with the UK in the past; however, Ireland is not currently a member.

Finally, La Francophonie is sort of like a French version of the Commonwealth but, as we'll see, its membership is even more diverse.

And, during the second session this week, we're going to talk about international economic organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. In particular, we're going to focus on two ongoing controversies about the role of these organizations in international affairs, including whether these organizations help or hinder efforts to reduce poverty in

developing countries and whether they unjustly harm the environment by promoting and protecting liberal trade practices.

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Week 11 – Regional Organizations

Then, in Week 11, we're going to have a couple of lectures on regional organizations that, as the name implies, are largely made up of countries located in one particular area of the world. These will include organizations like the Arab League, the African Union, the Association of South East Asian Nations, the Organization of American States, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Week 12 – The International Criminal Court

And finally, we'll finish off the semester by talking about one of the newest major international organizations, which is the International Criminal Court. This institution was established, in part, to make it easier for the international community to hold human rights abusers legally accountable for their actions. However, some very powerful countries, including the United States, Russia, China, and India, have, so far, refused to grant the ICC jurisdiction over their citizens, which means that American, Russian, Chinese, and Indian citizens cannot be put on trial at the ICC, even if they commit severe human rights abuses.

We're going to discuss this issue during our first lecture of Week 12, and then, during our second lecture, we're going to discuss how effective the ICC has been at prosecuting human rights violators since it became operational in 2002.

And I hope that you'll find the topic of our final tutorial groups particularly interesting since we're going to talk about a highly controversial proposal to allow dictators that violate the rights of their citizens to escape prosecution and live out the rest of their lives in luxury in exile from their home countries in exchange for giving up power peacefully and refraining from trying to use further violence to continue their rule.

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Objectives of the Module

Alright, now, before moving on, I just wanted to outline my basic philosophy for designing my lectures, which is, in a nutshell, to avoid, whenever possible, giving you exactly the same take on the subject matter that you'll get in your main textbook and other readings.

As a result, the lectures usually won't be a direct, point-by-point rehash of the text. There will be some overlap, but also some major divergences. What this means is that you'll basically be getting more value for your tuition money because you'll get two takes on these topics instead of just one.

Oh, and just a reminder, the tutorial groups in this module start in Week 3, which is in TWO WEEKS.

Also, another important reminder for you is that all of the readings for this module are going to be posted on our module's Brightspace site. I think it's a waste of time to have you running around the library finding and photocopying chapters from a textbook on reserve or searching through journal databases for your tutorial readings. I'm simply going to do all of that leg work for you.

Alright, now, I have two major learning objectives for anyone taking this module. The first is **knowledge**, which means I want to expose you to a range of theories, actors, and issues pertaining to international organizations and global governance in order to enhance your knowledge of this really exciting part of international relations.

My other objective is **communication**, meaning that I want you to further develop your abilities and willingness to talk about and debate these theories, actors, and issues both verbally and in your writing.

The first objective might seem pretty understandable while the second is probably a little less obvious. Nevertheless, I want to hear all of you talking during your tutorial groups. You are all smart people and you all have opinions, so I want to hear you voice them and defend them. There will be discussion questions every tutorial group to help spark

discussion and I hope we can talk about many aspects of these topics. The organizations and issues that we're going to talk about during this module make headlines every single day. In other words, they're supposed to be interesting, so I hope it won't be too hard to get you to talk about and write about them.

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Major Assignments and Module Requirements

Alright, now for the part of the lecture you're probably most interested in – the workload of the module. Well, the workload has three major components.

Participation

First off, we'll have class participation. I want you to come to every lecture and tutorial ready to talk about the topics of the week. This isn't something to take lightly because it's worth 10% of your total grade. Each tutorial meeting is, of course, going to be devoted to class discussion, so if you don't talk, we're just going to have a lot of awkward silences and the class won't be nearly as interesting or fun for any of us.

Now, while I just said that this is not something to take lightly, it's also not something to be worried about. If you come to class and participate actively during the tutorial groups, these are effectively just free marks. The topics we're going to cover in the class are suppose to be contentious and there isn't a right answer for any of them, so don't worry about trying to figure out the right or best answer.

Ultimately, just tell me and your classmates what you think and what you believe about these topics and you'll do just fine.

