The Role of the Executive Head in Inter-Governmental Organisations –

In Search of Agency: The Cases of the UNECE and the OECD

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Abstract

This thesis seeks new insight into the role of the executive heads of inter-governmental organisations, particularly the nexus of the relationships with the political world of member states, non-member states, and other multilateral actors, and the inward one towards the more bureaucratically inclined secretariat. I am also interested in how the role of the executive head is organised, through cabinets with responsibilities split between individuals, and how the work is practically carried out.

International relations scholar Robert W. Cox's[1] 1969 essay on executive leadership in international organisations suggests that: 'The quality of executive leadership may prove to be the most critical single determinant of international organizations' growth in scope and authority'.[2]

It is critically important to distinguish between the role of the executive head and the individual undertaking it. Therefore, the intent of this study is not to add to the body of literature on leadership or to investigate personality cults, but to shed new light on the functional aspects of the political and operational role of the executive head. I will address 'the possibility that the executive head may be the explanatory key to the emergence of a new kind of autonomous actor [international organisation] in the international system'. [3]

The thesis will propose a role-centric analytic framework codifying the tenets of dynamic agency of the executive heads within the structures of inter-governmental organisations. This is based on learnings from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), addressing the question of the importance and influence of the executive head.

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[1] Robert W. Cox was an eminent proponent of the English School of international relations, see Buzan, Barry, 'An Introduction to the English School of International Relations: the Societal Approach', *Polity*, Cambridge 2014. His academic engagement with and views on international organisations has most definitely been impacted by his tenure as the first research director (1948-1972) at the International Labour Organizations (ILO), see Leysens, Anthony, *The Critical Theory of Robert W. Cox - Fugitive or Guru?*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 12.
[2] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23 (02), pp. 205-230, 1969, p. 205.
[3] Idem, p. 206.

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1. Introduction to the Role of the Executive Head

1.1   Rationale

Why Study the Role of the Executive Head in Inter-Governmental Organisations?

Any entry into the world of international organisations, which in this thesis is narrowed down to the subset of inter-governmental organisations,[4] will involve the individual who has been appointed to lead and also to manage the organisation. Sometimes the personality of the appointed individual blots out the finer details in the workings of the inter-governmental organisations they are leading. Therefore, the role itself is important: the holders of the role will have their personal tastes, perception, and interpretation of the role, its opportunities, limitations, and boundaries, as well as their own, and their teams' abilities to implement. However, separating the person from the role is necessary if the inner workings of an inter-governmental organisation are to be understood. Hence, this approach is not person-centric, but it explores the structures of inter-governmental organisations and investigates the role of the executive head, its agency and dynamic interplay with these structures. Cox's comment that 'The possibility that the executive head may be the explanatory key to the emergence of a new kind of autonomous actor [international organisation] in the international system'[5] is the rationale for this study of the role of the executive head in inter-governmental organisations.

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[4] Inter-Governmental Organisations defined as an international organisation, where the parties to its decision-making governing bodies are solely composed by sovereign states. See: Pease, Kelly-Kate S., *International Organizations*, Longman, Boston 2012, p. 2, and Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 39, pp. 595-609, in Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 596. Building on a United Nations study of the concept of international organisations, the aim and restriction of the thesis is ultimately that 'as in any scientific inquiry, ,.. to understand the phenomenon as a whole, i.e. in its broadest sense, it is only by studying international organizations as specific entities or institutions that we can progressively come to an overall view of the institutional framework which moulds international relations in general. This is in its narrowest sense that the term "international organizations" is used' Abi-Saab, Georges (ed.), *The concept of international organization*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), Paris, 1981, p. 9

[5] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization ', *International Organization* 23 (02), pp. 205-230, 1969, p. 206

1.2   Defining the Role and the Limits of the Inquiry

Much has been said about inter-governmental organisations and their role and placement within what can broadly be called global governance. Less has been said about the mechanics with which the substance and mandates of inter-governmental organisations link the political actors of and in countries and world forums. The scope of the thesis is not to add the vast body of leadership literature or to investigate various cults of personality, but to shed new light on the functional aspects of the political and operational role of the executive head. Therefore, the critical question to be addressed is whether the role of the executive head is all just about leadership:

Is it all just about leadership?

To answer this question a reasonable definition of leadership must be established. Nannerl O. Keohane invites the reader to think of leadership 'Like pornography for Justice Potter Stewart ... "we know it when we see it"'.[6] Needless to say, leadership is an elusive matter and is may be easier to notice when absent. Keohane arrives at the following definition of leadership:[7] 'Leaders determine or clarify goals for a group of individuals and bring together the energies of members of that group to accomplish those goals'.

There are different definitions of leadership, but the level of power or agency of leaders often remains undefined and undescribed,[8] as does a recognition of the structure facing the leader and the surrounding information levels. This is also the conclusion Keohane reaches, namely that:

> the leader must often play by the rules that have structured power holding… [there are] good reasons why those rules have emerged and been built into the structures we call organizations and institutions; there is no advantage to be gained and much to be lost in ignoring or disrupting them entirely.[9]

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[6] Keohane, Nannerl O., *Thinking about Leadership*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2010, p. 2.
[7] Idem, p. 23.
[8] Nye, Joseph S., *The Power to Lead*, Oxford University Press, New York 2008.
[9] Keohane, Nannerl O., *Thinking about Leadership*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2010, p. 235-236.

This is illustrated by the delicate situation the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat would be in 'If he and the Commonwealth try to accomplish more than the fragile bonds linking its heterogenous membership will bear, the whole enterprise may collapse'.[10] This is what has been termed the tightrope of inter-governmental organisation leadership.[11]

Beyond leadership, the question remains as to how the attributes of an executive head can be described adequately in their implementation through the executive head's agency and the set structural limitations. The three main attributes or traits of the executive head are as diplomats, politicians, and bureaucratic leaders.[12] The diplomatic role touches on personal, summit, crisis, conference, and public diplomacy, and can it that sense be very broad.[13] The structure and resources of the organisation have an impact on which forms of diplomacy the executive head can most effectively engage. The political role where they must be able to work with member states with diverse interests which are jealously protecting their sovereignty, and persuade them to support multilateral actions and to achieve common goals. The bureaucratic role where they need to develop for their agency a sense of mission and of purpose; be able to mobilize and manage international civil servants coming from multiple countries, with multiple cultures, education backgrounds, expertise and skills[14]. Only through a more granular understanding of agency and structure and their interrelationship, is it possible to understand the full range of possibilities for executive leadership as related to the three attributes.

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[10] Doxey, Margaret, 'The Commonwealth Secretary-General: Limits of Leadership', *International Affairs* 55 (1), 1979, p. 78.

[11] Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 13 in Kane, John, Patapan, Haig, 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *Dispersed Democratic Leadership: Origins, Dynamics, and Implications*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009.

[12] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders*, Routledge, New York, 2015, p. 11. This expands on Inis L. Claude's view of a dual role of staff and of executive, 'with the secretary-general [of the League of Nations] serving as chief bureaucrat and prime minister*"*, and follows that 'The special difficulties of the international civil service also derive in part from a kind of institutional loneliness. A national bureaucracy fits comfortably into a government context… . The international secretariat, by its very uniqueness as a government-like institution on the international level, is condemned to function in something uncomfortably like an institutional vacuum." See: Claude, Inis L., *Swords into Plowshares - the Problems and Progress of International Organization*, Random House, New York 1984, p. 192.

[13] Holmes, Alison R., with Rofe, J. Simon, *Global Diplomacy: Theories, Types, and Models*, Westview Press. 2016.

[14] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 56.

The role of the executive head as organised through cabinets or through split responsibilities between individuals or other bespoke arrangements, aims at providing the essential link between organisational bureaucracy on the one hand and the political level on the other, and vice versa, being placed in their nexus. This endeavour may succeed, be indifferent or fail due to the change of relevance to the organisation during the tenure, or the real and perceived effectiveness of operations. 'The hero-in-history model in the context of world politics focuses exclusively on the personality of leaders'[15] is usually a man. What is unhelpful about a generalised person-centric leadership approach is that this easily becomes a stumbling block to insights. Even if so-called great men do exist[16] and do wield their influence and power, the aim of this study is different. Reinalda and Verbeek define a set of limiting, structural factors, which determine the ability to exercise the role of executive head successfully:

> a) the room for manoeuvre allowed to IOs by their member states, whether formally or informally; b) the extent to which the image of neutral and impartial player can be maintained; c) the specific phase in the policy cycle on which IOs seek to make an impact; and d) the specific traits of individuals occupying consequential positions within IOs.[17]

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[15] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan, *Leadership of International Organizations*, Chapter 39, pp. 595-609, in Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 595. See also Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, the State and War*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1959 for a presentation of the image of the 'Great Men' of classic realism, as suggested in Williams, Andrew, 'History and International Relations' in James, Patrick (ed.), *Oxford Bibliographies in International Relations*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2017. The Second United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold told the Security Council at their 751st meeting on 31 October 1956 (UN Security Council Official Records, Eleventh Year, 751st Meeting, 31 October 1956): 'The principles of the Charter are, by far, greater than the Organization in which they are embodied, and the aims which they are to safeguard are holier than the policies of any single nation or people. As a servant of the Organization, the Secretary-General has the duty to maintain his usefulness by avoiding public stands on conflicts between Member States unless and until such an action might help to resolve the conflict. However, the discretion and impartiality required of the Secretary-General may not degenerate into a policy of expedience. He must also be a servant of the principles of the [UN] Charter, and its aim must ultimately determine what for him is right and wrong. For that he must stand.' As a 'Great Man' he also knew and recognised the structural limitations of his role and that of member states.
[16] Byman, Daniel J., Pollack, Kenneth M., 'Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesmen Back In', *International Security* 25, pp. 107-146, 2001.
[17] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 39, pp. 595-609, in Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 596.

In equating the specific traits with the above-mentioned three main traits, a picture emerges of a role engaging with both formal and informal structures in a temporal arrangement.

It is worth keeping in the mind that the tenure of an executive head is preceded by an earlier part of the incumbents' career, and the tenure is in turn the stepping stone to the next stage of his or her career. Limiting the time horizon with respect to individual interests to the tenure in the inter-governmental organisation in question will limit the understanding of the dynamics at play. Self-interest and self-sacrifice are the outer limits of possible actions for the incumbent during tenure.[18] The general mainstay is an inert focus on self-interest, a lack of temporal horizon, and an examination of alternatives.[19] In the words of the first United Nations Secretary-General, Trygve Lie: '[I am] spokesman for a world interest overriding any national interest in the council of the nations'.[20]

The thesis will therefore investigate the temporal aspect of agency and its relation to structure, to process or operations, and on the ex-ante (self)perception of agency versus the observed execution ex-post on agency for the incumbent in the role as executive head. The following literature review has a historical element to it and begins with Robert Cox's paper entitled *The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization,* published in 1969 and the first such focused paper. Cox was in turn building directly on Haas' work *Beyond the Nation-State*, where the supposition of inter-governmental organisations' possible autonomy was first seen in the context of organisational dynamics.[21] The literature review will map the prevalence of views of agency and structure and their interrelation starting from the notion that up until 1991 'it is probably fair to say that two major traditions have dominated the international relations

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[18] Fierke, Karin M., *Political Self-Sacrifice: Agency, Body and Emotion in International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 56.
[19] Sen, Amartya K., 'Rational fools: a critique of the behavioral foundations of economic theory', p. 29 in Mansbridge, Jane (ed.), *Beyond Self-Interest*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1990.
[20] Claude, Inis L., *Swords into Plowshares - the Problems and Progress of International Organization*, Random House, New York 1984, p. 173.
[21] Haas analysed the ILO, where Cox worked. See: Haas, Ernst B., *Beyond the Nation-State – Functionalism and International Organization*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1964, p. 93. Cox writes in his autobiography: 'My thinking about the politics of international organization was formed in the milieu of contemporary American political science. Through Harold Jacobson I knew the members of the Committee on International Organizations of the SSRC, in particular Inis Claude and Ernst Haas. I had many discussions with Ernst Haas when he was researching in Geneva'. See: Cox, Robert W, *Universal Foreigner – The Individual and the World*, World Scientific, New Jersey, 2013, p. 222.

literature on international organizations',[22]namely international institutionalists and realists, particularly the latter. The level of importance and perception of agency in the literature on international relations has developed over time, and 'constructivism' has recently been the strand promoting the studies on international organisations and thereby inter-governmental organisations. A noteworthy trend has been for this discourse to have a direct effect on the study of international relations in the effectiveness of, and thereby importance placed on the executive head in inter-governmental organisations. Therefore, I will seek to untangle the conflation of agency with structure and the directly-related effectiveness and relevance on bureaucratic and political levels by drawing on literature from the spectrum of constructivist international relations.

The inquiry into the literature and its focus are primarily to establish what the relevant scholars have to say about agency as it relates to inter-governmental organisations, and in particular to the executive head through the following three inquiry lines:

1. Agency versus structure: the weight of either and their inter-relation;
2. (Self-) perception versus execution: the time aspect, evolution, and relation to process or operations;
3. Observations on the structure of inter-governmental organisations and the interrelations within them.

Regarding the latter, this includes the elements they observe, the relations between the elements, and their relative importance.

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[22] Dillon, P., Ilgen, Thomas L., Willett, Thomas D., 'Approaches to the Study if International Organizations: Major Paradigms in Economics and Political Science', Chapter 6, pp. 79-99 in Vaubel, Roland, Willet, Thomas D., *The Political Economy of International Organizations*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1991, p. 83.

1.3 Literature Review

The main aim of the literature review is to place the works in the context of how they contribute to an understanding of the subject of the thesis. The three inquiry lines are therefore meant as the focus and end point of a funnel that will lead to the literature of interest and relevance, to an understanding of their inter-relation, and identify gaps in the literature.[23]

The literature review opens with a juxtaposition of international relations views of inter-governmental organisations and their place in the world. This follows with the inner workings of inter-governmental organisations, and places the thesis within the existing literature. The selected authors have made significant contributions and represent a diverse and acknowledged set of views from the different strands of international relations scholarship. The selection is not an attempt to be 'definitive, but rather it is illustrative of the diversity of opinion encompassing a liberal internationalist perspective inspired by functionalism over institutionalism to liberalism, and from a more legally driven view to realism and constructivism. [24] When summing up past work and charting the possible future of international relations theory at the end of the Cold War, John Gaddis[25] – seemingly shocked by the real life events of the collapse of the Communist bloc – pointed to the future approaches as either structural or behavioural. The structural one did not lead very far, while the behavioural approach was overtaken by the constructivist approach that not only co-opts ideas, but also attempts to put ideas back into international relations.[26]

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[23] Booth, A., Sutton, A., Papaioannou, D., *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review*, Sage, London, 2012.

[24] Knopf, Jeffrey W., 'Doing a Literature Review', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 39 (1), pp. 127-132, 2006.

[25] Gaddis, John Lewis, 'International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War', *International Security*, 17 (3), pp. 5-58, 1992. Gaddis builds further on this in: Gaddis, John Lewis, 'History, Theory, Common Ground', *International Security* 22(1), pp. 75-85. 1997.

[26] See: Wendt, Alexander E., 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory', *International Organization* 41, 3, pp. 335-370, 1987; and Wendt, Alexander, 'Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46 (2), 1992, pp. 391-425.

1.3.1 Inter-governmental organizations: realist versus institutionalist in constructivist light

Realist theory may be traced back to Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes.[27] In this study of inter-governmental organisations and at a time when these kinds of organisation do exist nominally, I start with classic realism, in particular the state-centred theory of Edward H. Carr[28] and Hans Morgenthau.[29] There is very little room for anything above state level. Michael Howard talks about the 'invention of peace'[30] and Kenneth N. Waltz that the 'wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them'.[31] The medieval version of classic realism leaves very little space for a conversation about inter-governmental organisations. Evolving into neo-realism, nation states are still the main actors engaged in maximising their own capabilities and autonomy to secure survival.[32] What is missing is a 'clear attitude to the conscious use of history to shed light on broader historical patterns and thereby produce a firmer understanding of national interest, cultural attitudes and decision-making [that] was largely missing'.[33] Neo-realists may see inter-governmental organisations as instruments of powerful states, meaning that at least there can be a conversation.[34] However, what makes realism less useful in the study of inter-governmental organisations is Alexander Wendt's[35] demonstration that anarchic orders function very differently, depending on which level of threat actors relate to or perceive other actors to have.[36]

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[27] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 14. See as well: Pease, Kelly-Kate S., *International Organizations,* Longman, Boston 2012, p. 44-47.

[28] Carr, Edward H., *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1939.

[29] Morgenthau, Hans, *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1948.

[30] Howard, Michael, *The Invention of Peace and the Reinvention of War*, Profile Books, London 2002.

[31] Waltz, Kenneth N., *Man, the State and War*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1959, p. 232.

[32] Waltz, Kenneth N., *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, 1979, pp. 79-101.

[33] Williams, Andrew, Hadfield, Amelia, Rofe, Simon, *International History and International Relations*, Routledge, London, 2012, p. 1.

[34] Krasner, Stephen D. (ed.), *International Regimes*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1983; Krasner, Stephen D., 'Global Communications and National Power. Life on the Pareto Frontier', *World Politics*, 43 (3), 1991, Krasner, Stephen D., *Sovereignty – Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1999.

[35] See Chapter 6 of Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 246-312.

