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## **The relations between international organisations**

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### **Introduction**

The international relations literature has tended, until relatively recently, to neglect the role and impact of the relations between international governmental organisations (IGOs), in common with a more general neglect of how they behave after they are created (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 699). Similarly, it has rather neglected the role of the OECD. Hence, the aims of this paper are to:

- One, review the small, but growing literature on the relationships between international, intergovernmental organisations.
- Two, examine the origins, type and extent of relationships between the OECD and other, major international organisations such as the IMF/World Bank, the UNO (and its agencies), EU and the WTO.

The paper is divided into the following sections: a literature review; an examination of the extent and type of current OECD relationships with other IGOs; a conclusion.

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### **A review of the literature**

It is a relatively simple matter to discuss the value of past or current approaches to the study of the relationships between IGOs as there are very few substantial theoretical or conceptual studies of this phenomenon, perhaps a victim of the more general neglect discussed by Abbot and Snidal (1998). However, if we cast the net a little wider there are a number of conceptual frameworks that stimulate useful insights. Rosenau (1969), for example, developed a conceptual scheme intended to enable more systematic and detailed examination of the wide range of interdependencies that exist between national and international systems. The unit of analysis was the linkage, defined as a recurrent sequence of behaviour that originates in one system and is reacted to in another (1969: 45). The initial stage of a linkage is the output; the end stage is the input to another system. Policy outputs originate in a polity and culminate in an input to its environment, and vice versa. He suggests three basic types of linkage process:

- Penetrative, when members of one polity serve as participants in the political processes of another.
- Reactive, where the behaviour of actors in another system is a response to the linkage inputs of another, though the former do not participate.

- Emulative, where the behaviour of actors in another system is not only a response to the output of another system, but takes essentially the same form.

While Rosenau was concerned with national-international linkages, with only a little modification his approach could be applied to the linkages between IGOs, suggesting a number of dimensions for examination, including the extent to which the three basic types of linkage are evident in, or typify inter-IGO relationships.

Similarly, Benson (1975) and Jonsson (1986) in drawing upon the sociological literature on interorganisational relations provide insights of some value. Benson, for example, suggests four basic action orientations of administrators in regard to other organisations: the fulfilment of program requirements; the maintenance of a clear domain of high social importance, where administrators are oriented to the maintenance of a clear-cut, uncluttered claim that includes a set of important activities; the maintenance of orderly, reliable patterns of resource flow, where organizations are oriented to see that their support network operates in a predictable, dependable way that permits the agency to anticipate an adequate and certain flow of resources; and, fourthly, the extended application and defence of the agency's paradigm, in the sense that an organisation's participants are committed to their agency's way of doing things in 'their own way', with other approaches regarded as less efficient, irresponsible or immoral (Benson 1973: 112-113). This approach begs the question as to whether or not IGOs orient themselves to each other in any one or more of these four ways and, if so, why and with what impact?

There does exist a growing literature on institutional interaction, with its roots in the regime theory approach developed, if in somewhat separate fashions, by authors such as Young (1980) and Krasner (1983), a literature that focuses on the interactions between regimes, as most recently seen in the work of Stokke (2001) and Oberthur and Gehring, T (2006). Within these conceptual frameworks IGOs do, of course, constitute actors but receive relatively little specific attention as regards empirical or conceptual studies of their relationships with other IGOs. This is somewhat surprising as, for example, questions as to the robustness of regimes (see, for example, Keohane 1980, 1984, 1989, Young 1989, 1992), and the factors enhancing or detracting from robustness would benefit from more detailed, empirical studies of the role of IGOs and their interactions. Indeed, while this is somewhat speculative, IGOs and their interaction might constitute the more robust 'bones', of international regimes, helping to explain their persistence.