Midterm Exam

Next up, we'll have a midterm exam during Week 9. This exam will cover material that we have discussed during the module up to that point in the term, and will be worth 20 percent of your total grade.

Research Essay

And finally, you'll also write a major research essay for the module, which will be due on November 27th and be worth 70 percent of your total grade. This essay will be between 2,000 and 2,500 words and it should focus on an international organization and/or a global governance issue. And, just to be clear, you don't have to limit yourselves to the organizations and issues that we are going to discuss in the lectures.

Questions

So, does anyone have any questions for me?

TAKE A BREAK

Conclusion

MOVE ONTO LECTURE 2

Lecture 2 – An Introduction to International Organizations

Hi class, and welcome to our first real lecture of the module. In today's lecture, I'm going to be providing you with answers to the following questions: what are international organizations? What are the common structures and functions of international organizations? Why do governments choose to join international organizations? And, finally, why do some governments decide NOT to join international organizations?

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What are International Organizations?

So, what are international organizations anyway? Well, international organizations are institutions that help coordinate the resources and behaviour of governments and non-governmental actors, which include individuals, ethnic groups, multinational corporations and several others, to help them achieve their common objectives.

Generally speaking, we can divide international organizations into two groups. The first group consists of organizations whose members are the **governments of nation-states**. These organizations are appropriately called **intergovernmental organizations** or IGOs. By one estimate, there were **thirty-seven** IGOs in 1909 and today there are **hundreds**.

We're going to talk about several different IGOs in this module, including the United Nations, which 193 out of the 196 countries in the world as members. In case you're wondering which three countries are not members, they are Kosovo, the Vatican, and Taiwan. The United Nations seeks to be a truly **global** organization that can logically claim to speak and act for the entire world. And, **to do this**, it requires representation from as many countries as possible.

The European Union, on the other hand, has a much more **limited** and **regional** membership, since it confines itself to the governments of **European** countries. However, not **every** European country is a member. Some, like the UK, Norway, and Switzerland, don't want to be members. Others, like Turkey, desperately want to join but have not been invited to join yet because of concerns raised by some of the organization's **existing** members about, among other things, Turkey's respect for democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

The Organization of American States, similarly, is made up of the governments of countries in North and South America. The one exception to this is the Government of **Cuba**, which was suspended for being Communist in 1962. And, even though the suspension was **lifted** in 2009, it has not yet decided to send official representatives to take part in the organization's business.

The **secretariat** of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which is an agreement designed to facilitate the free flow of goods and investment across the borders of its members, has a **very limited** regional membership, since it only includes the Governments of the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

In contrast to these organizations, not only were the original members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization spread across a **quite vaguely-defined** area known as the “North Atlantic region,” with countries like Canada and America on one side of the Atlantic, and the UK and France, on the other side, but the membership of this organization has greatly **expanded** over time to include countries like Albania, Poland, and Turkey that are **quite far away** from the North Atlantic.

Finally, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, or OPEC, has **never** limited its membership by geography. Rather, as its name implies, its membership is made up of countries that produce and export oil, regardless of where they are physically located around the world. As a result, OPEC has members in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Iran, but also in Africa, like Nigeria, and South America, like Venezuela. And, between 1962 and 2009, when Indonesia was a member, it also had representation from South East Asia.

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Now, the **second** type of international organization are organizations whose members are primarily **individuals** and **groups**, rather than governments. These are known as **international nongovernmental organizations** or INGOs, though they are frequently referred to as simply NGOs, without the “I”, since it’s very common for NGOs to do international work. There were an estimated 176 INGOs around in 1909 and this had increased to several **thousand** by the dawn of the twenty-first century.

For instance, **Greenpeace** is an INGO that has offices in over forty countries. Greenpeace considers its overall goal to be to "ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity," and it tries to **accomplish** this goal by campaigning for governments and ordinary citizens to take action on worldwide environmental issues, such as global warming, deforestation, overfishing, commercial whaling, genetic engineering, and fighting the spread and use of nuclear technologies.

Amnesty International is an INGO that focuses on human rights, and boasts over **three million** members and supporters around the world. The main objective of this organisation is "to conduct research and generate action to prevent and end grave abuses of human rights, and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated." With this in mind, it's most visible activities are its efforts to **lobby** on behalf of the victims of human rights abuses and to **conduct inspections** of facilities, such as prisons and other detention centres, where human rights abuses are likely to take place.