[36] Burchill, Scott & Linklater, Andrew *Theories of International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 45

On the institutionalist side, the strains of neo-functionalism and interdependence do matter to the discourse at hand. The former builds on Haas[37] and the experience and process of European integration, where inter-governmental organisation is the catalyst for a forward-looking dynamic process, which at European and later at global levels has created a much higher level of interdependence.[38] The theoretical interdependence approach focused mostly on what multinational or transnational companies did to relations between states, and how these new dynamics gave rise to new international and inter-governmental organisations. Nye and Keohane's original 1977 work[39] is, however, cognisant of the relative power between states and the implication for the creation of inter-governmental organisations, which plays out in issue-specific terms: 'Their effectiveness has varied from issue-area to issue-area and from time to time. … specific groups of countries such as those in the…Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have developed regimes that affect several aspects of their countries' relationship with each other'.[40]

In the (liberal) institutionalist category, Ikenberry's 2020 work[41] centres around the crisis of the (American) global order, and predominantly how the United States can influence inter-governmental organisations to further the liberal democratic[42] path of the world. As history did not end, but rather diverged, Ikenberry calls on Ruggie's institutional ideas of an 'architectural form' of international organisation that coordinates relations among a group of states 'on the basis of generalized principles of conduct'.[43] A good example of such an architecture is the OECD. Ikenberry agrees with Ruggie that a system of rules

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[37] Haas, Ernst B., *Beyond the Nation-State – Functionalism and International Organization*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1964.
[38] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 17.
[39] Keohane, Robert O., Nye, Joseph S., *Power and Interdependence*, Longman, Boston 2011. First edition from 1977.
[40] Idem, p. 17.
[41] Ikenberry, John G., *A World Safe for Democracy – Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2020, p. 35
[42] Previously the front cover of any USAID grant contract came with the stamp: 'Supporting American Interest', now it is 'from the American People'.
[43] Ruggie, John Gerard, 'Multilateralism: the Anatomy of an Institution', *International Organization* 46(3), pp. 561-598. 1992, p. 572. For a precursor of Ruggie's thought see: Ruggie, John Gerard, 'International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order*', International Organization* 36(2), pp. 379-415. 1982. For how to eventual enact this new world polity, see: Ruggie, John Gerard, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalisation*, Routledge, London 2002. A precursor for Ikenberry's 2020 work is Ikenberry, John G., Knock, Thomas J., Slaughter, Anne-Marie, Smith, Tony, *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy*, Princeton University Press, 2008, where institutionalism and interventionism is brought to the fore.

and institutions embodied as an inter-government organisation will have an attraction for states seeking status and legitimacy.[44] However, this does not work in the absence of a hegemon, and what will follow is therefore the distinctive ordering imperatives which follow the logic of a liberal hegemonic order.[45]

Neo-institutionalism,[46] or neo-liberal institutionalism, provides an explanation as to why states prefer to cooperate within the framework of inter-governmental organisations rather than through informal ad hoc arrangements. This theory provides routes for understanding legalisation and institutional design.[47]

Of the former the question is: Would the work inter-governmental organisations do be possible without securing the legal element and supranational power of enforcement? Slaughter establishes a frame in the article 'The Real New World Order' (1997)[48] to concretise the concept of legalisation with the proposed term 'transgovernmentalism', which it claims best fits the purpose. Placing 'transgovernmentalism' as a mid-point between a liberal internationalism and new medievalism[49] makes the point elitist and without what I would call classical liberal legitimacy. Interconnectedness and global elitist norms and interest are real and should be considered, but they cannot be building blocks in the multilateral sphere in the way Slaughter presents them. . 'Globe-spanning networks will strengthen... [only a certain part of] the state in the international system '[50]. The networks are transnational and industry specific, e.g. the judiciary, and they leave out the multilateral element. The notion that inter-governmental organisations cannot be brokers in a networked world is false. The idea that national elites would reach out and shape each other's ideas through a networked peer approach without any established

[44] Ikenberry, John G., *A World Safe for Democracy – Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2020, p. 36

[45] Idem, p. 188-189.

[46] Building in particular on: Keohane, Robert O., *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984.

[47] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 19; Pease, Kelly-Kate S., *International Organizations,* Longman, Boston 2012, p. 69-72; Karns, Margaret P., Mingst, Karen A., International Organizations – The Politics and Processes of Global Governance, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London 2010, p. 47-49.

[48] Slaughter, Anne-Marie, 'The Real New World Order', *Foreign Affairs* 76 (5), pp. 183-197, 1997. For further discourse and expansion on the legalization of cooperation, see: Abbott, Kenneth W., Keohane, Robert O., Moravcsik, Andrew, Slaughter, Anne-Marie, Snidal, Duncan, 'The Concept of Legalization', *International Organization* Vol. 54, issue 03, pp. 401-419. 2003.

[49] Which is understood as a return to a time before the nation state.

[50] Slaughter, Anne-Marie, 'The Real New World Order', *Foreign Affairs* 76 (5), pp. 183-197, 1997, p. 196.

mechanism is a novel one. Slaughter ends with a tautology: 'Transgovernmentalism offers answers to the most important challenges facing advanced industrial countries: loss of regulatory power with economic globalization, perceptions of a "democratic deficit" as international institutions step in'.[51] According to Slaughter, economic globalisation, i.e. global capitalism, has some side-effects and thereby following regulatory issues. Suggesting inter-governmental organisations are causing the problem without including, capitalism in the discourse is too simplistic. Slaughter does concede that a natural place for this to take place would be the OECD rather than in hidden bilateral conversations. Like the neo-realists, Slaughter questions the use of inter-governmental organisations, but does see a need for them. Slaughter's world is one without inter-governmental organisations, with leaders of relevance, nations inhabited by national champions brought together by faceless international civil servant without an agenda or a right to one.[52] The question of the capacity of national champions to do so across the board is left unanswered.

Koremos et. al. (2001) [53] engage with the topic of institutional design and explain why 'major institutions are organized in radically different ways. Some are global, essentially open to all states; others are regional, with restricted memberships'.[54] They propose five key dimensions of institutional design[55]: i) Membership rules; ii) Scope of issues covered; iii) Centralisation of tasks; iv) Rules for controlling the institution; v) Flexibility of arrangements. For this thesis the internal governance dimension of iv) and v) are clearly relevant as they drive the structure facing the executive head. Less focused on the design features, the principal-agent theory proposed by Vaubel (2005)[56] and Hawkins et al. (2006),[57] among others, sees inter-governmental organisations from the point of view of

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[51] Idem, p. 197.
[52] Slaughter seems to have taken the consequence of this world view when joining the New America Foundation, see: https://www.newamerica.org/our-people/anne-marie-slaughter/ <accessed 24 March 2022>
[53] Koremos, Barbara, Lipson, Charles, Snidal, Duncan, 'The Rational Design of International Institutions', *International Organization* 55(4), pp. 761-799. 2001.
[54] Idem, p. 761. Further on the difference and span of institutions in Koremos et. al., p. 761-762: 'Some [institutions] are global, essentially open to all states; others are regional, with restricted memberships. Some institutions give each state an equal vote, whereas others have weighted voting and sometimes require supermajorities. Institutions may have relatively strong central authorities and significant operating responsibilities or be little more than forums for consultation.'
[55] Idem, p. 763.
[56] Vaubel, Roland, 'Principal-Agent Problems in International Organizations', *The Review of International Organizations* 1, pp. 125-138, 2006.
[57] Hawkins, Darren G., Lake, David A., Nielson, Daniel L., Tierney, Michael J. (eds.), Delegation and Agency in International Organizations, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006.

member states' delegations to the organisations' secretariats. This accords varying degrees of authority and autonomy to the secretariat, with an impact on the structure and the formal agency handed to the executive head as the leader of the secretariat. These will be expanded in Chapter 2.

Wendt's article[58] (1987) addresses this question in his contribution to the agency-structure discussion in international relations. His critique of neorealism and world-system theory points to the issues identified above. He sees the problems as the lack of 'a self-evident way to conceptualize these entities [agents and structures] and their relationship.'[59] According to Wendt, neorealists end up in a blind alley in this regard as 'system structures cannot generate agents if they are reduced to the properties of agents in the first place.'[60] This is the danger of making leadership the centrepiece of any theory on the role of the executive head, where the executive head ends up being the explanatory variable that will answer all questions.. The reductionist view of agents in neorealism makes explicit theorising about them 'ontologically primitive.'[61] In world-system theory the unit of analysis is the system as whole, a holism that prevents agents from being anything but passengers reproducing the requirements of the world-system. 'The principal weakness of a structuralist solution to the agent-structure problem is that ... it cannot explain anything but behavioural conformity to structural demands.'[62] Wendt goes on to propose his structuration theory[63] as follows: 'theories of international relations must have foundations in theories of both their principal units of analysis (… agents and … structures)'. In practical terms this means 'the use of structural analysis to theorize the conditions of existence of state agents, and the use of historical analysis to explain the genesis and reproduction of social structure.'[64] In the case of the executive head, this can be projected straight onto the inter-governmental organisation and its stakeholders.

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[58] The article is the first step of the journey of the Wendtian constructivism, that would find its 'highest' form in the 1999 book 'Social Theory of International Politics'. Heavily inspired by Anthony Giddens, Wendt used Kenneth Waltz's theory of neorealism as the foil for his own constructivism, see: Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders*, Routledge, New York, 2015, p. 218.
[59] Wendt, Alexander E., 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory', *International Organization* 41, 3, pp. 335-370, 1987, p. 338.
[60] Idem, p. 342.
[61] Idem, p. 344.
[62] Idem, p. 347.
[63] Later: constructivism, see footnote 58.
[64] Wendt, Alexander E., 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory', *International Organization* 41, 3, pp. 335-370, 1987, p. 365.

Wendt offers a deep insight into the problematics of agency versus structure and the inter-relation between the two. He does not however seem too concerned as to which end of the stick he is starting from. In his article, where the agents are the states, Wendt could also have discussed what happens when a new state arises. Decolonisation, the breakup of the state as a result of armed internal conflict or referenda, are situations in which the structural set is changed and agency is realigned. What happens at the birth of a nation or organisation determines both structure and the inwardly and outwardly projected agency. The initial conditions plot the trajectory unless these are interrupted by conflict.

Most (neo-)realist positions can be condensed in John Mearsheimer's classic 1995 article, the 'False Promise of International Institutions' which 'maintain that institutions are basically a reflection of the distribution of power in the world.'[65] Mearsheimer continues: 'They [institutions] are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behaviour.'[66] If the latter had been qualified as 'great state behavior' it could have held up, but one IMF[67] or European Central Bank conditional state bailout is enough to empirically counter this rather inflated statement. As Wendt suggested, (neo-)realism reduces agents to a primitive state, which reduces theorising to the basic*: 'Daily life is essentially a struggle for power, where each state [agent] strives not only to be the most powerful actor in the system [organisation (structure)], but also to ensure that no other state [agent] achieves that lofty position'.[68] In other words: it's a *hustle*. Projecting this crude view of agent-structure onto this inquiry proves Wendt's point, even if the executive head in this case would not be too unlike the one described by Cox (1969), except that the sophistication of the agent ontology is much lower. One point from Mearsheimer I would like to raise is the question of the relevance and relativity of institutions and their study. In the myriad of inter-governmental organisations not all are equally relevant and some, even if loaded with the most important policy issue, will still struggle in this regard.

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[65] Mearsheimer, John J., 'The False promise of International Institutions', *International Security* 19 (3), pp. 5-49, 1994, p. 7.
[66] Idem, p. 7.
[67] International Monetary Fund
[68] Mearsheimer, John J., 'The False promise of International Institutions', *International Security* 19 (3), pp. 5-49, 1994, p. 9.

Thomas Weiss had by 2014[69] rejected the myths surrounding inter-governmental organisations, 'realist lament' (in particular Mearsheimer's), and offered a firm push back. His points are that not only states wield power, that global incentives do work, and that supranational organisations do exist and do work. 'No matter how muscular the inputs from formal and informal networks... no matter how much goodwill from individuals and governments, we cannot continue to ignore and rationalize the absence of overarching authority'.[70] Despite the views of H. G. Wells[71], in a realistic scenario this 'authority' is already taking shape in the form of norms and standards.[72] There is a choice to be made for states to stand outside, as did the Communist Bloc during the Cold War, or be an integral part of the liberal (democratic) bloc. In this scenario inter-governmental organisations are essential to govern these norms and standards. Mearsheimer (2018)[73] doubles down on these ideas, especially as they – as Ikenberry believes – only can be seen as a proponent for the liberal hegemony, which he sees as the direct source of trouble, i.e. war. Inter-governmental organisations are only ever as good as their member states' intentions towards them. If used in an expansionist fashion by a hegemon, this will lower the interest of other large countries towards this organisation unless all countries belong to the liberal (democratic) bloc. Inter-governmental organisations can be useful, but not to consolidate hegemony in a diffusing world or to establish a world government, a move towards what Rosenau would call 'fragmegration'.[74] An inter-governmental organisation will have to operate within these two extremes if it has a heterogeneous membership and is to be effective. Relevant in this context is Robert W. Cox's embrace of critical theory,[75]

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[69] Weiss, Thomas G., *Governing the World – Addressing "Problems without Passports"*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, 2014. See also: Weiss, Thomas G., *Global Governance - Why? What? Whither?*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2013; Weiss, Thomas G., 'Good Governance and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges', *Third World Quarterly* 21(5), pp. 795-814. 2000; Weiss, Thomas G., Wilkinson, Rorden (a), *International Organization and Global Governance,* Routledge, London 2014; and Weiss, Thomas G., Wilkinson, Rorden (b), 'Global Governance to the Rescue: Saving International Relations?, *Global Governance* 20, pp. 19-36. 2014.

[70] Weiss, Thomas G., *Governing the World – Addressing "Problems without Passports",* Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, 2014, p. 101.

[71] Wells, H. G., *Shape of Things to Come*, Hutchinson, London, 1933.

[72] A good example is the OECD Pillar two model for minimum taxation of multinational enterprises, see: https://www.oecd.org/tax/beps/oecd-releases-pillar-two-model-rules-for-domestic-implementation-of-15-percent-global-minimum-tax.htm <accessed 3 April>

[73] Mearsheimer, John J*., The Great Delusion – Liberal Dreams and International Realities*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2018, pp.152-156.

[74] Rosenau, James N., 'Fragmegrative' challenges to national security', pp. 65-82, in Hens, Teddy (ed.), *Understanding US Strategy: A Reader,* National Defense University, Washington DC, 1983.

[75] For Robert W. Cox academic journey from 'The International Labour Organisation phase' to Critical Theory and 'The dynamics of historical structures', see Leysens, Anthony, *The Critical Theory of Robert W. Cox - Fugitive or Guru?,* Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, pp. 13-49.

to consider a historical structure or process where ideas, institutions and material capabilities interact over time in reciprocal relationships;[76] otherwise an inter-governmental organisation would just be a deterministic constructive with a time stamp.

The theory of social constructivism stresses the presence of a consensus of norms and values as needed to establish international institutions in general, and inter-governmental organisations in particular.[77] States are social actors that not only pursue 'interest', but also ask what ideals, values and norms are expected and pursued in the setting. Importantly, inter-governmental organisations 'may shape the action of states depending on the configuration of their interest, but they can also, through the values and norms embedded in them, influence the interests and identities of states and thus, ultimately, the structure of the international system'.[78] If inter-governmental organisations are shaped in this way, they and their secretariats would also, 'constructively', be able themselves to promote these respective values and norms to member states and other stakeholders acting as 'teachers of norms'.[79] However, like transnational civil society, unattainably ambitious objectives should be tempered to manage the expectations of inter-governmental organisations' actual capabilities[80] or pathologies.

Most subfields have defining articles that open a new pathway for research. Barnet and Finnemore's article was one such. Their classic article 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations' (1999)[81] takes a new view of international organisations and thereby inter-governmental organisations, heavily influenced by Wendt, but by no means a regurgitation of his work. Unlike realists and liberalists, they

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[76] Cox, Robert W., Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory, *Millennium – Journal of International Studie*s 10(2), pp. 126-155. 1981, p. 135-136. See also: Cox, Robert W., 'Multilateralism and World Order', *Review of International Studies*, 18 (2), pp. 161-180, 1992.
[77] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 23; Pease, Kelly-Kate S., *International Organizations,* Longman, Boston 2012, p. 107; Karns, Margaret P., Mingst, Karen A., *International Organizations – The Politics and Processes of Global Governance*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London 2010, p. 59-60.
[78] Wendt, Alexander, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999. See also: Wendt, Alexander, 'Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46 (2), 1992, pp. 391-425.
[79] Finnemore, Martha, 'International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization', *International Organization*, 47 (4), pp. 565-598, 1993
[80] Davies, Thomas R., 'The Rise and Fall of Transnational Civil Society: The Evolution of International Non-Governmental Organizations since 1839', *Working Paper City University of London*, 2008, p. 15.
[81] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations', *International Organization*, 53 (4), pp. 699-732. 1999.

start their inquiry from the international organisation and its sociological foundations. In doing so the '...scrutiny would reveal that many IOs stray from their efficiency goals... and that many IOs exercise power autonomously in way unintended and unanticipated by states at their creation'.[82] Barnet and Finnemore hereby offer a new insight into the power of the inter-governmental organisation and its source: firstly, the legitimacy of the rational-legal authority they embody as bureaucracies;[83] and secondly, their control over technical expertise and information.[84] The former is Barnet and Finnemore's contribution; by viewing inter-governmental organisations as deriving their legitimacy first and foremost from their bureaucratic nature means that in effect they can be autonomous actors. The power is then wielded from their culturally constructed status in three ways: '... IOs (i) classify the world, creating categories of actors and action; (ii) fix meanings in the social worlds; and (iii) articulate and diffuse new norms, principles, and actors around the globe.' [85]

Barnet and Finnemore's (1999) sociological approach to international organisations, describing them as Weberian bureaucracies, brings with it the uncovering of inherent pathologies, according to them, which went undetected when applying economically driven international relations theory. The five features identified that might produce pathology are: 1) Irrationality of rationalisation, 2) Bureaucratic universalism, 3) Normalisation of deviance, 4) Insulation, and 5) Cultural contestation.[86] The result and potential impact of the pathologies will be further explored in Chapter 2.