Similarly, the transgovernmental relations literature potentially might have examined IGO relationships in some depth, at least as an important part of the environment of transgovernmental relationships. In Keohane and Nye's 1974 article, for example, in part intended to clarify their earlier definitions, the authors note that transgovernmental relations refers to sub-units of governments when they act relatively autonomously from higher authority in international politics (1974: 41). They then go on to note the relevance of IGOs for transgovernmental relations, noting that they:

- Can serve as arenas for transgovernmental relations
- Can be members of transgovernmental coalitions

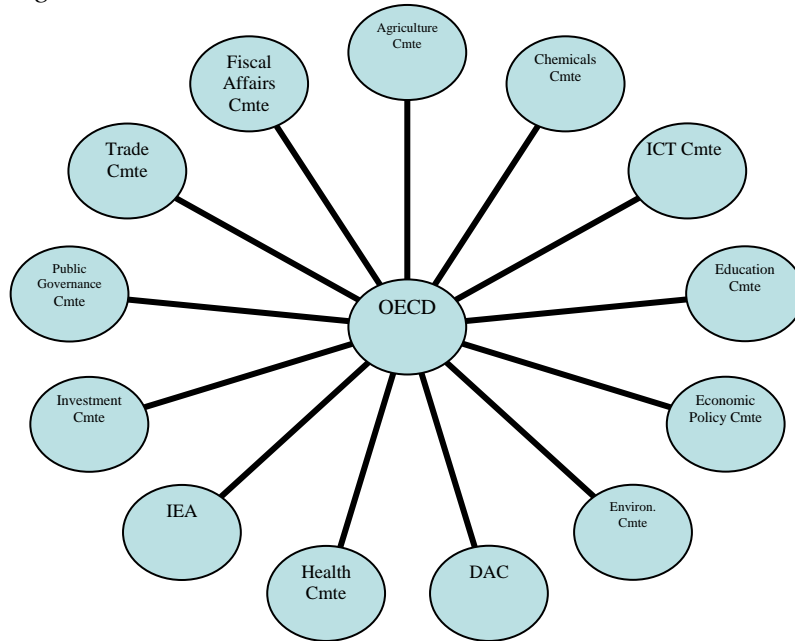
- Can be points of intervention by governments (and other actors) in non-governmental, international transactions, enabling them to use IOs for a variety of purposes.

However, they do not go on to examine in any detail the role of IGO relationships, which is somewhat surprising. Nor have the authors of this paper been able, to date, to identify any of the large number of later studies that use their approach to focus on inter-IGO relationships.

Slaughter (2004), in extending Keohane and Nye's 1974 work on transgovernmental relations, outlines in greater detail the important role of intergovernmental networks of national public servants, in which she notes the importance of IGOs, but does not provide a conceptual scheme that specifically relates to IGOs and their relationships. Nevertheless, her focus on the importance of intergovernmental networks (IGNs), many of which are based in IGOs such as the Nordic Council, APEC and the OECD, is useful in helping to explain the relations between IGOs, given that inter-IGO relationships are, for the most part, IGN relationships. She also draws our attention away from the traditional, billiard ball model of relationships, in which an undifferentiated organisation relates to similarly undifferentiated organisations, whether it is a state or an IGO. Rather, it is more useful, to paraphrase Slaughter, to conceive of an IGO such as the OECD as a largely disaggregated network of IGNs, a network of networks facilitated by a supranational secretariat with, for the most part, only informational power (2004: 136). Hence, our quest in seeking to understand IGO to IGO relationships needs to focus not only on such matters as their formal agreements and related interactions but on a potentially very wide range of linkages of varying degrees of importance between the IGNs within the IGO in question and the IGNs within other IGOs such as the IMF, the World Bank or the WTO. Indeed, IGNs often incorporate more than one IGO within their ambit.

In the OECD's case, for example, each of its two hundred plus committees is an organisational focus for at least one IGN as represented in Diagram 1. Each committee is an IGN in the sense that it consists of a varying number of representatives of the national government members of the OECD working together on one or more agreed projects that, in turn, might be engaged in relationships with other IGNs in other IGOs.