But INGOs don't have to be large or famous. The vast majority of them are quite small and little-known. For example, Alanna Tynan, one of my best students at the University of Victoria, who is pictured up on the slide, decided to create one of these organizations with her sister after they finished their undergraduate degrees, which they called The Latitude Project. And, with a combination of fundraising and volunteers, they have built schools in Nicaragua and repaired the dilapidated roofs of peasants living in areas of Nicaragua that receive very little assistance from their national government.

Now, to help clarify the primary **difference** between the two different types of international organizations, I'd just like to highlight the fact that an individual, like you and me, is allowed to become a member of an INGO, like Amnesty International or Greenpeace or, if we wanted, a terrorist group. We could not, however, become a member of the United Nations or NATO because only the governments of nation-states can become members of an intergovernmental organization.

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What are Common Structure and Functions of International Organizations?

Now, although intergovernmental organizations differ from international nongovernmental organizations in terms of their membership, they also share a number of key characteristics.

For instance, both kinds of international organizations have **voluntary membership**, which means that the governments, individuals, and groups that serve as members of these institutions are there because they **want to be**, not because they were **forced to be**.

So, for example, after the Cold War ended, when NATO was deciding whether to expand into Eastern Europe, it didn't **threaten** its former enemies, like Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, with harm if they refused to join. Rather, NATO's existing members **asked** their former enemies whether they wanted to join, and it was left up to the governments of these three countries to decide whether they would ultimately accept the offer.

And, as I mentioned a minute ago, Cuba **could** rejoin the Organization of American States if it wanted to, but it has, so far, decided that it is not interested in doing this.

Now, just to clarify this point a little bit, although each member of an international organization has to decide to join or remain a part of the organization, the organization itself may be able to **prevent** a potential member from joining, and may also be able to temporarily or permanently **remove** an existing member.

For example, when new countries come into existence, they do not **automatically** become part of the United Nations. Rather, they have to apply for membership and the existing members of the UN may decide to **reject** the application. The main reason for having a selection process is to discourage attempts by rebel groups to try to seize control over **part** of an existing country and then declare that the part they control is a new and completely independent country.

To put this in a different way, UN membership serves as the official **stamp of approval** for a country. If a country has not been invited to join the UN, then its status as a “legitimate” country is disputed. Kosovo and Taiwan are considered “legitimate” countries by **some** UN members but not others – notably, China doesn't consider Taiwan to be a legitimate country and has worked hard to prevent it from becoming

a UN member. Likewise, some people consider the Palestinian territories to be a legitimate country and it's easy to understand why, since it has its own President and diplomats. However, it isn't an "**official**" legitimate country yet since it has not been invited to join the UN's General Assembly.

And to give you an example of an incident where an international organization **temporarily removed** an existing member, South Africa was suspended from the UN General Assembly in 1974 due to its racist apartheid policies, which involved the oppression and general denial of political and human rights of the Black African majority in that country. This suspension was only lifted in 1994 when South Africa ended its apartheid policies and held free and democratic elections, which were won by Nelson Mandela's African National Congress party.

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Alright, now, international organizations also tend to have some sort of key **document**, such as a treaty or charter, which states the organization's goals, structure, membership rules, rules for governing the behaviour of its members, and procedures for how the organization will respond to particular issues and problems.

The United Nations Charter, for instance, has several passages about the membership and functions of the General Assembly and Security Council, and also contains passages that identify the primary purpose of the UN, which is, and I quote:

"To maintain international peace and security, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace."

In short, the UN Charter makes it clear that the UN's main function is to prevent and resolve wars.

NATO is, likewise, governed by the North Atlantic Treaty, which contains several passages laying out the organization's membership rules and purposes. The most important of these is known as Article 5, which lays out the rules for responding to an attack against any of the member countries. This Article states that:

“The Parties (which refers to the members of the organization) agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”

In other words, this article states that an attack against any of the 32 members of NATO will be treated as an attack against ALL of the members, and that they will work together to respond with military force, if necessary, to the attack.

The content of these documents is critically important because they are considered to be legally binding and can grant considerable powers to the organization. For example, the UN Charter states that the UN Security Council is the only decision-making body in the world that can decide whether to grant permission for a country to use military force against another country.