Unfortunately, this hard definition of the inter-governmental organisation as a bureaucracy does not offer a symbiotic relationship with the external world as the bureaucracy is self-conceived from the perspective of authority and legitimacy. The bureaucracy as a starting point for the argument is valid, even if it is hard to see how it can become more than a zero-sum game because of its own insulation, much like the other end of the international relations theory spectrum where (neo-)realism sits. The link to

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[82] Idem, p. 699.
[83] See also: Hurd, Ian *International Organizations – Politics, Law, Practise,* Cambridge University Press, 2014.
[84] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations', *International Organization* 53 (4), pp. 699-732. 1999, p. 707.
[85] Idem, p. 710.
[86] Idem, pp. 715-724.

the outer world, so to speak, comes through an understanding of the inter-governmental organisation as a dual political and bureaucratic entity.

1.3.2   *Inside the inter-governmental organisation with the executive head*

In his *Swords into Plowshares*[87] (1956) Inis L. Claude, a realist with an open mind[88], outlines and discusses international organisation as historical process. This saw secretariats emerge from what used to be conferences, thereby institutionalising international organisation[89] in the quest to solve what Claude, in a state-dominated environment, saw as the need for: i) efficient administration, ii) allegiance and iii) political initiative.

With the 'Black Box' of inter-governmental organisations opened for inspection and legitimised by Claude from a needs perspective, and classified by Barnet and Finnemore as international bureaucracies, I will try to move beyond the zero-sum game and hence return to Robert W. Cox. He was an international civil servant with the ILO at the time of publishing his first academic article in 1969[90] dealing with leaders of international organisations, which starts: 'The quality of executive leadership may prove to be the most critical single determinant of the growth in scope and authority of international organization'.[91] This established the primacy of agency rather than structure and critiques which in previous approaches focused on the legal-institutional, idiosyncratic (personality or leadership style), ethical-normative aspects of the role of executive head.[92] However,

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[87] Claude, Inis L., *Swords into Plowshares - the Problems and Progress of International Organization*, Random House, New York 1984, (4th ed.).
[88] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 39, pp. 595-609, in Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 598
[89] A late example of this would be the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). At the end of the Cold War, the Paris Summit of November 1990 set the CSCE on a new course. In the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the CSCE was called upon to play its part in managing the historic change taking place in Europe and responding to the new challenges of the post-Cold War period, which led to its acquiring permanent institutions and operational capabilities. As part of this institutionalisation process, the name was changed from the CSCE to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1994, see: https://www.osce.org/who/87 <accessed 3 April 2022>, see also: Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 35.
[90] Cox, Robert W, *Universal Foreigner – The Individual and the World*, World Scientific, New Jersey, 2013, p. 181.
[91] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23 (02), pp 205-230, 1969, p. 205.
[92] Idem, p. 207.

Cox speculates what could have become of the League of Nations had it had a different secretary-general[93], and goes on to concretise 'the possibility that the executive head may be the explanatory key to the emergence of a new kind of autonomous actor [international organization] in the international system'.[94] He goes even further, pointing to the possibility that as a result of executive head agency, inter-governmental organisations may be able to change the dynamics within the international system.

In gauging this agency Cox outlines the basic qualities that the executive head must possess: 'The basic personal qualification for effective leadership is clear perception of what actions and initiative the state of the international system at any time permits'.[95] Therefore a constant scanning and reading of the external environment is a necessity, as the executive head's 'perception will determine the balance between an [Executive Head's] role as a negotiator in "quiet diplomacy" and as a taker of personal political initiatives'.[96] Cox does not offer any solution to redress possible misreading and following actions in the time continuum. The questions remaining are whether the executive head can regain lost agency, and if there are situations where a comeback is impossible.

Structurally, Cox sees the executive head as distinctly apart from the rest of the organisation, and that the executive head has its main relationships with three other identified defining parts of the vertical boundaries of the organisation: i) the international bureaucracy, ii) the member states, and iii) the international system.[97] In particular, with respect to i), Cox goes further and identifies three modalities of interaction with the

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[93] Robert Cox has his reasons for pointing to the Executive Head: The motivation from his autobiography 'Universal Foreigner' : ".. encouraged by academic friends to write an essay on executive leadership in international organization .. It was well-received .. and .. published in the journal International Organization in November 1969 .. The article became something of a scandal in ILO circles. It was written as a dispassionate political analysis of the political potential of leadership in international organization .. It was to be a contribution towards a theory of international organization in world politics, examining the hypothesis that international organizations might become "actors" .. and not merely agencies .. and the idea that executive leadership might be a critical factor in giving these organizations a distinctive role and initiative. It gives a framework for analyzing the internal and external constraints (bureaucratic and world political) .. derived from my experience working with Morse' See: Cox, Robert W, *Universal Foreigner – The Individual and the World*, World Scientific, New Jersey, 2013, p. 182. Robert Cox was the inaugural Director of Research at the ILO. David Morse was Secretary-General of the ILO from 1948 to 1970.
[94] Idem, p. 206.
[95] Idem, p. 226.
[96] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization*', *International Organization* 23 (02), pp 205-230, 1969, p. 226.
[97] Idem, p. 214.

internal bureaucracy, namely: coercion or commanding, collaborative, and issue selective.[98] This broaches the subject of decision-making within the secretariat of inter-governmental organisations and the ways the executive head may enact them.

Robert Cox and Harald Jacobson (together with Gerard Curzon) dealt in great detail with the subject of decision-making in inter-governmental organisations in *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization* (1973).[99] Their 1977 article 'Decision-making' projects their study into power relations on the different levels of international organisation by analysing the decision processes of different categories of decisions within organisations.[100] In relation to this thesis' line of inquiry, power relations can be seen as a proxy for agency, to which the authors also clearly allude: 'Each decision-maker … carries in [his/her] consciousness a picture of prevailing power relations ... these images ... are initial determinants of the decision process'.[101] However, the authors remain silent on how this evolves over time. The decision-making processes observed followed either formal or informal paths, or a combination of the two.[102] The points are made through observing power relations as they relate to process, not structure, as the structure they try to capture is the one of power relations. This thesis pits agency with structure, but an important point arises here with respect to elasticity of term and interconnectivity.

The structure Cox and Jacobson see is relational. The actors taking part in the decision-making process are: '(a) representatives of national governments; (b) representatives of national and international private associations; (c) the executive heads of the organizations; (d) high officials and other members of the bureaucracy of each organization; (e) individuals who serve in their own capacity formally and informally as advisers; (f) representatives of other international organizations; and (g) employees of the

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[98] Idem, pp. 220-221.

[99] International Telecommunications Union (ITU), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Monetary Fund (IMF), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

[100] The decision categories are: Representational, symbolic, boundary, programmatic, rule-creating, rule-supervisory and operational, see: Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973, p. 117.

[101] Idem, p. 116.

[102] Idem, p. 118.

mass media.'[103] This broadens the stakeholder landscape compared to Cox's version (1969), but precisely where these actors sit from a structural and governance perspective is left vague. How (c) and (d) are defined boundary-wise is important when determining the vertical boundary of the secretariat of inter-governmental organisations. They do reach the conclusion (a realist one), that the more important, politically relevant, and sensitive areas of an organisation, the less autonomy it achieves.[104]

The executive head, high level officials and other members of the bureaucracy are all members of the international civil service. Thomas Weiss' 1982 article 'International Bureaucracy: Myth and Reality of the International Civil Service' takes a historical perspective back to the League of Nations to propose a new paradigm of the international civil service. Conventionally 'Each international official is expected to approach decision-making objectively, taking into account the opinions of all nations',[105] but issues arise when states try to sway outcomes using their own nationals. This structural conflict is the norm and is further exaggerated by the rule of thumb approximation that more financial contributions equal more staff.[106] The problem can be further deepened by some states control of citizens wanting to or already engaged in a career in international organisations. Over time the international administration has grown in size resulting in an increasing number of purely administrative problems.[107] Weiss's final proposal is that of tying recruitment and promotion to a commitment to internationalism.[108] Weiss is implicitly acknowledging that the international staff in the secretariats have agency, although this is limited and subject to influence. The structure can be read as a pie division from a financial and resource perspective. It is curious that Weiss' 1982 arguments, perhaps inadvertently, end up underpinning the neo-realist claim by recounting the reality of the international civil service.

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[103] Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973, p. 118
[104] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 39, pp. 595-609, in Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, Paul (eds.), "*The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*", Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 600.
[105] Weiss, Thomas G., 'International Bureaucracy: The Myth and Reality of the International Civil Service', *International Affairs* 58 (2), pp. 287-306, 1982, p. 288.
[106] Idem, p. 292.
[107] Idem, p. 300.
[108] Idem, p. 305.

Cox's seminal article provides an excellent starting point from which to drill down into aspects of the agency of the executive head. He points to the executive head's perception and reading of situations and opportunities, but also links it to the structure. All of which could impede or manipulate the executive head in adequately assessing it, and thereby misjudge the level of agency. Importantly, points on the informal and formal parts of structure are drawn, indicating that decision-making follows inter-twined paths, pointing to a dynamic interplay between agents and the structure they populate. The sticky point, from this inquiry's point of view, of whether agency can be regained or not, is better understood by taking Cox and Jacobson's view of structure as power relations. Their broadened view of stakeholders, compared to Cox's 1969 conception, gives more nuance to the operative part of the agency of the executive head. Michael Schechter (1987)[109] criticised this view for not focussing enough on the 'personal factors which are needed effectively to lead one organization may not be appropriate in another or in the same organization at different time'. The problem is that in the three inter-governmental organisations studied by Schechter (1987)[110], the executive heads may not have grasped the interplay of their agency and the organisation's structure, and thereby failed to express their personality fully. Weiss (1982)[111] in turn sees the agents as influenceable by the stakeholders; here the member states – and in particular the agent's member state – and structure being the invisible glue of internationalism. The question remains, from a time-continuum perspective: How do agency and structure evolve, separately and interconnectedly?

My main issue with the existing body of work on the role of the executive head is that it reduces the inter-governmental organisations, which are meant to lead, to either blunt (read: non-existent) or interest-driven instruments of member states or of (international) bureaucracies. Schroeder (2014)[112] arrives at the same conclusion: 'The empirics of IO studies frequently credit EHs [Executive Heads] with important changes, but these studies seldom consider EHs separate from the rest of the bureaucracy and thus makes [sic] few theoretical claims about them'. Schroeder develops his arguments along constructivist

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[109] Schechter, Michael G., 'Leadership in International Organizations: Systemic, Organizational and Personality Factors', *Review of International Studies*, 13 (3), pp. 197-220, 1987, p. 197.
[110] Idem.
[111] Weiss, Thomas G., 'International Bureaucracy: The Myth and Reality of the International Civil Service', *International Affairs* 58 (2), pp. 287-306, 1982.
[112] Schroeder, Michael Bluman, 'Executive Leadership in the Study of International Organization: A Framework for Analysis', *International Studies Review* 16, pp. 339-361, 2014.

lines but does not recognize the duality of the role: political versus bureaucratic. Hall and Woods' (2017)[113] promising article sits on the fence of a leadership (or rather management) or bureaucratic study, systematising the constraints of executive head implementation ability. The study follows the line of thought initiated by Cox and Jacobson[114] but does make the link to the political side of the spectrum and focus on the person, not the role. The Hall and Woods (2017)[115] study's focus on the managerial aspects of the daily life of an executive head framed from a leadership perspective through the analysis of the diverse types of constraints the executive head meets does little to codify the role as such and does not seek to understand their interrelations. The constraints listed are: i) legal-political, ii) resources, and iii) bureaucratic, all, in their own right, important and intrinsically interrelated. The article, however, does not capture the interlinkages and codified structure among these constraints, which again turns the suggested list of executive head action into a management action without greater refinement into perceived levels of agency, sequencing in actions, and their effect on other action item if implemented.[116] This thesis presents a codification of the role with the constraints as an embedded part of the structure the executive head meets. This will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

To sum up: The duality of the role of political versus bureaucratic, is imperative. The recognition that the executive head's role is in the nexus between the two cannot be explained by shouting from one camp to the other; it is important to have a foot in both camps.

1.4   Gaps

The study of the role of the executive head in inter-governmental organisations is not a crowded subfield of international relations, especially with regard to the main realist-dominated field where interest in inter-governmental organisation has often been met

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[113] Hall, Nina, Woods, Ngaire, 'Theorizing the Role of the Executive Head in International Organizations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2017.
[114] Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973.
[115] Hall, Nina, Woods, Ngaire, 'Theorizing the Role of the Executive Head in International Organizations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2017.
[116] Idem, p. 16.

with scepticism, 'if not contempt'[117]. Only after the emergence of studies based on constructivist approaches has any real progress been made since its inception, which we mark with Cox's 1969 article. Further, the limitations of bureaucracies and their organisation and structure are well studied in domestic and national settings but have 'been largely neglected'[118] in the study of inter-governmental organisations.

A good body of literature deals with agency versus structure; but this, however, fails to fully systematise structure and the inter-relation between the two. Most literature is static in the way it describes inter-governmental organisations and does not engage with executive head (self-)perception of agency versus the ex-post agency concretised in the ability to implement, and few relate to organisational processes or operations. Therefore, the observations on structure and inter-relational dynamics are largely uncodified.

There is clearly a research gap when it comes to the study of the role, not the person, of the executive head, and the codification of the role, viewed as the nexus (or connection) of the political and bureaucratic aspect of international relations being not solely either one of the two. The research that comes closest to the scope of this thesis is the beforementioned article by Halls and Woods (2017).[119] The article does not capture the interlinkages and codified structure among the proposed constraints the executive head is facing in undertaking duties. The article, therefore, leaves room to dig deeper and explore, and develop the codification of these complexities.

In the research area of leadership in international organisations in general, and on the actions and behaviour of individual secretaries-general and executive secretaries in particular, there is a lack of understanding of how leaders influence their organisations. The conclusion is that 'we need to be able to trace what guides their [executive heads] behaviour and then how their actions affect the IGO [inter-governmental organisation]

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[117] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 39, pp. 595-609, in Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 596.
[118] Bauer, Michael W., Knill, Christoph, Eckhard, Steffen (eds.), *International Bureaucracy – Challenges and Lessons for Public Administration Research*, Palgrave Macmillian, London, 2017.
[119] Hall, Nina, Woods, Ngaire, 'Theorizing the Role of the Executive Head in International Organizations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2017.

itself'.[120] This is exactly the gap that this thesis aims to fill, not from the leadership angle, but by codifying the role of the executive head, its agency, and its interplay with the structure within which it is placed.

1.5   Research Question

The research question this thesis seeks to answer is as follows:

How does the role of the executive head of inter-governmental organisations, through its incumbents, influence and operate in the nexus between the external political stakeholders of member states, non-member states and other multilateral actors, and the internal stakeholders of the more bureaucratically inclined secretariat?

The thesis will answer this question through a theoretical framework supported by case studies.

1.6   Methodology, Data and Sources

The thesis proposes a role-centric analytic framework codifying the specific tenants of dynamic agency of executive heads within the structures of inter-governmental organisations. Research is thus essential to understand (or even begin to understand) this complexity. It is important to infuse historical and factual events into the self-referencing field of international relations, such that the theoretical and conceptual developments and discussion in the thesis have a bearing on the material world. Inter-governmental organisations are slow-moving entities, and any learning and observation will suffer if an understanding of what their foundation is based on in terms of the specific interests, norms and values of, in particular, member states, is not included. Further, the historical development of these norms and interests have to be included too. Therefore, the thesis will be based on case studies of the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and its precursor the

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[120] Kille, Kent J., Scully, Roger M., 'Executive Heads and the Role of Intergovernmental Organizations: Expansionist Leadership in the United Nations and the European Union', *Political Psychology*, 24 (1), 2003, p. 190.

Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), to answer the question on the importance and influence of the executive head.

1.6.1 Methodology

In the case studies the thesis applies a frame based on qualitative methods, since they are, as previously stated, 'most appropriately employed where the aim of research is to explore people's subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences.'[121] This is and has been the case during this inquiry. As a result, qualitative methods are 'most appropriately employed where the aim of research is to explore people's subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences.[122] Consequently, when investigating whether and how executive heads matter in inter-governmental organisations, qualitative research designs are more appropriate, and the same holds for investigating the subjective experiences of actors in inter-governmental organisations. Obtaining detailed information from a small number of cases is the basis of qualitative research. This should be done with an emphasis on detailed explanation rather than broad generalisation, which corresponds to the scope of the research questions.

Namely, how the executive heads influence and operate in the nexus between the external political stakeholders of member states, non-member states and other multilateral actors, and the internal stakeholders of the secretariat.