Diagram 1



In a recent, somewhat neglected contribution Grigorescu (2004), does directly address the question of inter-IGO relationships. His primary research question, addressed in a preliminary fashion, asks which types of international organizations are more likely to engage in cooperative interaction and which ones are more likely to engage in competitive ones. In drawing upon the bureaucratic politics literature, he derives five hypotheses regarding the likelihood of inter-IGO cooperation, as follows:

- The greater the amount of funds available to an international organization in a specific issue-area, the more likely it is for that organization to engage in collaborative projects.
- The longer an IGO has been involved in an issue-area, (and the greater its expertise) the more likely it is that it will engage in inter-organizational collaborative projects with others.
- International organizations, whose original tasks have substantially changed (increased or decreased), are less likely to engage in cooperative arrangements with others IGOs.
- IGOs, whose original tasks have substantially diminished, are initially more likely to adopt a “go-it-alone” strategy in issue areas that are growing in relevance but, after they establish themselves as principal actors in this area, they are more likely to engage in collaborative arrangements.
- IGOs are more likely to engage in collaborative arrangements with other organizations that were initially designed for a similar purpose (and thus are staffed with bureaucrats with a similar background).

He then moves on to examine the plausibility of the hypotheses in the context of the involvement by eight IGOs (including the OECD), that form a ‘cluster’, in relation to work on corruption, finding some support for his hypotheses.

In the most recent publication of which the authors are aware Oberthur and Gehring, plus a number of collaborators (2006), examined the interaction between the proliferating institutions created for environmental governance, stimulated by

concerns that the increasing overlap between the institutions and its impact might be harmful to their effectiveness. It became clear that the institutions involved did interact with each other to varying extents, in varying ways, with a variety of impacts. They define, unusually, an institutional interaction as a unidirectional, causal relationship between two interacting institutions (not necessarily IGOs). The interaction comprises a source institution from which influence originates, a target institution that is affected and a causal pathway through which influence runs from the source to the target (2006: 19). They distinguish it from actions that occur where two institutions are present but where there is no causal influence. In this sense their conception is very similar to that proposed by Rosenau (1969: 45), whose unit of analysis is the linkage, defined as a recurrent sequence of behaviour that originates in one system and is reacted to in another.

However, Oberthur and Gehring do indicate that ‘complex interaction situations’ seem to be the norm, involving causally related chains of interaction that may ‘run back and forth’, between institutions over a long period of time (2006: 29). They suggest that if we wish to gain a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon then we need to disaggregate this complexity into several cases of unidirectional relationships. Unfortunately, while their approach and findings do provide valuable insight as to the nature of the broader, institutional context within which IGOs operate, they do not provide approaches that focus directly on inter-IGO relationships.

In summary, we note the relative lack of detailed studies of IGO to IGO relationships, other than in the limited context of the institutional interaction literature, such as the work of Oberthur and Gehring and the small number of case studies of such relationships that exist. Unfortunately for our interests, much of the inter-institutional work also has been limited to specialised IGOs in relation to the environment and it is most uncertain as to the extent to which one can generalise from its findings to other, non-environmental IGOs and their relationships.

### **The OECD’s current relationships with other IGOs**

#### *OECD strategy and policy in relation to other IGOs*

OECD policy in relation to IGOs falls within the general ambit of its external relations strategy (OECD 2008c). The importance of the world external to its members, springing out of increasing, global interdependence, has been a continuing concern of the OECD since its inception, though variable in its coverage and intensity. In 1969, for example, shortly after taking up the position of Secretary General of the OECD, Van Lennep was reported by a British Foreign and Commonwealth Office official as saying that he wanted someone of ‘middle rank’, to look after the external relations of the OECD, a function ‘not carried out at all at present’ (FCO 1969). However, while there may well have been fluctuations in the efficiency with which it related to the world external to its members, the OECD Secretariat could not neglect that world for any length of time. Indeed, as noted in its Convention, Article 1, its members ‘should contribute to sound economic expansion in member as well as non-member countries in the process of economic development.’ This is further clarified in Article 12, which notes that the OECD may

Address communications to non-member states or organisations; Establish and maintain relations with non-member states or organisations; Invite non-member governments or organisations to participate in activities of the Organisation.

As well as the fact of growing economic interdependence and the need to generate, maintain and enhance relations with non-members if issues that arise from that interdependence are to be successfully dealt with, the OECD now makes it quite clear that external relations are of major importance, noting that a major motive for building its 'global relations' is to promote its views as to what should be the 'principles, values and policies that lead to sound, sustainable growth and poverty reduction' (OECD 2008: c).