Similarly, the EU's Treaty of Lisbon states that the EU's European Court of Justice has the power to overrule decisions made by the courts of the EU's member countries.

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Now, international organizations also tend to have what's known as a representative consultative conference system, which is just a fancy

way of saying that they hold regular **meetings** of the member governments, individuals, or groups where they discuss issues that are relevant to the work, membership, and structure of the organization.

So, for example, the United Nations has regular meetings of the General Assembly, where ambassadors from each of the 193 member countries meet to discuss a range of topics.

Other international organizations tend to meet less regularly, but most major international organizations meet at least once every two years.

Now, some organizations, like the United Nations and European Union, have **legislative assemblies** that meet on a regular basis, while other organizations, like the secretariat of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, do not have assemblies. And certain international organizations that were founded **without** a legislative assembly have later decided to create one. A good example of this is the Organization of African Unity. When it was founded in 1963, it relied on annual **summit** meetings between the heads of state of its member countries, which would last only 4 or 5 days on average. But, shortly after the organization transformed itself into the African Union, in 2002, it decided to create the Pan-African Parliament to ensure more regular contact between the member states.

Moreover, international organizations also tend to have a **permanent secretariat to carry out administrative, research, and information functions**. I think that it's helpful to think of these secretariats as being quite similar to the **bureaucracy** of a national government since they are made up of full-time, long-term, professional staff who are supposed to use their accumulated knowledge and expertise to assist the organization with its work.

To provide you with yet-another UN-related example, the UN Secretariat, which is headed by the UN Secretary General, performs numerous vital functions for the organization, including collecting and disseminating statistics on issues and countries and managing the UN's various peacekeeping operations.

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And finally, just like with their membership rules, international organizations tend to carry out **most** of their functions according to the principles of **consent and recommendation** rather than relying on **compulsion or force**.

In other words, the members of most international organizations try to adhere to the organization's decisions, even in cases where they might be disadvantaged in some way by this, because the organization has **asked them to** and because they accept that they have an **obligation** to do so when they decided to join the organization. It's only in fairly **rare** circumstances that an international organization will decide to martial its resources and use force against one of its members and this almost always happens after that member has been given multiple opportunities to peacefully adhere to the organization's decisions.

Furthermore, it's important for me to emphasize the fact that the members of international organizations still retain a great deal of **autonomy** to behave as they wish to in international affairs. For example, although the 28 members of the European Union have **tried** to harmonize their foreign policies to a great extent, they didn't act as one during the lead up to the War in Iraq, when **most** of the member governments decided not to participate in the US-led military coalition that invaded Iraq in 2003, and **two** members, the UK and Poland, did take part.

Similarly, while most of the EU's member governments have agreed to use a common currency, the Euro, some members have decided to retain their traditional national currency.

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Why do Governments Join International Organizations?

So, why do governments choose to join international organizations? Well, there are several plausible reasons for doing this.

Economic Rewards

First off, some countries choose to join international organizations because being a member should yield positive **economic rewards**. The North American Free Trade Agreement was created, for example, during the early 1990s because the Governments of the United States, Canada, and Mexico thought that it would help promote trade and investment between them and, therefore, help their economies grow. Canada and Mexico, in particular, were very keen to help improve access for their businesses to the hundreds of millions of consumers in the American economy because this consumer base was simply far, far larger than the ones present in Mexico and Canada. Some American businesses, on the other hand, were very interested in getting better access to cheap Mexican labour, who would perform the same work as an American for considerably less money.

In addition, China's desire to join the World Trade Organization, which it accomplished in 2001, was driven largely by its desire to improve its ability to buy and sell goods more easily to all of the **other** members of the WTO, which included a lot of very wealthy countries in North America and Europe that would serve as lucrative markets for inexpensive Chinese-made products.

Furthermore, France was motivated to join the European Common Market, which eventually evolved into the European Union, because it considered this to be a good way to help bolster its economy in the aftermath of the devastating Second World War.

Enhanced Political Influence

Now, **another** reason why governments decide to join international organizations is because they believe that this will allow them to gain greater **political influence** than they would otherwise enjoy. For example, the Netherlands and Portugal are **too small and weak** to have much influence on international affairs if they tried to act on their own. However, as members of the European Union, they enjoy genuine political clout.