A role-centric analytic framework that codifies the unique tenants of dynamic agency of executive heads within the frameworks of inter-governmental organisations is proposed by the thesis. Therefore, research to comprehend this level of intricacy is essential and has to incorporate historical and factual events into the self-referencing realm of international relations. Therefore the thesis will be based on case studies of the UNECE and the OEEC/OECD. Case studies are used for a range of purposes due to the fact that case studies can be utilised for a variety of objectives,[123] firstly, because they are used in the development of theories, and secondly, because they describe a process and a system

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[121] Devine, F., 'Qualitative Methods', pp. 137-153 in D Marsh. D., Stoker, G. (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Macmillan Press, Basingstoke, 1995, p. 138.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Hall, P., 'Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research'. In: Mahoney, J. and Rueschemeyer, D., ed. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. pp. 373-406. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 2003.

that are unlikely to operate in a linear fashion with a clear causal relationship. [124] Both of these reasons are related to the fact that they are used to develop theories. The methodology that was utilised to explore these issues needs to be able to detect intricate interactions and connections between the variables.[125] It builds on Mill's method of difference since it is anticipated that some conditions would remain constant, whilst some essential drivers may be subject to change. In addition, as was previously established, the case study method works well with and is appropriate for research questions that address 'how' or 'why' topics. One example of this would be questions regarding whether or not, and under what circumstances, the role of the executive head features, is interpreted and plays out in inter-governmental organisations.[126] To sum up, the case study method entails the systematic collection of data and the organisation of a single standing research topic over time, or question as an 'empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context'.[127] Research that aims to provide a comprehensive explanation of intricate social relationships can benefit enormously from utilising this methodology. The case study method provides a suitable mechanism for organising an analysis of the actors engaged in the nexus of politics and bureaucracy in inter-governmental organisations. [128] This is because the material side of the role of the executive head is a complex, relational experience between actors involved in social, political, and economic relationships.[129] Essentially I am applying what George and Bennett (2005) call 'the Method of Structured, Focused Comparison' between the two selected organisations. George and Bennett elaborate:

> The method and logic of structured, focused comparison is simple and
> straightforward. The method is 'structured' in that the researcher writes general
> questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of
> each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making a

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[124] George, A. and Bennett, A., *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. The MIT Press. Cambridge. 2005; and Van Evera, S., *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, NY. 1997.

[125] King, G., Keohane, R. and Verba, S., *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. Princeton. 1994.

[126] Yin, Robert K., *Case study research: design and methods,* Sage, London, 2009.

[127] Berg, B. L., *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, Pearson, Boston, 2009, pp. 6-7.

[128] See: Berg, B. L., *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences,* Pearson, Boston, 2009; and Collier, D., Mahon, J. E., Jr., 'Conceptual "Stretching" Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis', *The American Political Science Review*, 87 (4), pp. 845-855, 1993.

[129] White, Laura J., *Executive Leadership in International Organisation: A Case Study of WTO Directors-General (1995-2013)*, University of Manchester, 2015, pp. 131-133.

systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is 'focused' in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined.[130]

1.6.2 *Case Studies*

Case studies can be employed for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, because they are used in the development of theories and the fact that they describe a process and a system that are unlikely to work in a linear fashion with a clear causal relationship. The methodology used to investigate these must be capable of identifying complex interactions and relationships.[131] If more case studies were to be included, that could require a sacrifice of detail. In-depth case studies are particularly useful for the development of theory because they can point to causal factors that have previously gone unnoticed.[132] Such issues will be addressed using within-case analysis,[133] but it is possible that with an increased the number of observations an increase in the variation in dependent variables will follow. The proposal is to use two types of within-case analysis, namely across time, and member states and other actors. This builds on Mill's method of difference since it is assumed that some conditions remain constant whereas some critical drivers may change.

Further, the case study method works well with and is appropriate for research questions that addresses 'how' or 'why' topics, such as if and under what circumstances the role of the executive head features, is interpreted, and plays out in inter-governmental organisations.[134] The case study method entails the systematic collection of data and the organisation of a single research topic over time, or question as a: '[qualitative] empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context'.[135] Research which seeks an in-depth explanation of complex social relationships can further

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[130] George, Alexander, Bennett, Andrew, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. The MIT Press. Cambridge. 2005, p. 67.
[131] Hall, P., 'Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research'. In: Mahoney, J. and Rueschemeyer, D., ed. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. pp. 373-406. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 2003.
[132] George, A. and Bennett, A., *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. The MIT Press. Cambridge. 2005; and Van Evera, S., *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, NY. 1997.
[133] King, G., Keohane, R. and Verba, S., *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. Princeton. 1994.
[134] Yin, Robert K., *Case study research: design and methods,* Sage, London, 2009.
[135] Berg, B. L., *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, Pearson, Boston, 2009, pp. 6-7.

benefit from this method.[136] Since the material side of the role of the executive head is a complex, relational experience between actors involved in social, political, and economic relationships, the case study method provides a suitable mechanism for organising an analysis of the actors engaged in the nexus of politics and bureaucracy in inter-governmental organisations.[137]

The case studies will be structured around the theoretical framework and the individual organisations will be viewed against that prism. The case studies will build up enough evidence for an in-depth understanding of the conflict or convergence of interest between the various actors in inter-governmental organisations' governance structures.

The two case studies selected for the inquiry: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE). The two organisations have an intertwined and shared history, with the Cold War as the backdrop, and to a large extent, comparable operational practices.

Caroll and Kellow (2011), Mahon and McBride (2008) and Woodward (2009) agree that the OECD is a little-studied and even elusive organisation.[138] Leimgruber and Schmelzer (2017) propose a possible reason why:

> The lack of research on the OECD and its neglect by historians can to some extent be explained by the OECD's specific mode of governance, its politically neutral and non-controversial image, and the relative absence of historical interest by the OECD itself. Because of its self-representation as a soft power organization, the

[136] See: Berg, B. L., *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences,* Pearson, Boston, 2009; and Collier, D., Mahon, J. E., Jr., 'Conceptual "Stretching" Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis', *The American Political Science Review*, 87 (4), pp. 845-855, 1993.

[137] White, Laura J., *Executive Leadership in International Organisation: A Case Study of WTO Directors-General (1995-2013)*, University of Manchester, 2015, pp. 131-133.

[138] Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011, p. vi; Mahon, Rianne, McBride, Stephen (eds.), *The OECD and Transnational Governance*, UBCPress, Toronto, 2008, p. 3; and Woodward, Richard, *The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. xiv.

OECD has often escaped the attention of historical and political science scholars who have focused on traditional forms of economic and political power.[139]

Concrete bodies of work that describe and analyse the OECD's organisation and its operations in a comprehensive manner are hard to come by. The OECD has, however, produced its own anniversary series.[140]

The UNECE seems to have had even less scholarly attention than the OECD[141], for the very same reasons outlined for by Leimgruber and Schmelzer above, but also because the UNECE has been on the shadow of the OECD:

> The fact that the [UN]ECE is understudied has historical reasons itself. The relative success of the Marshall Plan and of Western European cooperation have overshadowed [UN]ECE's work, in public perception as well as in historiography.[142]

Therefore data collection through interview and archive visits has research significance. The UNECE and former UNECE secretariat staff members have also produced various anniversary articles and books.[143]

1.6.3   Case Selection and Rationale

The selected case studies represent the diversity, competition and complementarity of the international organisation system, specifically focusing on that part of the multilateral structural patchwork that could be seen as being engaged in 'contested' multilateralism.

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[139] Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer, Matthias, 'Introduction: Writing Histories of the OECD', Chapter 1, pp. 1-22. Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, p. 8.

[140] Griffiths, Richard T. (ed.), *Explorations in OEEC History*, OECD Historical Series, Paris, 1997.

[141] Stinski, Daniel, *International Cooperation in Cold War Europe – The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-64,* Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2021, p. 14.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Myrdal, Gunnar, 'Twenty Years of the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe', *International Organization* Vol, 22, 1968; Kostelecky, Vaclav, *The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe: The Beginning of a History*, Graphic Systems AB, Gothenburg, 1989; and Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, *Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007*, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007.

This generally does not receive much attention from scholars, even if they constitute an important part of the dynamics of the multilateral structures, as the thesis argues.

In order to enhance the analytical power of the case studies the thesis starts with a combined study of two organisations, which overlap in both scope and membership as well as in implementation. This builds on recent scholarly statements, such as 'much more empirical research is needed to determine more precisely when, and why, IOs employ different approaches to implementation in a complementary fashion or employ [their] instruments in an unconventional fashion'.[144] The implementing mechanism deployed may also reveal part of the interest dynamics at play among the relevant actors. The organisations in question, that is the OECD and the UNECE, have distinct overlaps all the way back to their original inceptions, but have still had very different beginnings and developments.

The similarities and differences between the OECD and the UNECE are playing out in the following areas, which helps compare and contrast executive heads agency between the two organisations over time:

1. Founding purpose: Economic cooperation post-World War II;
2. Mandate: Platforms for cooperation without sanctioning powers;
3. Work practise: Knowledge producers, conveners, and standard setters. Engaging with largely the same type and set of substantive state representatives between ministries;
4. Geographical scope and membership: The membership of the OECD was formed by its precursor the OEEC acting as the defacto implementer of the US Marshall Plan for Western Europe. Whereas the UNECE was founded as a regional economic commission forming part of the newly minted universal organisation the United Nations.

Generally, more similarities than difference, however, the historical context – The Cold War – meant that the membership was the determining factor on the trajectories that formed subsequently. The perceived relevance also links to the self-perception the

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[144] Joachim, J., Reinalda, B., and Verbeek, B., (eds.), *International Organizations and Implementation: Enforcers, Managers, Authorities?*, Routledge, New York, 2008, p. 188.

organisations formed about themselves. On the OECD Matthias Schmelzer (2017)[145] writes:

> The OECD was an identity-generating Club of the West. During the 1950s and in particular from the 1960s onwards, it became the organization defining the community of highly "developed" or "advanced" capitalist countries on the "mental maps" of officials, and increasingly the wider public. The OECD was founded as the "economic conscience of the free world" that aimed at the "construction of an international economic philosophy" that guarded the principles of liberal capitalism and the interests of this imagined community of countries. The notion of "like-mindedness" was key to all the negotiations about new member countries throughout the OECD's history, in particular in the 1960s and 1970s. Given that for the demarcation of a community of countries the non-members – or the "others" – is highly important, with the end of the Cold War and the rise of the newly emerging market economies the OECD lost two key identity-defining markers. Since the 1990s, the OECD no longer encompasses all the core economies of global capitalism and struggles to find a new identity beyond the Cold Vision representing rich capitalist countries and the (post)colonial idea of representing the major developed economic powers.

The UNECE had the precise opposite trajectory where the Cold War meant relative less relevance and ability for manoeuvre.

To further develop this point on history being formative for the organisational development of the two organisations, the following section will outline their common historical starting points which resulted in very different trajectories given the attributes discussed above.

1.6.4   The UNECE and the OECD: Formed by a Common History

For the purpose of the case studies, I will examine the circumstances of the UNECE and OECD from the perspective of the inside out, rather than the outside in. Since the

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[145] Schmelzer, Matthias, *The Hegemony of Growth – The OECD and the making of the Economic Growth Paradigm*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, pp. 355-356.

framework for international relations is mostly made up of its own internal references, it is vital to add components of organisational conception and development,[146] bearing in mind the limitations of an international relations framework.[147] In this subsection, we will investigate the historical path that the two organisations shared leading up to the establishment of the OECD proper in 1961. The understanding of a shared history was clear to the protagonists, and here UNECE Executive Secretary[148] Gunnar Myrdal, underlines the validity of the approach:

> Right from the start, we in Geneva [at the UNECE] have been deeply conscious of the community of destiny we share with the ERP [European Recovery Programme]. When things go well in Paris [at the OEEC], conditions for cooperation in Geneva are also good. When the work in Paris is up to difficulties, the Western countries get sick and tired of international conferences and can, already for political reasons, not allow much progress to be made on an all-European level in Geneva. This is one side of our relationship with OEEC. I am quite conscious of the fact that things can go so "well" in OEEC that there is no space left for us and UN.[149]

This is important in understanding how the organisations formed each other's paths, and eventually became what they are today. Further, this thesis is trying to establish a link between existing historical studies and the engagement with international relations, as

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[146] Williams, Andrew, *Failed imagination? – The Anglo-American new world order from Wilson to Bush*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2007, p. 1.

[147] Caroline Kennedy-Pipe has argued that International History and IR [International Relations] theory are waging a war over interpreting the Cold War, lasting for some forty years now. Historians, she claims, have a tendency to reduce 'the state' to 'the archives', thereby ignoring that "ideologies, ideas and how states are organized matter". Her conclusions are clear: International historians do not rely sufficiently upon insights from IR, while IR scholars make too little out of historical sources. In other words, she suggests more forms of cross-fertilization between historical and theoretical approaches.' Lagendijk, Vincent, 'The Structure of Power: The UNECE and East-West Electricity Connections, 1947-1975', *Comparativ* 24 (1), pp. 50-65, 2014, p. 51. Referencing to: Kennedy-Pipe, Caroline, 'International History and International Relations Theory: A Dialogue Beyond the Cold War', *International Affairs* 76 (4), pp. 741-754, 2000, p. 741. Even if Kennedy-Pipe does not refer directly to inter-governmental organisations, this thesis aims at this precise cross-fertilisation.

[148] See appendix 6.6 for a list of UNECE Executive Secretaries and OECD (and OEEC) Secretaries-Generals.

[149] United Nations Offices (UNOG) Archives, ARR 14/1360, Box 71, Gunnar Myrdal, Notes on ERP, December 1949, and Stinsky, Daniel, 'Western European Vs. All-European Cooperation? The OEEC, the European Recovery Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 1947-1952', Chapter 4, pp. 65-88, in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, p. 66.

this link is at times neglected.[150] Most studies of post-World War II European integration have been focused on the Marshall Plan itself, not the inter-governmental organisation implementing it or for that matter the multitude of other organisations, which played their role in creating the mosaic of post-war Europe. If the OEEC (the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation) has been understudied, the UNECE has received even less attention,[151] as the focus has often been directed at the United States and Western Europe. It is essential to keep this in mind because the majority of the published works and studies that have been reviewed focus on European integration in and of itself rather than the historical journeys taken by the organisations that have been part of this implementation.[152]

Inception of UNECE and the Precursor to OECD

In the post-World War II canvas of inter-governmental organisations there were many different conceptions of Europe, namely, 'Pan-Europe, Western Europe, the Europe of People's Democracies, and the Europe of the Inner Six and the Outer Seven'[153], that competed and coexisted in an interdependent system. The UNECE was an essential actor in this landscape of growing European inter-governmental organisations; yet, it has received too little attention until recently (2021). At best, the UNECE plays a minimal role in history, as it is written and understood by the public. In spite of this, it is the oldest and most inclusive of the post-World War II European inter-governmental organisations. The very existence of the UNECE presents a challenge to many of the traditional assumptions that have been made regarding the history of European integration and the Cold War. The UNECE was the first successful attempt to create an intergovernmental

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[150] Idem, p. 5.

[151] Ventresca, Roberto, 'The OECD as a Global Preacher for Capitalism', pp. 301-326, in Grin, Gilles, Nicod, Françoise, Altermatt, Bernhard (eds.), *Forms of Europe. European Union and Other Organisations*, Cahiers rouges, Volume 218, 2018, p. 303.

[152] Illustrated and contextualised by: 'However we would be wrong to assume that what became the Marshall Plan sprang ready formed out of the ashes of the Second World War. During the war the main effort was directed to winning, as it had been in 1914-18. But there was also a concerted attempt within the Post War Planning sections of the [United States] State Department to both better conceptualise and better institutionalise reconstruction efforts after the war had ended … The most important point is that in this war the winning of it was not seen by the liberal coalition of states that became the "United Nations". In the United States in particular the war was seen as having had its roots in economic causes.' in Williams, Andrew, '"Reconstruction" before the Marshall Plan', *Review of International Studies* 31 (3), pp. 541-558, 2005, p. 548.

[153] Patel, Klaus Kiran, Kaiser, Wolfram, 'Multiple Connections in European Co-operation: International Organizations, Policy Ideas, Practices and Transfers 1967-92', *European Review of History* 24 (3), 2017.

organisation for European economic cooperation after World War II. This attempt took place within the context of the United Nations, and it did include socialist nations as members. 'UNECE's monopoly on economic cooperation in Europe was probed just a few weeks after its inception with the announcement of the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan created a Western European alternative to UNECE's model of all-European economic cooperation.'[154]

In this light the OEEC was the UNECE's main competitor, whilst both were pushed by the European Union's (EU) precursor, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). One could also turn the conventional equation on its head and regard the OEEC/OECD as a tool of an economic bloc (the West). It may possibly have been better understood as the institution of a global economy from which the countries controlled by the communist bloc opted to isolate themselves.[155] The recent scholarship about the League of Nations and the origins of the UN underscores this point[156]. It is evident that the strong current that sees the two organisations as having been established to serve the Great, Western, Powers of the day in at least the case of the OEEC and the UN at large clearly speaks to the findings of this thesis, as they relate to the relevance of inter-governmental organisation to states. Mark Mazower (2009) writes:

> When we turn back to the 1940s, warning-bells should go, for we find that commentators then expressed a more wary view of the new world organization than historians currently tend to. Indeed many left the founding conference at San Francisco in 1945 believing that the world body they were being asked to sign up to was shot through with hypocrisy. They saw its universalizing rhetoric of freedom and rights as all too partial – a veil masking the consolidation of a great power directorate that was not as different from the Axis powers, in its imperious

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[154] Stinsky, Daniel, *International Cooperation in Cold War Europe – The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-64*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2021, p. 5.
[155] Acharya, Amitav, Buzan, Barry, *The Making of Global International Relations – Origins and Evolution of IR at its Centenary*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, p. 119.
[156] See e.g.: Mazower, Mark, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2009, and Martin, Jamie, *The Meddlers: Sovereignty, Empire, and the Birth of Global Economic Governance*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2022.

attisude to how the world's weak and poor should be governed, as it should have been.[157]

The UNECE, however, could clearly not, given its membership was including both the United States and the Soviet Union, fall into this category. Rather because of its regional scope and the Soviet Union's inclusion in the UNECE meant that the Commission could not be a Western Great Power tool.