In 2005, following on from a general review of its existing strategies and organisational structure the OECD adopted a broad strategic framework to guide its external relations activities, the global relations strategy, consisting of three objectives, being to:

- Contribute to the harmonious functioning of the global economy
- Promote shared prosperity
- Encourage shared knowledge for better public policy (OECD 2008c).

The External Relations Committee (ERC), which replaced the former Committee for Cooperation with Non-Members in a restructuring of the OECD in 2006, is the body delegated to support the work of the Council in relation to non-members, monitoring the implementation of its decisions as to non-member participants, carrying out delegated functions and advising the Council as appropriate, especially as to the needs of its 'global relations', programs in the bi-annual preparation of the OECD's budget and program of work (OECD 2008d). The ERC, in turn, is supported by a small administrative unit with ten members, the Centre for Cooperation with Non-Members (CCNM), created in 1998 to support the then less well developed objectives as regards non-members.

However, within the context of the global relations strategy each OECD committee has considerable discretion to define – indeed, is required to define - its own specific global relations strategy, including the participation of IGOs and other non-members (OECD 2008c). The CCNM fulfils a central role in monitoring the development and implementation of OECD partnerships with international organisations, as well as providing advice to committees in relation to the specific global relations plans and activities (OECD 2008e). In practice, given the sheer scale of the OECD's operations, the large number of its committees and the small size of the CCNM, its global relations activities overwhelmingly are carried out in a largely decentralised fashion by staff within the directorates, subject to varying degrees of supervision by their supervisors and the general constraints imposed by the work programs of the committees which they support. Members of committees, notably members of their bureaux, do become involved in the OECD's external relations with IGOs, but to a lesser and varying extent. It is usually lesser as they do not have the time for such work, and it varies depending on the extent to which other IGOs are relevant to the work of the committee in question. Hence, for example, the staff serving the OECD's Development Assistance Committee, as well as its members, engage relatively frequently with the World Bank and other UN agencies, given their common interest in development. Similarly, members of the Competition Committee engage in regular interactions with the International Committee Network (ICN), to the extent that meetings of their bureau sometimes take place during meetings of the ICN, as the relevant members take part in the activities of both the OECD and the ICN.

### *Relationships with IGOs*

In general, the OECD's global relations strategy also encompasses IGOs, with an additional motivation in the case of IGOs being the aim to improve its understanding of their work and, in particular, to avoid duplication of work by formal and informal participation in each others' work, exchanging information (especially statistical information) and a variety of jointly resourced activities (OECD 2008g).

The OECD currently has five formal arrangements with other IGOs, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, UNCTAD and the WHO (OECD 2008a). The actual number of formal arrangements of this type has varied over time. For example, when established in 1961 it had a number of formal relationships with IGOs as bequeathed to it by its predecessor, the OEEC. These included, for example, a formal agreement with the Council of Europe. Both the OECD and the Council of Europe had a five person liaison committee to handle the relationship, meeting on a regular basis. In essence, it was a continuation of the system set up by the OEEC and involved a flow of papers and information from each party to the other in areas of interest, plus invitations to sit as observers on specific committees, including an invitation to the OECD Secretary General. The conventions and procedures of the new OECD were more restrictive than the old OEEC and did not enable the same degree of automatic access to OECD committees as had been the case with the OEEC. This had not been realised at first by either party, leading to a number of modifications to existing practices (OECD 1962a).

Other IGOs with which the OECD has not signed official partnership agreements but has established close and regular co-operation on various projects are: the African Development Bank, APEC, FAO, ILO, IMF, UNDP, and UN Economic Commission for Africa, UNESCO and the WTO (OECD 2008b). However, as seems to be the case for most interorganisational relationships, those of the OECD are for the most part of an informal nature, in the sense that their origins do not lie in formal agreements but grow up in a somewhat ad hoc fashion over time, sometimes formalised at a later date. Given the OECD's Convention in regard to non-members, plus its recent development of a more systematic, proactive and coherent global relations strategy, plus the tendency to informal relationships, it should not come as any surprise that the OECD has a substantial number of relationships with other IGOs. This can be seen most clearly in relation to the extensive participation by IGOs in the work of the OECD's two hundred plus committees, subcommittees and working parties (often described as 'subsidiary bodies') as noted in the literature review, above (OECD 2008f).