In a similar way, membership in the United Nations allows small and weak countries to influence the work of the UN because each country,

no matter how small and weak, gets to propose and vote on resolutions in the General Assembly. Moreover, every so often, a small and weak country may even get appointed to serve as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council where it will get to decide on issues like whether to deploy peacekeeping forces to prevent or resolve a violent conflict.

Similarly, one of the reasons why Germany and Italy, which were on the losing side of World War Two, enthusiastically supported the development of the European Common Market in the 1950s was to prove to the entire world, but particularly France, that they could be trusted as peaceful, cooperative political and economic partners that did not need to be oppressed, occupied, and feared by other countries.

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Enhanced Security

A country may also decide to join an international organization because it believes that the organization can enhance its security. The most clear cut example of this is the members of NATO since that organization was established to ensure that all of its members would be guaranteed to receive military assistance from the other members in the event that they were attacked by another country or a terrorist group. Many members of NATO, particularly when it was founded in 1949, were far too weak to defend themselves from attack. France, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy had all been devastated during World War II, and the UK was nearly bankrupt, so they would have needed help from Canada and the United States to defend themselves if the Soviet Union had decided to invade Western Europe and start a Third World War.

Another example of an international organization that helps to enhance the security of its members is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is much larger than NATO, at 57 members, but focussed more on facilitating discussions on security issues between its members to help them work out their differences peacefully and, therefore, avoid the need to resort to violence.

The Increasing Inability of Governments to Solve Problems

And finally, perhaps the single most important reason why governments join international organizations is because governments and their citizens have come to realize that they are not going to be able to address a wide range of **serious issues and problems** by themselves.

In other words, international organizations have been created to **help** governments and regular people, like you and me, to address serious issues and problems, like terrorism, environmental degradation, the proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world, and human rights abuses, by **coordinating** and **directing** the resources and efforts of governments and regular people, by facilitating the transmission of information, by standardizing laws, and by managing the use of armed forces, toward common purposes.

Even a country as powerful and wealthy as the United States cannot do things like stamp out terrorism around the world or stop the international drug trade by itself. Nor can it clean up the world's oceans, eliminate harmful pollutants in the air we breathe, or slow global warming by itself. The United States can, of course, make **some** progress towards addressing these issues by itself, but **significant** progress will require the efforts of countries all over the world, and international organizations can help countries work together.

NEXT SLIDE

Why do Governments decide NOT to Join International Organizations?

Now, the final topic I want to touch on before letting you go is that of the question of why some governments decide **NOT** to join certain international organizations. Well, there are at least two good reasons for this.

A Loss of Sovereignty

First off, some governments may decide that they have to **sacrifice too much of their sovereignty** by joining an international organization, with **sovereignty** meaning their ability to do whatever they want. When joining an international organization, every member has to agree to

abide by its rules, which, at least in theory, place some restrictions on each member's ability to do what it wants.

Switzerland, for example, has long-felt that it can best-achieve its political and economic goals by itself and does not want to have to adhere to the rules imposed by the EU or NATO or most other international organizations that boast numerous European members.

Moreover, even though Canada has vast oil reserves, it has no desire to be part of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries because it doesn't want an international organization telling it how much oil it is allowed to produce in any given period of time. It wants to be able to decide this for itself.

Costs Too High/Benefits Too Low

In addition, governments may also decide to refrain from joining an international organization if they feel that they will NOT receive any tangible benefits from being a member of the organization or if they feel that the costs of being a member will exceed the benefits.

For example, the United States chose not to become a member of the International Criminal Court because it felt that joining this organization would expose American military personnel and political leaders to prosecution for real or suspected human rights violations that the United States feels it would like to have the option to commit during overseas military operations. These include torturing suspected terrorists and, of course, bombing civilians to death in their homes.

So, even though the Government of the United States generally supports the notion that people who abuse human rights should be prosecuted by institutions like the International Criminal Court, it also believes that the risk that Americans might someday be prosecuted by this institution is simply too high to warrant participating in it and granting it jurisdiction over American citizens.

Conclusion

Alright, that's it for today, class. I'll see you back here next time for our first lecture on theories of international organizations.