During the years from 1945 to 1947, the United States contributed enormous sums toward helping Europe get back on its feet after the devastation caused by World War II. The vast bulk of this money was transferred from one party to another in the form of ad hoc or bilateral transactions or agreements. With the support of financial aid coming from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, [158] the majority of European states were given the duty of directing their own rehabilitation. This was accomplished with the assistance of the IMF. If we are to find a defining moment when the impossibility of the UNECE and the OEEC becoming one organisation could be found, it was in what was then known as 'The political background to Marshall Aid'. This specifically related to 'the failure of the conference organised by the four occupying powers on the future of Germany'[159]held in Moscow at the beginning of 1947. UNECE and Marshall fought the Soviet agenda during the meeting, which was predicated on heavy reparations paid by Germany and the dismantlement of Germany's industrial capacity. In addition, by the middle of 1947, it was patently evident that this tactic was not successful. Because of a decrease in international liquidity, intra-European trade had become paralysed and this contributed to an already severe lack of food, fuel, and raw materials that was aggravated by the harsh winter of 1946.

The United States made the decision to become engaged at this time because many economies in Europe were on the edge of collapse, social unrest was on the rise, and

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[157] Mazower, Mark, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2009, p. 7.
[158] Woodward, Richard, *The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD), Routledge, London, 2009, p. 13.
[159] Reinalda, Bob, *The Routledge History of International Organizations - From 1815 to the Present Day*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 407.

communist parties were gaining headway in both France and Italy.[160] This meant that the UNECE, having received approval from the UN General Assembly by December 1946, had the failure of the above-mentioned Moscow conference and 'enunciation of the Truman Doctrine, and uncertainty over the position of the USSR'[161] by its first session in May 1947. This was despite the fact that the UNECE had received approval from the UN General Assembly by December 1946, and as a result the UNECE was placed in a political limbo.

To initiate the implementation of the Marshall Plan, the Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC) met in March 1948 and the 'Convention for European Economic Cooperation' was agreed as a result. The founding of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was the first article of the convention.[162] The UNECE was established in March 1947, a year before the OEEC, with strong support from the United States and Western-European countries.[163] Despite ever-increasing tensions, the West and the Soviet Union had not yet broken off formal relations with each other, but were on track to becoming separate blocs in the near future.

Considering their actions, it is evident that there were some similarities in the ways in which the inaugural executive heads of the UNECE and the OEEC, Gunnar Myrdal at the UNECE and Robert Marjolin at the OEEC, went about initiating their respective organisation's work. They began by developing a plan to carry out the organisation's mandate after first gaining an understanding of the political constraints surrounding that goal. Myrdal was caught in the middle of the battle between East and West, but tried to overcome it by shifting attention to issues that were increasingly technical, while yet maintaining a pan-European perspective on the work. On the other hand, if he had not maintained this approach the UNECE would have been in a constant state of paralysis. On the topic of Western European integration, Marjolin faced rivalry from other

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[160] Woodward, Richard, *The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 13.
[161] Rostow, Walt W., 'The Economic Commission for Europe', *International Organization 3 (2)*, pp. 254-268, 1949, p. 257.
[162] Barbezat, Daniel, 'The Marshall Plan and the Origin of the OEEC', Chapter II in Griffiths, Richard T. (ed.), *Explorations in OEEC History,* OECD Historical Series, Paris, 1997, pp. 34-35.
[163] Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, *Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007,* United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, pp. 10-11; and UNECE, *ECE The First Ten Years 1947-1957*, United Nations, Geneva, 1957, p. II-3.

organisations in the West, especially the ECSC. His response was to mould and, in a sense, prepare the organisation for the subsequent move it would take, as the OECD.

> The Americans had wanted the OEEC to be a vehicle for European integration by requiring that the organization allocate Marshall Plan aid, but the OEEC could not bear this burden. The organization carried on for nearly a decade, but it was undermined by its members' growing preference for discussions in the NATO economic committee, and was finally doomed by the structural changes in trade and payments.[164]

It was evident that the OEEC had reached its final destination:

> Formal progress on a fresh transatlantic partnership began in December 1959 with a summit meeting in Paris of the leaders of France, West Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Their communique argued for an unofficial convocation of OEEC members to consider how consultations on trade, development and regional economic integration should proceed thereafter. In January 1960, plenipotentiaries of 13 countries and the European Economic Commission [EEC] met as the Special Economic Committee (SEC) and the Group of Four on Economic Organization to consult with OEEC governments and the EEC about the institutional specifications of transatlantic economic cooperation.[165]

In 1960, during the 'Conference on the Reconstitution of the OEEC', a working team was given the task of drafting a convention for the organisation.[166] This convention, which became operational on 30 September 1961 as the OECD, was signed on 14 December 1960 by twenty states (the eighteen OEEC members, which now included Spain, and Canada and the United States).[167]

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[164] Wolfe, Robert, 'From Reconstructing Europe to Constructing Globalization: The OECD in Historical Perspective', Chapter 1, pp. 25-42, in; Mahon, Rianne, McBride, Stephen (eds.), *The OECD and Transnational Governance*, UBCPress, Toronto, 2008, p. 26.
[165] Woodward, Richard, *The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 18.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.

The OECD

Once the OECD had been established in 1961 its inaugural Secretary-General, Torkil Kristensen, considered that the organisation should play the function of a forward-looking think tank with a catalytic role to deliver creative ideas that member states could pick up if they became interested in doing so. Therefore, the OECD concentrated its efforts on the use of soft power mechanisms such as the generation, legitimation, and dissemination of policy ideas and conceptual frameworks.[168]

The common historical circumstances that shaped both the UNECE and the OECD from their inception are crucial to this study. It is impossible to discuss and analyse structure and the agency of the executive head without understating how these organisations were formed.

1.6.5   Data Collection and Analysis

In order to underpin the models on principal-agent and organisation design from the perspective of historical method,[169] the plan is to partly build and verify the answer from the questionnaires on the findings from other sources such as organisational and government archives or built on those. This possesses challenges in practical terms of completeness and (perceived) hiddenness as well as a possible challenge to the proposed theoretical framework.[170]

The thesis will base itself primarily on research done on formal and informal levels within the two selected organisations. Access to the leaders and high-level officials of these

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[168] Reinalda, Bob, *International Secretariats – Two Centuries of International Civil Servants and Secretariats*, Routledge, London, 2020, p. 118. Further, 'The expertise of the OECD Secretariat has remained an important factor at the heart of the organization's relevance. The influence of its international civil servants varied over time and across issue areas, but member states were much aware of their influence, even if at times governments restricted and reduced that influence through budgetary action. The influence of the OECD Secretariat derives largely from the quality of its work and can be compared to similar work by IGO [inter-governmental organisations] with large databases and analytical capacity.' Idem, p. 119. See also: Kellow, Aynsley, Caroll, Peter, 'Exploring the Impact of International Civil Servants: The Case of the OECD', *International Journal of Public Administration* 36 (7), pp. 482-491, 2013.
[169] Howell, Martha, Prevenier, Walter, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2001.
[170] Gunn, Simon, Faire, Lucy (eds.), *Research Methods for History*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2012.

organisations is crucial and has been obtained with success. It was difficult to assess how long this exercise with take, but dealing with high-level people is usually very time consuming. In my view it was more difficult to address staff on operational levels for reasons of career and loyalty. However, I have used contacts on these levels in the data collection and data verification stages.

In choosing interviewees, only those that can be said to be process-tracing will be selected, based on their knowledge of and involvement rather than on random sampling.[171] Interviews should be open-ended with a common set of themes and framework in order to expose new angles and reveal other potential drivers, than be hypothesised.[172]

Secondary statistical data will also be gathered to underpin the shift in the historical lines and donor time series to substantiate the hypothesis of shifts in the focus of international organisations. The wealth of information is staggering; however, data regarding the organisation's actual effectiveness and ability to attain to its mandate are often seen as too politically sensitive to be publicised or are too obfuscated to be useful in analysis.

When building the combined case study, the first step will be to analyse the difference in responses of the organisations towards a stylised rational design model similar to that proposed by Koremos et al. (2001),[173] but distinct and enhanced with a broader focus on the governance side. Operationally the two organisations work on the same footing and in the same fashion: 'OECD works not through international treaties backed by formal sanctions but through the power of ideas, peer pressure and the enactment of "soft law"'.[174] The analysis will have to be people-centric in order to fully understand the implications of secretariat autonomy, the amount of agency vested in the executive head, and the proportion of elite circulation. An official history of UNECE published by the Commission itself clearly points to the first executive head, Gunnar Myrdal, to explain

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[171] Tansey, O., 'Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling'. PS: *Political Science and Politics* 40(4), pp. 765-772. 2007.

[172] Aberbach, J. and Rockman, B., 'Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews'. PS: *Political Science and Politics.* 35 (4), pp. 673-676. 2002.

[173] Koremos, Barbara, Lipson, Charles, Snidal, Duncan, 'The Rational Design of International Institutions', *International Organization* 55 (4), pp. 761-799. 2001.

[174] Davies, Michael, Woodward, Richard, *International Organizations - a Companion*, Edward Elgar, London, 2014.

the culture of the secretariat,[175] an observation that underlines the validity of the approach. The starting point for the assembly of the interviewee lists are the public organigrams of the organisations,[176] which, combined with my personal professional network, ensures a balance between the political and bureaucratic vector's weights, and of the interviewee's level in the hierarchies.

The theoretical framework outlined in chapter 2 will serve as the organising principle for the case studies, and each individual organisation will be examined through the lens of the framework. There have been very few instances of research that use the role of the executive head as the unit of analysis, and none of those cases have addressed the question of whether or not agency matters; instead, they have simply presumed that it does.[177] In the course of the case studies, sufficient information was accumulated to provide an in-depth comprehension of the conflict or convergence of interests that exist between the many actors in the governing structure of inter-governmental organisations.

The primary foundation of the thesis will be the findings of research conducted at both official and informal levels within the UNECE and the OECD. Access to their high-level officials and leaders was obtained. It turned out to be a very time-consuming exercise to undertake the interviews. The first step was to break the ice with an introductory email[178], and after a reply, I would sent a research project teaser or short introductory note[179] to give the background and awaken the interview subjects' curiosity, as well as an interview guide so they had an idea of what the conversation would be about more specifically. Subsequently, I had to negotiate with gatekeepers in setting up the appointments, and more times than not, reschedule, and then either (pre-pandemic) travel to Geneva or Paris to conduct the interviews or as in a couple of instances conduct phone interviews after 'extended handshakes' in person. Largely, interview targets were very receptive to the

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[175] Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, *Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007*, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007.
[176] OECD: www.oecd.org/about/list-of-departments-and-special-bodies.htm <accessed 12 June 2016>, UNECE: www.unece.org/info/about-unece/unecesecretariat/organizational-chart.html <accessed 12 June 2016>, changed subsequently – now see https://unece.org/organizational-chart-0 <accessed 18 March 2022>. See appendix 6.5 for organigrams of the OECD and the UNECE accessed at the time interview decisions.
[177] See for the best-known examples: Doxey, Margaret, 'The Commonwealth Secretary-General: Limits of Leadership'*, International Affairs* 55 (1), 1979, and Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization'*, International Organization* 23 (2), pp 205-230, 1969.
[178] See appendix 6.1 for 'request for interview' sample email.
[179] See appendix 6.2 for the Research Project Teaser.

idea of participating, but time and in many instances (especially in the OECD) constant rescheduling made the interviews unfeasible. Curiously enough, quite a number of the interview requests sent to (then) current UNECE secretariat staff went unanswered.[180]

As mentioned above, to structure the data collection that took place through interviews an interview guide was produced. The research was centred in and around the nexus of the political and bureaucratic in inter-governmental organisations, thus living up to the basic tenets of the method followed.[181] The questions were designed to ask in and around the nexus to support the development of a clearer theoretical framework than the current presented in the literature. The themes outlined by the interview guide were:

1. Type;
2. Functions and scope;
3. Formal and informal interaction;
4. Formal and informal management and accountability; and
5. Autonomy.

Beyond the opening introduction, the first open ended discussion question was about the interviewees' perception of the interplay between the person and the role of the executive head. This normally progressed to an open-ended conversation around executive head functions and their scope. Understanding any delegated parts of the function was an opener to inquire about where on the political bureaucratic spectre the executive head operated. Was there delineation between the management of the organisation and its substantive pursuit or was it all treated as one? The interviews then aimed at covering the relational elements with the actors[182] populating the structures and processes of the inter-governmental organisations. Firstly, with the external political, namely, the executive heads relationship with member states and other political actors. This was as well as the

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[180] When interviewing elites, it is to get access to the 'black box' or 'closed systems' they populate and have power over, as elites are 'a group of individuals, who hold … a privileged position in society, and … are likely to have … more influence on political outcomes than general members of the public.'
Generally, the willingness to be interviewed among elites is often low. See: Richards, David, 'Elite Interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls', *Politics* 16 (3), pp. 199-204, 1996, p. 199.
[181] George, Alexander, Bennett, Andrew, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. The MIT Press. Cambridge. 2005, p. 77.
[182] The interview guide and other sought to be relational to more managerial language than international relations terms, so as not to alienate the interviewees from the subject even before the interview had started.

element of engagement with other inter-governmental organisations and non-state actors, to understand where the focus was in both relative and real terms, and to hold this up against the executive head's relationship with (the rest of the) the secretariat, in particular the part of the secretariat through the substantive committee's interaction with non-political or bureaucratic actors from external entities in the political domain. The question was designed to reveal the depth of engagement with either the political or the bureaucratic, and to establish if a preference was present. This was normally followed by a more functionally directed question aiming to understand the level and sophistication of the translation between the political and the bureaucratic and vice versa in the nexus between the two where the executive head was operating. Either in the formal structure, where member states' impulses coming to the council or committees with member state representation needed translation into bureaucratic action, or through informal channels. Further, it was sought to try and gauge if there were any real attempts from the executive head to weigh or evaluate the cohesion of signals from member states' different messengers on political and bureaucratic levels. Lastly, there was a rather loaded question on autonomy to gauge the institutional self-perception of the 'balance of power' between the secretariat and executive head on one side and member states on the other. Even if the interview guide was very structured, most interviews were semi-structured in nature. It is worth noting that the interview guide also served the purpose of getting past the gate keepers to the actual interview subject.

The choice of interviewees was a function of accessibility and expected usefulness of data. Pinpointing which roles, other than the executive head, would be useful to the research started with the publicly available organigrams.[183] Positions which had an open degree of interaction with member states on different levels were favoured, compared to substantial experts with less exposure to the variety of political and bureaucratic actors, otherwise they could not be said to be process-tracing. As with the selection of interviewees, only those who might be considered to be process-tracing were chosen; the choice was made on the basis of their familiarity with and involvement in the process, rather than through random sampling.[184] In order to discover new perspectives and uncover additional potential drivers, interviews were kept with an open ended format and

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[183] See appendix 6.5 for UNECE and OECD organigrams and appendix 6.4 for the list of interviews.
[184] Tansey, O., 'Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling'. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40(4), pp. 765-772. 2007.

followed a standard set of topics and guidelines as outlined above.[185] As explained, the design of the questionnaire was properly reviewed, particularly in light of the level of the respondents and the potential hostility that they could have had toward questionnaires. With the approach taken in particular regarding the bureaucratic inquiry, 'process-tracing finds a place also in the constructivist approach. Alexander Wendt recognises that the core of the description of causal mechanisms is "process-tracing, which in social science ultimately requires case studies and historical scholarship."'[186], this is the path taken in this thesis.

The strongest interviewer effect occurs when interview procedures are not standardised across all interviews[187], given the individuals involved and the time pressure that sometimes arose because of interviewee time-constraints. As the interviewer, I had to be active to get the interviews to work practically. This of course has an effect. Out of the eleven elite interviews only one went 'badly', but I understood later from the interviewee's assistant that my meeting was followed by an important delegation (which I met on the way out).

In addition, secondary archival and statistical data were analysed in order to support the shift in the historical lines and donor time series, to provide evidence that adjustments in the emphasis of international organisations occurred as the theory predicts. The amount of information available is good and the area has received more and more attention from scholars; however, data regarding the organisations' actual effectiveness and ability to fulfil their mandates are frequently regarded as being too politically sensitive to be made public. This is because of the nature of the information.