Participation by non-members, including IGOs, in OECD committees is both required and encouraged by the OECD's Council in line with its pro-active strategy of inclusion of non-member bodies that meet specified criteria (OECD 2004). Non-members may, with the approval of the OECD Council, participate as observers or as full members in OECD bodies in one of three broad categories of participation. The first is an Ad hoc category, where a non-member is invited to attend as observer at one or more meetings, or relevant parts of meetings. The observers are expected to contribute to discussions, involving, for example, a country review, or the possible contribution to the work of the committee that could be made by the observer. The second category is a full observership, again by invitation, where the non-member is expected to actively participate and co-operate in the work of the committee. In

general, invitations last for a period of two years and relate to the Committee's mandate and programme of work. The invitations can be extended by the Council for further periods of two years. A regular observer of this type is required to make an appropriate financial contribution to the expenses of the OECD. The third category is that of full participation, offered only to organisations willing and able to comply with the relevant rules and guidelines of the Organisation as they apply to the committee in question. They have the same responsibilities and the same rights as members in the Committee concerned, though without representation in the Council.

The development of relationships with other IGOs by means of invitations to them to participate as observers was initiated early on in the OECD's history. In January 1962, for example, the Secretary General was granted authority by the OECD Council to invite representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to attend as observers at meetings of the key Economic Policy Committee. Secretary General Kristensen, in welcoming the resolution, noted that in advance of each meeting he discussed procedure with the chair of the committee and, where desirable, the committee met without the observers being present (OECD 1962b).

It is interesting to note the sensitivity with which relations with other IGOs were regarded in these early years, especially where the IGO in question contained members from the then Soviet Bloc, or those sympathetic to its aims. The British, for example, wanted considerable care taken when deciding whether or not to invite or permit Council of Europe observers to be present at OECD committees which discussed sensitive matters such as trade, invisible transactions and energy. It noted several reservations to a proposal from the OECD's Committee responsible for liaison with the Council of Europe as to which committees a representative of the Council of Europe should be admitted, reservations also noted by the USA and Canada, leading to a decision on the matter being postponed (OECD 1962c).

While sensitive matters would always be a challenge in the context of IGO – OECD relationships, they were not necessarily an insuperable obstacle. An early example of a politically sensitive matter came about in July 1962, in the shape of the increasingly difficult financial situation faced by Greece and Turkey. It was agreed by the members of the OECD that two working parties should be established, one for each country, that would lead, hopefully, to two consortia to provide increased foreign aid and investment capital for their development and, further, that the EEC, European Monetary Authority, World Bank, IMF and European Investment Bank be invited to participate on both bodies (OECD 1962d). The aim was to ensure the swift provision of efficient and effective coordination of financial and technical aid to bolster two regimes whose stability was seen as particularly important in the context of the Cold War.

Up to date figures on trends in ad hoc participation in the OECD by IGOs are not available, but twenty seven have full observership status and some twenty six are full participating members of one or more OECD committees. Excluding the EU and EFTA, which have a unique constitutional position in the OECD, most of the twenty six fully participate in only one or two committees, though the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) participates in twenty six.

At least potentially each OECD IGN might be linked to other IGNs in one or more of three ways:

- Direct, intra-OECD links to other OECD IGNs, both formal and informal
- ‘Internal’, OECD links to other IGOs and their IGNs.
- External OECD links to non-OECD IGNs, both formal and informal

#### Direct intra-OECD links to other OECD IGNs

In the first case an IGN may be linked to other IGNs within the context of the OECD, sometimes formally, as in the case of the Joint Working Party on Trade and Agriculture that links the Trade and Agriculture committees together. Given that both the Trade and the Agriculture committees are the focus of separate IGNs, their linkage in the Joint Working Party constitutes a linkage between the two IGN involved. The Environment committee, to take another example, has seven subsidiary bodies that, in turn, have eleven subsidiary bodies of their own. Three of the bodies that report directly to the committee link it formally with other OECD IGNs, being the Joint Working Parties on Agriculture and the Environment, Trade and the Environment and Tax and the Environment. The members of the Working Parties are the links that connect the two IGN, placing them in positions of influence when it comes to the consideration of recommendations, guidelines, codes of practice and the like.

The membership of the Joint Working Parties is drawn from a mix of the national representatives sitting on the ‘parent’, committees, not from the Secretariat, signifying that the area of interest overlaps the mandates of both committees and is sufficiently important to warrant a joint focus. The existence of the Joint Working Party on Trade and Agriculture, for example, springs from the very clear overlap in mandates, given the importance of agriculture in trade and, also, from the very different policy positions of several groups of OECD members in relation to free trade in agricultural products, notably between those that are members of the EU and those that are not. In other words trade in agricultural products is a highly sensitive area for OECD members.

In addition, there is a large number of informal links between committees, in the shape of the interactions of the Secretariat officials who support the various committees, usually drawn from one Directorate, or unit within a Directorate. Less frequently, the links take the shape of interactions involving the members of the bureau of the two committees, notably the chairs and vice chairs. The bureau consist of the chair and a varying number of vice chairs, plus, for major or sensitive issues, a limited number of members of the committee, responsible for leading its activities and ensuring that the activities of the Secretariat support the committee’s mission. As with any organisation of any size, there also exists within the OECD regular meetings between members of other informal groups such as the meetings of the EU or APEC members of the OECD. The latter grew up, in part, because of a growing frustration by non-European members with the power of the EU grouping, although EU members do not act as a unified body with a common view and position on all occasions.

#### ‘Internal’, OECD links to other IGOs and their IGNs.

An OECD IGN may be linked, perhaps surprisingly, internally to other, non-OECD IGNs, as in the case of the Co-ordinating Committee on Remuneration, whose

organisational ‘home’, is the OECD and which has been in existence for several decades. It was created by agreement between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Space Agency (ESA), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Council of Europe, Western European Union (WEU) and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF). It is an intergovernmental committee of IGOs, a network of networks, with the role of making recommendations on remuneration, allowances and pensions to the Councils of the member IGOs, working closely with the Committee of Representatives of the Secretaries/Directors-General (CRSG) and the Committee of Staff Representatives (CRP) of the member organisations (OECD 2008f).

Two IGOs, the European Union and the European Free Trade Association, which can for analytical purposes be regarded as particularly complex IGNs, have very close, indeed unique, formal relationships with the OECD, laid down in the OECD Convention. While they do not have voting rights in the OECD they do have a full range of other rights, including membership of most committees. The origins of this situation go back to the political environment at the time of the establishment of the OECD in 1960-61. At this time the European members of the OECD’s predecessor, the OEEC, largely had split into two camps, those who became members of the EEC and those, led by the British, who became members of EFTA. Fearful of the political as well as economic consequences of a deepening split between the two groups at the height of the Cold War, it was agreed that both the EEC and EFTA would be represented at the OECD, hoping that this would minimise frictions between the three organisations and their overlapping memberships. The extent of the EU’s involvement (via its Commission), can be seen in the fact that the Commission is a member of two hundred and seventeen committees (as of March 2008, at OECD 2008f).

Working Party 3 (WP3) of the Economic Policy committee, a ‘mere’ subcommittee, also has, by design, a membership that is very similar to that of the Group of Ten, linking the OECD and the IMF closely together, enabling more effective, international economic cooperation. It is an unusual OECD committee in that its membership has always been restricted to the USA, Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy, France, UK, Switzerland, Sweden and representatives of the Benelux countries and the European Commission. The Group of Ten (G-10) refers to the group of countries that have agreed to participate in the General Arrangements to Borrow (GAB), established in 1962, when the governments of eight IMF members—Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and the central banks of two others, Germany and Sweden, agreed to make resources available to the IMF for drawings by participants, and, under certain circumstances, for drawings by non-participants. Switzerland joined the GAB in 1964, although it was then not a member of the IMF. At present the OECD, together with the BIS, European Commission and the IMF are official observers. It is common for meetings of the G10 and WP 3 to be organised to follow closely one after the other, with largely the same persons sitting as members of the relevant committees, wearing different organisational ‘hats’.