The eleven interviews (two interviewees interviewed twice), access to some archival material, new historical and international relations-oriented research into the less-trodden paths on the start of post-World War II European integration and the initial institutions, hereunder the UNECE and the OEEC, and the presence at different gatherings of the

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[185] Aberbach, J. and Rockman, B., 'Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews'. PS: *Political Science and Politics.* 35 (4), pp. 673-676. 2002.
[186] George, Alexander, Bennett, Andrew, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences.* The MIT Press. Cambridge. 2005, p. 206, See also: Wendt, Alexander, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 80-85.
[187] Schnell, Rainer, Kreuter, Frauke, 'Separating Interviewer and Sampling-Point Effects', *Journal of Official Statistics*, 21 (3), pp. 389-410, 2005, p. 392.

UNECE[188] and the OECD[189] all gave a good data basis from which to analyse. A good part of the historical analysis has been based on newer research into the OECD and the UNECE, in particular the work of Schmelzer (2016 and 2017) [190] and Stinsky (2021)[191] has been useful.

In order to investigate the effects of specific explanatory variables on the outcome of the study, that is of the ability or inability to find a sustainable equilibrium of the system, the idea is to utilise congruence procedures and process-tracing in the analysis. Congruence procedures means observing if there is a relationship between variance on the explanatory and dependent variables that is consistent with the hypothesis. Process-tracing may add explanatory power to reduce the risk of spurious correlations.[192]

The issue of professional bias can arise. However, rather than bias I see a problem of implicitness. Anecdotes like those brought forward on the behaviour of WTO and WHO[193] secretaries-general are no dramas for an insider,[194] but rather a normal expression of an at times suboptimal and frustrating governance situation. To counter any bias, the application of strong theoretical frameworks backed up by the application of historical method in the case studies on the operational and organisational levels is important, and should ensure explicitly detectable deviations.

The methodology, data collection and analysis will be deployed in Chapter 3 considering the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2.

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[188] The UNECE's 70th Anniversary in 2018 proved to be a good platform to get a deeper understanding of the Commission and create contacts that gave access to interviews.

[189] Attendance at the annual OECD Forum (pre-pandemic) gave a view into how minister level proceedings coupled with a substantive workshop with a very heterogenous set of actors made everyone contribute to 'brand OECD'.

[190] Schmelzer, Matthias, *The Hegemony of Growth – The OECD and the making of the Economic Growth Paradigm*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016 and Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017.

[191] Stinsky, Daniel, International Cooperation in Cold War Europe – The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-64, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2021.

[192] George, A. and Bennett, A., *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. The MIT Press. Cambridge. 2005

[193] World Trade Organization and World Health Organization respectively.

[194] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders,* Routledge, New York, 2015.

1.7   Structure of Thesis

Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 will focus respectively on the discourse surrounding the role of the executive head, the theorising about the role of the executive head, the case studies of the UNECE and the OECD, and the emerging patterns in the role of the executive head.

Chapter 1 will introduce the subject of the thesis and clarifies its boundaries. Particularly delineating the leadership discourse from the role-centric approach. The literature review has revealed important gaps in the research and the bodies of literature on inter-governmental organisation and their ability to deal with the subject matter in the most systematic and codified manner. The chapter will outline the research gap and the following research question, and the methodology pursued data-wise to answer the question quantitively and (mostly) qualitatively.

Chapter 2 will focus on building a framework for analysis that will fill the identified gap in the literature. That is to say, a framework that works in and adequately describes the nexus of politics and bureaucracy. Firstly, the structure and processes of inter-governmental organisations are discussed and analysed in detail to achieve the necessary level of understanding structures, set actors and their 'normal' interaction and interrelation. Secondly, by understanding and analysing elements of the functions and the tenure of an executive head from the appointment process, over the active implementation phase, to the legacy building and exit strategy phase, to the eventual next career step.

Chapter 3 will focus on two case studies, with a detailed discussion of the historical aspect of the two organisations and in particular their adversarial beginnings. The discussion includes the historical trajectories of the two organisations with respect to the paradigm within which they had to operate, and what this did to their relevance and effectiveness as inter-governmental organisations. The chapter will set the methodological frame and explore the data collected through interview and other gatherings, which, whilst building on the historical frame, will establish actions and consequences, which fall within the defined role of the executive head.

Chapter 4 will focus on exploring the codification of the role of the executive head, building on the framework outlined in Chapter 2 and case studies in Chapter 3. The aim

is to answer the research question through a systematisation of the patterns of the role of the executive head through theory and observation.

This thesis is a juncture of an inquiry that began in 1969, rather than the end of the inquiry. It offers an adoption and testing of ideas built from an international relations discourse, which has gone from being an orphan topic to a more developed subfield. The thesis offers a codification of the role of the executive head, drawing on additional aspects not previously used or juxtaposition in this way.

2. Theorising about the Role of the Executive Head

2.1 Introduction

The role of the executive head has been theorised about before, most notably by Cox (1969)[195], Schroeder (2014)[196], and Hall and Woods (2019).[197] However, the fact that the role has not been codified means that theorising cannot provide the insights needed, i.e. 'to be able to trace what guides their [executive heads] behaviour and then how their actions affect the IGO [inter-governmental organisation] itself'.[198] Therefore, in this chapter, we look at the environments and stakeholders surrounding the role, as follows:

1. Inter-governmental organisations and bureaucracy;
2. The structure, actors, processes and organisational culture in inter-governmental organisations;
3. The functions of the executive head; and
4. Executive head self-perception of agency and implementation.

Before going through the elements of the role itself and what surrounds it in detail, it is helpful to remember and reflect on how these elements came about. Firstly, the need for states to delegate from a principal-agent theory perspective. In particular, Vaubel (2005)[199] and Hawkins et al. (2006)[200] take the start of the analysis from the point of view of states, and not that of the secretariat or the executive head, in what Reinalda and Verbeek (2004) coin 'the principal-agent baseline' notwithstanding 'the rationalist-constructivist divide'.[201] As the organisation's formation stems from the principals, the

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[195] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23 (02), pp 205-230, 1969
[196] Schroeder, Michael Bluman, 'Executive Leadership in the Study of International Organization: A Framework for Analysis', *International Studies Review* 16, pp. 339-361, 2014.
[197] Hall, Nina, Woods, Ngaire, 'Theorizing the Role of the Executive Head in International Organizations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2017.
[198] Kille, Kent J., Scully, Roger M., 'Executive Heads and the Role of Intergovernmental Organizations: Expansionist Leadership in the United Nations and the European Union', *Political Psychology*, 24 (1), 2003, p. 190.
[199] Vaubel, Roland, 'Principal-Agent Problems in International Organizations', *The Review of International Organizations* 1, pp. 125-138, 2006.
[200] Hawkins, Darren G., Lake, David A., Nielson, Daniel L., Tierney, Michael J. (eds.), *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006.
[201] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, pp. 231-233.

states, the secretariat will be vested with varying degrees of authority and autonomy that align with the consensus, bearing the importance and relevance of the organisation in question. This will directly impact the secretariat structure and the formal agency handed to the executive head as the secretariat's leader. This delegation is done formally within the consensus frame set by the principals, which Koremos et al. (2001)[202] see as the five critical dimensions of institutional design[203]:

i)   Membership rules;

ii)   Scope of issues covered;

iii)   Centralisation of tasks;

iv)   Rules for controlling the institution; and

v)   Flexibility of arrangements.

The initial understanding of ii) through v) by the secretariat and the (first) executive head will determine many of the formal and informal boundaries within which the organisation as a whole can operate. These are also the boundaries within which the actors, specifically the executive head, can exercise their agency, and thereby affect the level of autonomy, also by playing principals off against each other.[204] Understanding the logic of delegation by states adds to the understanding and delineation of the boundaries.[205] The following section will frame the discourse regarding the secretariats and executive heads as a bureaucracy.

2.2   Inter-Governmental Organisations and Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy of an inter-governmental organisation is its secretariat, which may be seen as 'dull and malfunctioning bureaucracies'.[206] However, as Max Weber theorised, bureaucratisation is a primary characteristic of legal-rational authority, i.e. states

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[202] Koremos, Barbara, Lipson, Charles, Snidal, Duncan, 'The Rational Design of International Institutions', *International Organization* 55 (4), pp. 761-799. 2001.
[203] Idem, p. 763.
[204] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 232.
[205] Lake, David A., McCubbins, Mathew D., 'The Logic of Delegation to International Organizations', Chapter 12, pp. 341-370, in Hawkins, Darren G., Lake, David A., Nielson, Daniel L., Tierney, Michael J. (eds.), *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006.
[206] Reinalda, Bob*, International Secretariats – Two Centuries of International Civil Servants and Secretariats*, Routledge, London, 2020, p. 3.

establishing inter-governmental organisation secretariats, and an inevitable expression of modern life. The bureaucracy is necessary as it constitutes the most efficient means of administration. However, it also possesses the ability to evade legitimate principal control.[207] The latter detail hands a not insignificant amount of agency to the secretariat and the executive head. This can, of course, be seen as 'dangerous', as Weber[208] expressed it, and is one of the main concern of states when the subject of secretariats as autonomous actors is discussed. Barnett and Finnemore use this path to provide 'a more complete understanding of what bureaucracy is [and] explanations of how certain kinds of bureaucratic behaviour are possible',[209] essentially concluding that inter-governmental organisations as complex bureaucracies have a life of their own, independent of the interest of their principals, the states. From a rational choice perspective, this stems from the overall principal-agent relationship: the voters[210] versus inter-governmental organisations. Vaubel (2005) asserts that:

> The principal-agent problem is due to the fact that the international organization has vested interests which differs from the preferences of the voters and that the voters cannot effectively control the international organization because they are rationally ignorant of most of its activities and/or lack the power to impose their will. The international agents are interested in the survival and growth of their organization … The mere existence of the organization alters the political equilibrium. Events which otherwise would have no consequences provide opportunities for the expansion of the international organization. Thus, it is easier

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[207] Weber, Max, *Economy and Society,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978. See also: Bauer, Michael W., Knill, Christoph, Eckhard, Steffen (eds.), *International Bureaucracy – Challenges and Lessons for Public Administration Research*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2017, p. 2.

[208] Idem.

[209] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations', *International Organization* 53 (4), pp. 699-732, 1999, p. 701. See also: Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2004.

[210] Where 'the citizens [voters] elect their national parliaments. The national parliaments choose the national executive (except for presidential systems where the head of the national executive is directly elected). The national executives may appoint a group of representatives who are supposed to supervise the international organization … Usually, the chain of delegation from the citizen to the international executive involves three intermediate bodies of control, i.e. four separate principal-agent relationships.' See Vaubel, Roland, 'Principal-Agent Problems in International Organizations', The Review of International Organizations 1, pp. 125-138, 2006, pp. 126.

to maintain an international organization than found it, and it is easier to found it than to abolish it. [211]

This means that the secretariats of inter-governmental organisations as bureaucracies may not function as they were initially designed to.[212] Flipping the coin and potentially observing organisations, secretariats, and executive heads exhibiting self-sacrificing behaviour[213] could lead to the same conclusion as a result of the design. It is possible to let the principal-agent agenda crowd out the constructivist work that 'has focused on the "bureaucratisation" of world politics and how large international organisations can use knowledge and expertise, as well as their capacity for organised behaviour, to influence state behaviour.'[214] It can thus work both ways. It is necessary to keep these points in mind as the formal and informal parts of the inter-governmental organisation are presented in the following sections.

2.3 The Structure, Actors, Processes and Organisational Culture in Inter-Governmental Organisations

A thorough description of the nuts and bolts, and elements, of the inter-governmental organisation is necessary for a deeper understanding of their relation and interaction with the executive head and the role itself, namely, the 'harder' structures, processes and actors; and the 'softer' aspects of organisational culture. This section aims to establish a relational and organisational chart that mimics the interactions that take place in the day-to-day operations of an inter-governmental organisation, as seen from the perspective of the executive head.

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[211] Vaubel, Roland, 'Principal-Agent Problems in International Organizations', *The Review of International Organizations* 1, pp. 125-138, 2006, pp. 126-127.

[212] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 10.

[213] Fierke, Karin M., *Political Self-Sacrifice: Agency, Body and Emotion in International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 55.

[214] Muldoon Jr., James P., 'International Organization and Bureaucracy', Oxford Research Encyclopedias, International Studies (online), 2018.

2.3.1 Structure

The governance and organisational structure of an inter-governmental organisation consist, in my interpretation, of *three distinct elements*, which typically would be[215]:

1. Member states;
2. Executive heads of inter-governmental organisations; and
3. Secretariats.

The crucial point is how the executive head's role in the secretariat is interpreted, as this provides the possibility of utilising international relations theory to view the organisation as the function that sits in the pivotal nexus between what Barnet and Finnemore (1999)[216] label the internal and the external. In this thesis, I will call it the nexus between the 'political' and the 'bureaucratic'. Inter-governmental organisations are based on decisions and agreements (hereunder treaties and charters) that in the final instance are decided upon by politicians from the respective (or soon to be) member states as the executive representatives of their country. According to this definition, everything outside the triangle containing the executive head and the secretariat in Figure 1 is external or 'political'. The political aspect can, of course also relate to third parties,[217] in particular NGOs.[218]

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[215] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders*, Routledge, New York, 2015.

[216] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations'*, International Organization* 53 (4), pp. 699-732, 1999.

[217] See: Jönsson, Christer, 'IR Paradigms and Inter-Organizational Theory: Situating the Research Program Within the Discipline', pp. 49-66, in Koops, Joachim A., Biermann, Rafael (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relations in World Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2017 and Biermann, R., 'Towards a Theory of Inter-organizational Networking: The Euro-Atlantic Security Institutions Interacting', *Review of International Organizations*, 3 (2), pp. 151–177, 2008, for a discussion of inter-organisational dynamics and relations with civil society.

[218] See: Davies, Thomas, 'Introducing NGOs and International Relations', Chapter, pp. 1-16, in Davies, Thomas (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of NGOs and International Relations*, Routledge, London, 2019.
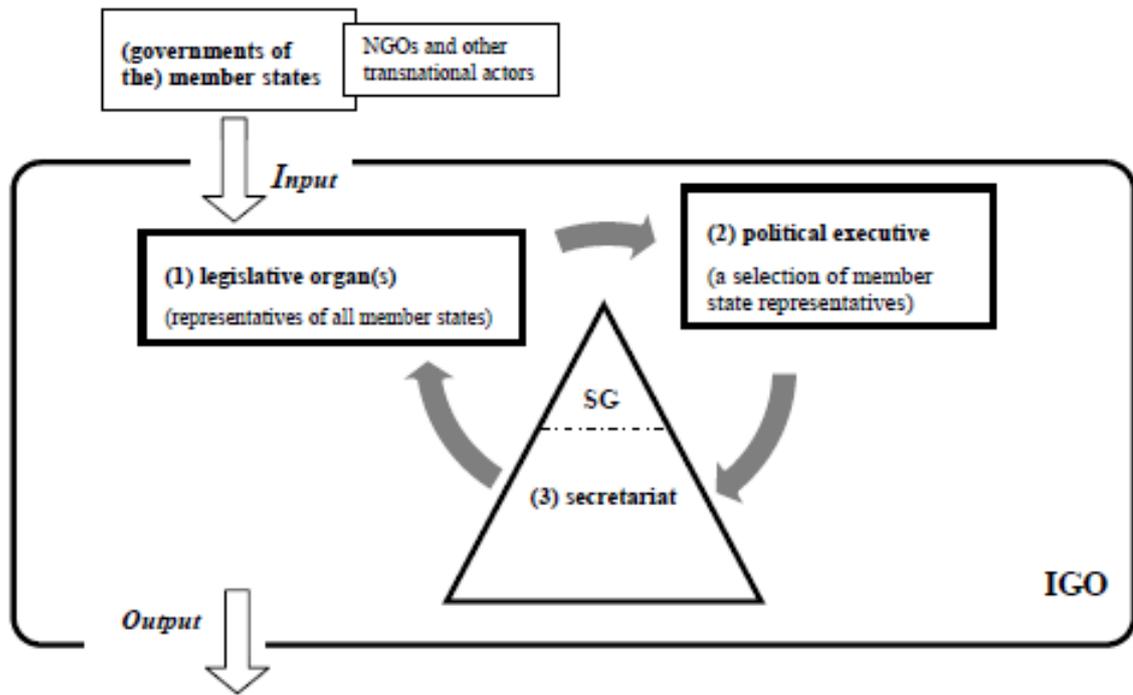
Figure 1: Governance Structure of Inter-governmental Organisations[219]

Figure 1 shows a slightly different packaging of the elements than the three distinctive elements as well as third parties listed above. In the figure, member states effectively have two parts: 1) the plenary organ, which is typically the highest body of the inter-governmental organisation, and 2) the political executive, member states which will need to monitor the day-to-day operations. This necessitates less politically driven, more frequent, and increasingly bureaucratic activity. This is typically a subsection of states with a time-limited seat of an executive council, standing or steering committee undertaking these monitoring activities. It is worth noting that in Ege's interpretation, the executive head and the secretariat are viewed as one from an interaction and relations perspective; this is, in my view, too simplistic. This will be dealt with later in this section.

[219] Ege, Jörn, 'Comparing the Autonomy of International Bureaucracies - An Ideal Type Approach', German Research Institute for Public Administration Speyer, March 2015. Other figures could have been used, but Jörn Ege's fits the purpose best.