#### External OECD links to non-OECD IGNs, both formal and informal

As noted above, the OECD has had a number of formal links with other IGOs since its inception; several bequeathed to it, as it were, by its predecessor the OEEC. In

addition, OECD IGNs also are often linked in a more informal and somewhat less direct fashion with non-OECD IGNs. There are, for example, some seventy five international organisations (NGOs as well as IGOs), that have observer status on OECD committees. Thirty one of these are IGOs, thus, in turn, linking the OECD committees to a varying number of their IGNs. Twenty seven of the IGOs are full participating members of the OECD committees in question, usually of one or two committees (OECD 2008f). However, the number can be far larger, indicating an extensive relationship. The International Atomic Energy Authority, for example, is a full, participating member of no less than twenty six OECD committees, subcommittees and working parties, and the UN and its family of agencies is an observer on fifteen. The OECD's Environment committee has seven IGO observers, being the Council of Europe, the UN Commission for Sustainable Development, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the UN Environment Programme, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation and the World Trade Organisation.

Similarly, OECD committees can be linked via their own subsidiary bodies to non-OECD IGNs, as in the case of WP 3 of the Economic Policy committee. The subsidiary bodies of the Environment committee have, in total, six other IGOs as observers, giving the committee links to a total of at least thirteen other IGOs and, in turn, the varying numbers of IGNs that they represent. The Agriculture committee and its subsidiary bodies are linked to a total of seven non-OECD IGNs.

In general, the IGOs are observers at those OECD committees that have functional responsibilities similar to those of the observer IGO in question, or whose responsibilities have, or might have an impact on their activities. Hence, for example, the OECD's Agriculture Committee has both the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Trade Organization as observers, while the Economic Policy Committee has the IMF, World Bank, Bank for International Settlements and the European Free Trade Area. Where an observing IGO has a wide range of responsibilities that are similar to those of the OECD then it typically will be an observer at several OECD committees. The Council of Europe is an observer of fifteen committees, the World Bank forty three, the IMF thirty eight, and the WTO eighteen. However, some IGOs with wide interests have few links as an observer, with the Commonwealth, for example, only relating to the Development Assistance Committee's Network on Gender Equality, suggesting relatively weak links with the OECD.

## **Conclusion**

This paper aimed to contribute to the small, but growing literature on inter-IGO relationships by assessing the adequacy of the existing views and conceptual frameworks used in the study of the relationships between international organisations, and by examining the origins, type and extent of relationships between the OECD and other, major international organisation.

As indicated, it concludes that the existing literature on inter-IGO relationships is very limited and in need of further development if it is to be of substantive value in guiding research and analysis. In particular, its limited focus has been primarily on the relationships between the very small international treaty secretariats regarding the environment, secretariats that have little in common with IGOs such as the OECD,

WTO and World Bank. Hence, there is a considerable danger in using the results of those studies, important though they are, to characterise their larger IGO brethren and their relationships. However, the work of those who have used and developed the concepts of networks and regimes did prove to be of value in informing the present study, although much less so in generating views or hypotheses that could be investigated and tested.

The paper did find a rich and complex world of IGO relationships in which the OECD was involved, suggesting an even more promising complex of relationships deserving of further work – which the authors will be addressing. Several of the more important sets of relationships were bequeathed to the OECD by the OEEC, but many more have been added to over time, waxing and waning in their importance and type, but with a general tendency to become more strategic in orientation as their members have become increasingly concerned with what seems to be an unnecessary proliferation of IGOs.

The relationships clearly vary in type, from more or less cooperative, to more or less competitive, though rarely hostile for any great length of time. It is also clear that the relationships that exist, at least in part, constitute systems of international governance in which the IGOs involved perform a variety of roles, roles that are sometimes not clear where attention is focused only on the one IGO, rather than its place within the system of governance in question. In relation to the OECD its two most common roles are that of ‘policy think tank’, generating policy ideas, concepts, frameworks and templates for the use of its members and the governance networks to which they belong, and a convenient, well organised, meeting place in which the implications of its policy suggestions can be discussed, modified and, to varying extents, adopted.

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