2.3.2 Actors

Categorising the actors using Cox and Jacobson's definitions, we have:

    i) 'representatives of national governments [operating with a clear delegation];

    ii) representatives of national and international private associations [civil society];

    iii) the executive heads of the organizations;

    iv) high officials and other members of the bureaucracy of each organization;[220]

    v) individuals who serve in their own capacity formally and informally as advisers;

    vi) representatives of other international organizations; and

    vii) employees of the mass media.'[221]

These seven distinct categories are directly linked to their processes. Some are by nature observers of proceedings, such as media and other organisations; and others may form part of a community of practice even if they give individual advice. The members of secretariat in inter-governmental organisation needs to be seen as the glue that binds the matters together and make things work.[222] The important aspect of how these categories

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[220] The thesis follows: 'International Civil Servants are divided into two categories: professional and supporting staff. We focus on professionals, especially those occupying high-echelon positions.' Further, 'Professional international civil servants share some common traits across IOs: for example, they tend to have similar mandates, report to a large group of member states, and are expected to to perform a variety of functions, such as standard setting, technical analyses, service delivery, and policy and program implementation in their specific policy domains.' in Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders, Routledge, New York, 2015, p. 12.

[221] Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973, p. 118

[222] Precise definition on secretariat staff: 'The impact of civil servants is based on those characteristics that empower bureaucracies … Officials work through routines that tame the unmanageable, shape the understanding of problems and break them into pieces that can be solved with standard operating procedures. Professional expertise determines what questions will be asked and through which prism problems are perceived. Continuity of employment provides an institutional memory and a narrative that defines what has worked before and what might be possible in this case: the officials are conscious of the past, sensitive to the present, and aware of the need to chart a future for the organization. Neutrality ensures that they should be able to work effectively for whomsoever time and chance has placed in authority over them and underpins the trust and legitimacy on which they rely. Departments develop organizational culture that create modes of behaviour and expectations to which new inductees are expected to conform. These cultures will often be contested and mutate. They are always a powerful force in shaping the ambitions and responses of the secretariats. Longstanding connections, both within and between organizations, provide the oil that makes institutions work; they speed up responses outside formal channels. The existence of these characteristics is not controversial. They would be recognized and accepted as providing the potential for all officials in bureaucracies to exercise influence.' Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 104-105.

project themselves onto the processes and thereby form an inter-relational partner will be explored further in this section.

2.3.3 *Processes*

The starting point here is to view an inter-governmental organisation as a political system. According to Easton's (1965) definition, political systems turn input into outputs.[223] This fits the delineation in the previous subsection between 'political' and 'bureaucratic'. Hence inter-governmental organisations turn political inputs into outputs through a translation from 'political' to 'bureaucratic'; or rather substantive, in the nexus between the two. The executive heads and their staff perform this very translation in the nexus.

Inter-governmental organisation processes operate on two levels: i) constituent and ii) institutional. For the constituent processes, 'A founding treaty normally outlines the organization's mission and membership, establishes its various organs and determines the allocation of competencies between these organs ... While international organizations do not fully compare to sovereign states, they are clearly "constituted" through their founding treaties.'[224] Formal changes after founding are usually cumbersome, as supermajorities, consensus, or domestic ratification could be required if divisions between states occur concerning the overarching mandate or structure of the organisation. Some states may resort to informal tactics to either slow down or sabotage the organisation outright. The institutional processes of an inter-governmental organisation are directly linked to the organs and bodies of the organisation. They are generally[225]:

1. Plenary organ representing all member states – the highest authority;
2. Executive council, standing or steering committee – supervising/monitoring day-to-day business;
3. Secretariat – led by the executive head, responsible for implementing the mandate;

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[223] See: Easton, David, *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1965.
[224] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, pp. 58-59.
[225] In this list I have left out organisational arbitration bodies and parliamentary assemblies. Both involve the executive head interaction and interrelation with state representatives; however the behaviour towards these bodies is captured with the inclusion of the foundational bodies (1. and 2.) in the analysis.

4. Substantive organs – representing civil society, private sector, academia, national, sub-national and regional bodies.[226]

All states have their own representatives within the plenary organ. They generally act under the instruction received from their state (and capital). The executive council is usually a subset of member states elected by the plenary organ for a specific time period to supervise and monitor the day-to-day business and operation of the organisation. This is the member state body with which the executive head has the most interaction. The secretariat generally has one section dealing with the administrative and organisational aspects, and another dealing with the substantive part of the operation as it relates to the organisation's mandate. The substantive organs' participants are the mesh of the substantive experts drawn from member states (national, sub-national and regional levels), civil society, academia and private section representatives, and the substantive experts from the secretariat.

The executive head, as an entity defined both politically and bureaucratically, acts as the glue in an inter-governmental organisation's functioning. Cox and Jacobson (1973)[227] described this through the formal decision-making mechanisms of the inter-governmental organisations divided into representative and participant subsystems.[228] Here I have described the representative subsystems and will deal with the participatory aspect later in the section.

2.3.4 Organisational Culture

Looking at the elements of the governance and organisational structure, the secretariats are probably the most stable part of the equation. They have had the possibility of developing a distinct culture from the outset but continued as a bureaucracy. This has

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[226] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, pp. 60-61.
[227] Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973.
[228] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004.

given the secretariats some form of cultural autonomy. An analytical starting point can therefore be taken using Schein's definition:[229]

> Organizational culture [as] the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

The starting point in organisation culture is not accidental since it possesses the sticking point in the response function to a change in demand. It is important to note how the international organisations' demands depend on the by states induced political priorities. Since inter-governmental organisations have been 'born' at a given time, external adaptation and integration is a continuous process from that moment onwards. The organisational design and structures are established at inception, based on the culture as defined by Schein. At inception, this culture is adopted from the founding member states, and the launch point of an international organisation very much defines this. The first executive head as culture champion and standard bearer is subsequently fundamental in shaping the organisation's culture. 'For the first executive head and the small group of initial senior staff, there are many things left to be arranged and decided upon,'[230] and to 'add flesh to the skeleton'.[231] The continuous change process sometimes means changing basic assumptions and unlearning coping mechanisms. Trondal (2014)[232] suggests that 'adaption through organizational rule-following and internalization through "in-house" socialization processes' are essential for international civil servants to enact supranational behavioural logic, which gives the secretariats autonomy. 'Trondal demonstrates that, on the whole, the more supranational an international organization is, the more likely it is

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[229] Schein, Edgar H., 'Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture', *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Winter 1984), MIT, p. 3.
[230] Reinalda, Bob, *International Secretariats – Two Centuries of International Civil Servants and Secretariats*, Routledge, London, 2020, p. 4.
[231] Bailey, Sidney D., *The Secretariat of the United Nations*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York, 1962, p. 18.
[232] Trondal, Jarle, Veggeland, Frode, 'The Autonomy of Bureaucratic Organization: An Organization Theory Argument', *Journal of International Organizations Studies* 5 (2), 2014.

that civil servants develop loyalties to that organization'[233] and its mandate. Trondal (2004) further states:

> In line with the Weberian model of bureaucracy, international bureaucracies have the capacity, through socialization as well as discipline and control, to create codes of conduct and senses of community and belonging that are relatively independent of constituent states.[234]

However, as pointed out by Weiss (1982), secretariat staff may be under the direct control or influence of their originating state. [235]

2.3.5   The Inter-Governmental Organization

The temporal aspect should to be added to the 'harder' structures, processes and actors; and the 'softer' aspects of organisational culture. The general frame for the summary of this section is thus that not only do the elements (structure, actors, processes and culture) evolve over time either by self-propulsion or through interaction and interconnectedness with the others; but their sum total moves together over time. Reinalda and Kille (2017) assert that:

> The 'institutional memory' related to these roles [of the organisation] enhanced the position of the Secretariat and the Secretary's [executive head's] awareness of the path dependency in what the IGOs [inter-governmental organisations] had been undertaking. Most Secretariats started relatively small (a Secretary, assisted by administrative officers and clerical workers), but, when activities increased, the Secretariats would grow and diversify and express specific wishes about the competence of staff members, as part of bureaucratization and professionalization

[233] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 240.

[234] Trondal, Jarle, Veggeland, Frode, 'The Autonomy of Bureaucratic Organization: An Organization Theory Argument', *Journal of International Organizations Studies* 5 (2), 2014, p. 65.

[235] Weiss, Thomas G., 'International Bureaucracy: The Myth and Reality of the International Civil Service', *International Affairs* 58 (2), pp. 287-306, 1982, pp. 288-305.

processes that also enhanced the leadership requirements of the Secretary [executive head].[236]

The founding or inception of the organisation and its infancy is thereby an endowment all future members of secretariats, hereunder the executive head, will have to acknowledge and take into account as they take their own first steps in their roles. The temporal perspective is important to note for the analysis: for example, none of the actors presented in subsection 2.3.2 above are static over time. Individuals move around, roles become more or less important, incumbents' interpretations of roles vary, and their formal and informal structures also over time. Yi-chong and Weller add that: 'Representatives at IOs often wear two hats – both representing states, pursuing collective goods on behalf of the international community, and promoting and protecting the interests of IOs as institutions.'[237] To these two hats one may add a third one: the representatives own career interests. The next posting will have to be secured and tangible results produced by the representative will have to be brought back home to the capital.

What does this mean for the executive head? What system of structure, actors, processes and organisational culture is waiting a future incumbent? The direct theorising about the role of the executive head by Hall and Woods sees this as series of 'constraints' the executive head has to overcome to be successful, i.e., maximise mandate implementation. 'We limit the scope ... to three key constraints – legal-political, resource and bureaucratic'.[238] From the discussion above it is clear that the first two fall into the 'political' category as being external to organisation, whereas the latter is in the internal category, as 'bureaucratic'. Hall and Woods were also penholders on the World Economic Forum report[239] under the Global Agenda Council on Institutional Governance Systems' umbrella. The report suggests an even more centric approach to the leader or executive head. This entails all roads leading to the executive office, and pressures and constraints

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[236] Reinalda, Bob, Kille, Kent J., 'The Evolvement of International Secretariats, Executive Heads and Leadership in Inter-Organizational Relations', Chapter 10, pp. 217-242, in Biermann, R., Koops, J. A., *Palgrave Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relations in World Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2017, p. 221.
[237] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 39.
[238] Hall, Nina, Woods, Ngaire, 'Theorizing the Role of the Executive Head in International Organizations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2017, p. 7.
[239] World Economic Forum (WEF), *Effective Leadership in International Organizations*, Global Agenda Council on Institutional Governance Systems, WEF, 2015.

being levied 'bureaucratically' by the senior management of the inter-governmental organisation, and 'politically' by member states' representatives and other external stakeholders. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below from the same report.
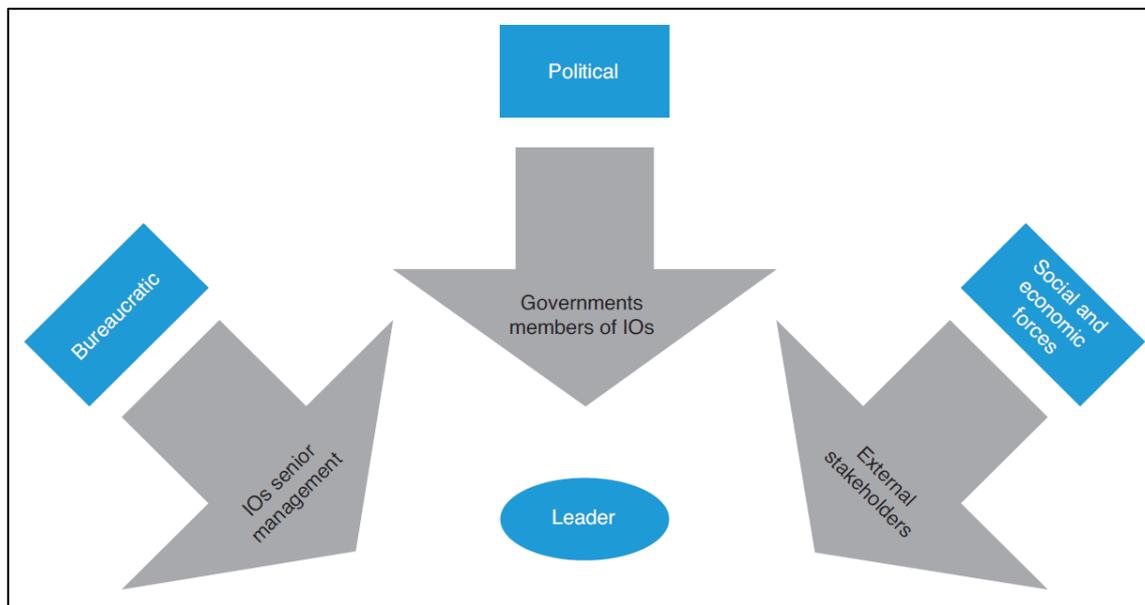
Figure 2: The placement of the executive head among actors and players in a *simplified* 'leader-centric' inter-governmental organisational structure[240]

Figure 2 is rather simplistic if one takes into account the actors and processes with whom the executive head is expected to interact and interrelate. In order to further the analysis and to provide an interactional and relational typology of inter-governmental organisations, I ask three basic questions, suggested by Reuter (1958):[241]

1. What provision is made in the organs to balance the interests of one member against those of another, or group of members against another group? How, then, is institutional power distributed?

2. How is the balance between the power and influence of the member states and that of the organisation's institutions reflected in its structure?

3. What is the balance between governmental and non-governmental representation?

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[240] World Economic Forum (WEF), *Effective Leadership in International Organizations*, Global Agenda Council on Institutional Governance Systems, WEF, 2015, p. 7.

[241] Reuter, P., *International Institutions*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, p. 248. See also Hurd, Ian, *International Organizations – Politics, Law, Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 57-58.

Projecting these questions onto the processes and organs described above, the relational chart of the inter-governmental organisation in Figure 3 emerges.

POLITICAL LEVEL	Political Fora Politicians		Global NGO/CSO and TNC actors
NEXUS		Executive Head	
BUREAUCRATIC LEVEL	Member States' (MS) Organs MS Coordination Function Ministerial Counterpart *Inter-ministerial competition*		Organization Governance Sectoral Subject Matter Experts

IGO Secretariat within ----------
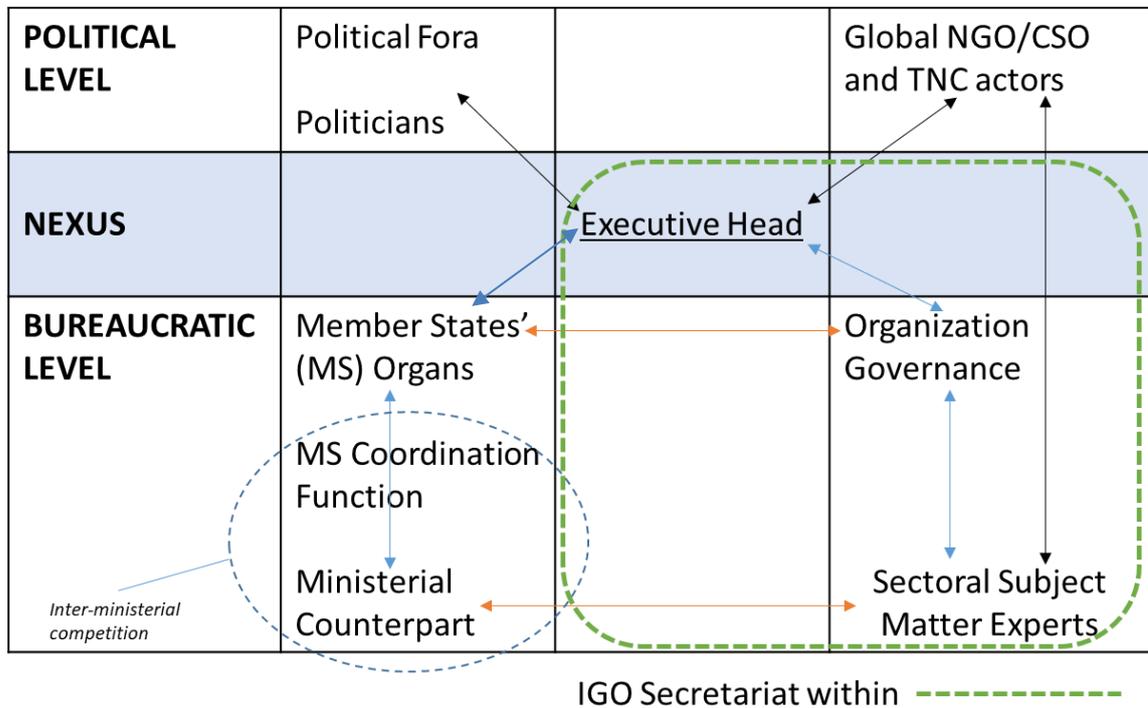
Figure 3: The placement of the executive head among actors, organs and players in an inter-governmental organisational structure[242]

Figure 3 interprets the inter-governmental organisation governance structure from a relational point of view, clearly showing the pivotal role of the executive head. The blue arrows symbolise internal coordination and interpretation, the black arrows symbolise relations at the political level, and the orange arrows symbolise relations at bureaucratic levels (governance and substantive) between member states and the organisation's secretariat. Figure 3 illustrates the translation role of the executive head, but also the fact that member states operate simultaneously at both political and bureaucratic levels. Thus the messaging may not always be fully coordinated for a state between the two levels nor within its ministerial bureaucratic apparatus, where inter-ministerial competition is a spoiler for effective coordination. The secretariat subject matter or substantive experts and their contribution to policymaking are often left out of or marginalised in analysis.

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[242] Author's drawing, where: NGO: non-governmental organisation, CSO: civil society organisation, and TNC: trans-national corporation.

'It is important to pay particular attention to the … staffs of the permanent secretariats. Although their power is formally quite small, their contributions are nevertheless very real.'[243]

The answers to Reuter's questions are that the provisions are met at both formal and informal levels. If there is no balance between members states, in raw numbers and in terms of power, the organisation will either dominated by one group or hegemon; or, if governance is consensus-based (or with veto rights), held hostage by politically squeezed member states. It is the role of executive head to negotiate between states and also to reconcile with states between their substantive and bureaucratic goals and the political ones, which are not always aligned. National bureaucracy also carries with it autonomy as a national actor.

The executive head's agency cannot be determined in the absence of inter-relational activity. In the next subsection, I will consider the functional aspects of these activities.

2.4   The Functions of the Role of the Executive Head

As previously defined and illustrated in Figures 1, 2 and 3 above, and in the previous sections an inter-governmental organisation is both a political and a bureaucratic structure and the nexus, or pivot between the two is the executive head. Robert W. Cox (1969) went as far as suggesting:

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[243] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, pp. 79-80. International civil servants as change agents or actors with agency is not well researched area. Bode does rectify this somewhat in 'Individual Agency and Policy Change at the United Nations', and states: 'the broader issue of temporary individual civil servants acting as agents of change in processes of policy development in the UN system, the book has clearly shown the analytical disregard for UN individuals beyond the Secretary-General [the executive head] is mistaken. Overall, individuals in temporary UN positions emerged as crucial innovators in circulating constitutive and regulative ideas. Without accounting for their agency, the emergence of connected new policies or the adjustment of old policies remains uncertain.' Bode, Ingrid, *Individual Agency and Policy Change at the United Nations - The People of the United Nations*, Routledge, London, 2015, p. 190.

If we want to answer the question "Are intergovernmental organizations merely instruments of national foreign policies or do they influence world politics in their own right?" then we must take a look at the executive head.[244]

In this light the executive head is expected in Yi-chong's definition (2015)[245] to have three main basic functions:

1. As diplomats, the executive leaders of inter-governmental organisations have to be able to pursue collective interests, represent their organisations in international arenas, mobilise political and financial support from key member states and relevant non-state players, and legitimise the actions and operations of the organisations.

The executive head is expected to represent the inter-governmental organisation they lead. Their diplomatic role further entails persuading national leaders of the organisation's case and generating political support. Thus, 'attract the attention of the international and economic communities to generate both the legitimacy needed for their cause and the financial resources to carry them out'.[246] The latter increasingly come from projectised funds from private foundations, bilaterally from states, or from multilateral institutions, such as other inter-governmental organisations. The executive head is therefore also expected to, work diplomatically with peers in other inter-governmental organisations and with the community in a broader sense.

2. As politicians, executive heads must be able to work with member states with diverse interests which are jealously protecting their sovereignty, and persuade them to support multilateral actions and to achieve common goals; and

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[244] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23(02), pp 205-230, 1969.
[245] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders*, Routledge, New York, 2015.
[246] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 81.

3. As bureaucratic leaders[247] they need to develop a sense of mission and of purpose for their agency, and be able to mobilise and manage international civil servants coming from multiple countries, with multiple cultures, education backgrounds, expertise and skills.

The three functions are individually complex; merged together they possess a sizeable challenge for any incumbent. The span increases when a substantial and desirably robust knowledge of the organisation's areas of work is added. These three overarching functions are held up against the tasks at hand as what the executive head is expected to do:

a) maintain support and legitimacy in the eyes of both member states and the secretariat;

b) respond to the demands of accountability to their state masters while retaining the ability to lead; and

c) muster the necessary capacity, both politically and technically, to influence the agenda, understand the problems, and develop ways ahead for their institutions.[248]

The diplomat, politician, and bureaucratic leader build on Cox's framework of the three key aspects of the executive head's relationships, as follows: i) international bureaucracy, ii) member states and iii) the international system.[249] These three functions are individually complex and merged possess a sizeable challenge for any incumbent. When a desirably robust substantial knowledge of the organisation's areas of work is added the

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[247] Xi-chong and Weller rename this trait to 'managers', which I my view is not an adequate term. The inquiry has to be based on issues and role modulations that will and cannot be delegated out of the immediate reach of the executive head and his/hers nearest collaborators, which many managerial issues can and should be. See: Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 56.

[248] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 57.

[249] Leysens, Anthony, *The Critical Theory of Robert W. Cox - Fugitive or Guru?*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, p. 16. Further from Leysens, p. 16: 'In the same article, Cox sources a functionalist view of international organisations from Ernst Haas' *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization* (1964). He then attempts to augment Haas' framework by focusing on three key aspects of the executive head's relationships; those related to the international bureaucracy, those related to dealings with member states, and those related to interactions with the international system. It is important to note that he emphasises the crucial role played by sub-national groups (domestic forces) who he argues are in a position to influence the foreign policy of their government towards international organisations. This leads him to propose that international organisations need to maintain links with domestic groups within member states who are well disposed to their goals and that, as such, the executive head needs to keep abreast of'

span increases further. The knowledge of the mandated substantive matters, for example economics, can be critical in maintaining support and legitimacy, in particular towards the secretariat.[250] Cox elaborates on i) by pointing out three ways in which the executive head engages with their organisation's internal bureaucracy: coercion or commanding, collaborative, and issue selective.[251]

In the next section, I will consider the different aspect of the life-cycle of executive head tenure.

2.5   Executive Head Self-perception of Agency and Implementation

The executive heads therefore navigate their paths in the structures and processes described above, aiming at implementing the functional elements of their mandate. In determining the strategy or tactic the executive head's self-perception of own agency is crucial. Reading the organisational landscape from both political and bureaucratic points of view is necessary for the incoming executive head to be able to build a self-perception, Knowing why states (or some states) want this particular individual can also be information the future executive head does not want to have explain, as 'states may purposefully choose a leader who will not rock the boat or does not have "bold ideas".'[252]

An executive head's road into and through an inter-governmental organisation as described and with the traits of the role the individual is set to attract only certain people. 'From the very beginning, IOs were led by people with high profiles, extensive experience and distinguished records as leaders. The positions as heads of IOs have become increasingly contested by people with these qualities. How individuals become executive

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[250] Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 13, pp. 235-254 in Kane, John, Patapan, Haig, 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *Dispersed Democratic Leadership: Origins, Dynamics, and Implications*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009, p. 239.
[251] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23(02), pp 205-230, 1969, pp. 220-221.
[252] Hall, Nina, Woods, Ngaire, 'Theorizing the Role of the Executive Head in International Organizations', European Journal of International Relations, 2017, p. 6. See also: Schroeder, Michael Bluman, 'Executive Leadership in the Study of International Organization: A Framework for Analysis', International Studies Review 16, pp. 339-361, 2014.

leaders of IOs is one of the factors that define their leadership',[253] and thereby their actions during the tenure. The following subsections will discuss:

1. The impact of the appointment process on agency;
2. Tenure: information, decision making and implementation; and
3. Tenure as transitory – within an elite pool.

2.5.1 The Impact of the Appointment Process on Agency

The in-coming executive head of an inter-governmental organisation is with almost no exception selected by member states through a competitive political process. This varies in transparency and interconnectedness with other inter-governmental organisation, issues in relation to the organisation itself, or the multilateral system, as seen from the perspective of a member state. In this subsection we analyse the appointment process that resulted in the first or initial appointment of a candidate, i.e., to the executive head's first term.

The selection process is used by both executive head candidates, states,[254] and in some instances (and informally) senior representatives of the organisation as well as other stakeholders (such as individuals, other international organisations, or civil society organisations) to signal both formal or informal individual, organisational and state level interests, to which the parties respond, informally or formally, or ignore.

Hawkins and Jacoby[255] set out four analytical claims framing the described selection process:

1. Principals are more likely to delegate when agents use interpreting strategies designed to convince principals that agent and principal preferences align.

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[253] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders,* Routledge, New York, 2015, p. 10.
[254] Here, individual representatives in the process and their interpretation of their instruction, own relative agency with respect to other states, and formal mandate.
[255] Hawkins, Darren G., Lake, David A., Nielson, Daniel L., Tierney, Michael J. (eds.*), Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 213.

2. Once states have delegated authority, agents can use buffering strategies to covertly increase their autonomy.

3. Once states have delegated authority, agents can use strategies to increase their own permeability to third parties and thereby increase their autonomy.

4. Once states have delegated authority, agents can use reinterpretation strategies to openly increase their autonomy.

An underlying assumption is the incomplete and asymmetric information on agency before, during and after the executive head tenure. The executive head's ex-ante perception of agency determines the agent's appetite to influence and reinterpret structure through process or operation. However, the ex-post revelation of actual realised agency may never come to fruition because of the incomplete and asymmetrical information in the structure. The best opportunity may be the selection process as parties seek incentive alignment.

Simon Chesterman claims that the formal appointment process of the executive head in an inter-governmental organisation is:

> governed by the constitutive document of the body. Such formal procedures often reveal little of how the decisions are actually made, however. In theory, formal rules may embrace principles of sovereign equality such as one vote per member state; in reality, power disparities manifest in informal practices and conventions that give greater weight to members, or balance and regional interests by ensuring a rotation of leadership positions.[256]

This means that the appointment process itself can be both an indication of the future executive head agency and its relationship with member states.

Some general factors in selection that impact the appointment process have changed in recent decades, specifically:

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[256] Chesterman, Simon, 'Executive Heads', Chapter 38, pp. 822-836, in Cogan, Jacob Katz, Hurd, Ian, Johnstone, Ian (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Organizations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016, p. 822.

i) The democratization of IOs. As more member states become active, as the issues expand, so the emerging powers argue that the choice of leaders should reflect these trends;

ii) The question of term limits. In the IOs' early days, with limited participation, it was not uncommon for an IO to have the same DG [executive head] for fifteen to twenty years; and

iii) Whether the heads of IOs need to be insiders or outsiders? Should they have experience working in IOs and know the details of the challenges … or should they be people of distinction, with records of achievements elsewhere.[257]

The chosen executive head therefore brings not only their past with them, but also the relational results of the 'struggle' that an appointment process is for the inter-governmental organisation. For the new incumbent to have been chosen, other candidates must have been defeated or discarded.

2.5.2 Tenure: Information, Decision Making and Implementation

Once the executive head is appointed the work begins. In this subsection the hypothesis is that the order sequence, when the work of the inter-governmental organisation is initiated by the executive head, is: i) information gathering and understanding, ii) decision making, and iii) implementation of the decision. As Cox and Jacobson remarked: 'Decisions can change power relations [and thereby relative agency] either by changing the resources available to the actors or by changing the procedures through which they interact so as to give some actors a more advantageous position than others.'[258] Decision making thereby has a dynamic impact on actors' agency, hereunder the executive head.

It is important to keep in mind that no inter-governmental organisation operates in a vacuum, and the impact of the organisation's relevance in comparison to other inter-governmental organisations on the executive head's agency is clear. Therefore, the question is: What type of agency do you have or are afforded if your organisation is

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[257] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 64.
[258] Cox, Robert W., Jacobson, Harold K., 'Decision Making', *International Social Science Journal* 29 (1), 1977, p. 116.

irrelevant? Probably a lot more than if it is politically relevant to a majority of member states. To answer these questions, we return to Reinalda and Verbeek's definition of the set of limiting structural factors, which determine the ability to exercise the role of executive head successfully:

> a) the room for manoeuvre allowed to inter-governmental organisations by their member states, whether formally or informally;

> b) the extent to which the image of neutral and impartial player can be maintained;

> c) the specific phase in the policy cycle on which inter-governmental organisations seek to make an impact; and

> d) the specific traits of individuals occupying consequential positions within inter-governmental organisations.[259]

The unknown factor for the executive head is the degree to which the information surrounding a), b), c) and d) is asymmetrical and/or incomplete. Principals— states — do play against each other at times,[260] and misinformation may also occur. When navigating these complex information sets the executive head needs either process control or formal and informal alliances with member states and secretariat staff, or both, as:

> the influence of international organizations' [secretariat] staffs … stems mainly from their location at the centre of the policy-making process. As a result, [secretariat] staffs often have an advantage over member states. This information advantage can come from studies, reports or proposals that members of [secretariat] staff are asked to prepare or which they themselves initiate, to inform policy-making within the organization. In addition, their central position lends a secretariat's leadership a remarkable influence as an agenda-setter. Frequently, the [secretariat] staffs of international organizations (co-)determine the agendas,

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[259] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 39, pp. 595-609, in Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 596.
[260] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 232.

thus influencing the decisions to be taken. Where member states' interests are not clear, the [secretariat] staff's influence on policy-making can grow very rapidly to the point where it is not only playing the role of agenda-setter but also that of policy entrepreneur.[261]

With access to internal secretariat information, and agency to influence and direct the processes[262] of the inter-governmental organisation, the executive head has a good starting point in understanding and forming the self-perception of their agency. These policy-making processes will eventually end up achieving a classification of the areas covered. 'This classification process is bound up with power.'[263], i.e., solidifying or enhancing the agency of the executive head.

Returning to Hawkins and Jacoby's [264] four claims: Once installed in office the executive head plays through steps 2.-4 of the above described selection process, as a set of iterative games designed to increase (or explore) more autonomy from states (for the organisation), i.e., agency. The agency is therefore a result of engaging 2.-4. through informal and formal processes, given the set cultures and norms at the time, in the structure defined in Figure 3. Figure 3 illustrates the triangular relationship and the levels within: i) The cultures and norms are linked to the informal processes and vice versa, ii) the structures linked to the formal processes. Over time relationship i) is likely to change gradually and slowly, whereas ii) might change drastically through e.g., organisational reform. With an iterative plan for unveiling and potentially increasing agency combined with other secretariat staff acting as 'agents of change'[265] the executive head has a good chance of maximising their agency within the set structures and processes[266]. However, member states may seem to counter this by redesigning the policy-making process.[267] The

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[261] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 80. See also: Pollack, Mark A., *The Engines of European Integration: Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.

[262] Described in 2.3.3 above.

[263] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations'*, International Organization* 53 (4), pp. 699-732, 1999, p. 710.

[264] Hawkins, Darren G., Lake, David A., Nielson, Daniel L., Tierney, Michael J. (eds*.), Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 213.

[265] Bode, Ingrid, *Individual Agency and Policy Change at the United Nations - The People of the United Nations*, Routledge, London, 2015, p. 190.

[266] See 2.3.1 and 2.3.3.

[267] Verbeek, Bertjan, 'Leadership of International Organizations', Chapter 13, pp. 235-254 in Kane, John, Patapan, Haig, 't Hart, Paul (eds.), *Dispersed Democratic Leadership: Origins, Dynamics, and Implications*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009, p. 242. See also: Van Kersbergen, K., Verbeek, B.,

executive head can also create a scarcity through active or disruptive use of protocol regarding access, which projects a higher level of agency. Further, rather than working with or against existing structures, the executive head can peg the organisation to a different structure, e.g., through collaboration with another inter-governmental organisation, or seek to create a separate (projectised) structure.

The executive head's ability to utilise policy-making processes in combination with an iterative process towards the principals (the states), or to leverage structures, may run into less fertile ground once faced with the idiosyncrasies of inter-governmental organisations. Therefore, Barnet and Finnemore's (1999)[268] identified five features of inter-governmental organisations identified that might produce pathology:

1) Irrationality of rationalisation, where executive head agency can be curbed by the secretariats (bureaucracy's) tendency to fall back on the 'existing, well-known, and comfortable rulebook,'[269] rather than seeking their mandate in the most effective way.

2) Bureaucratic universalism, as bureaucracies have been put in place to 'generate universal rules and categories that are, by design, inattentive to contextual and particularistic concerns.'[270] So even if secretariat staff may be driving the policy-making processes, the possible lack of contextualisation may be damaging.

3) Normalisation of deviance, 'calculated deviations from established rules because of new environmental and institutional developments, explicitly calculating that bending the rules in this instance does not create excessive risk of policy failure. Over time … they can become institutionalized to the point where deviance is "normalized".'[271] This means that the executive head should be attentive from a cultural perspective; and whilst having

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'Subsidiarity as a Principle of Governance in the European Union', *Comparative European Politics* 2 (2), pp. 142-162, 2004.

[268] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations'*, International Organization* 53 (4), pp. 699-732, 1999, pp. 720-725.

[269] Idem, p. 720. See also: Beetham, David, *Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics*, Polity, New York, 1985, p. 76.

[270] Idem, p. 721.

[271] Idem, p. 722.

to ask new questions in all policy areas, should detect where the 'slippery slopes' are, from a policy perspective.

4) Insulation, when organisations close rank around themselves, shying away from the principals as something from which to protect the organisation, or an organisation populated solely by economist unable to accept or willing to understand any other world view.

5) Cultural contestation, in that no organisation is totally homogeneous, neither are inter-governmental organisations, where 'different constituencies representing different normative views will suggest different tasks and goals for the organization, resulting in a clash of competing perspectives that [potentially] generates pathological tendencies.'[272] There are therefore many spoilers of executive head agency.

The landscape illustrated in Figure 4 is what the executive head needs to navigate in each discrete decision-making time period. Specifically, this means the dynamic interplay of the soft and hard structures with the formal and informal processes of the organisation undertaken by actors, whose agency in the discrete decision-making period will determine the actor's impact.
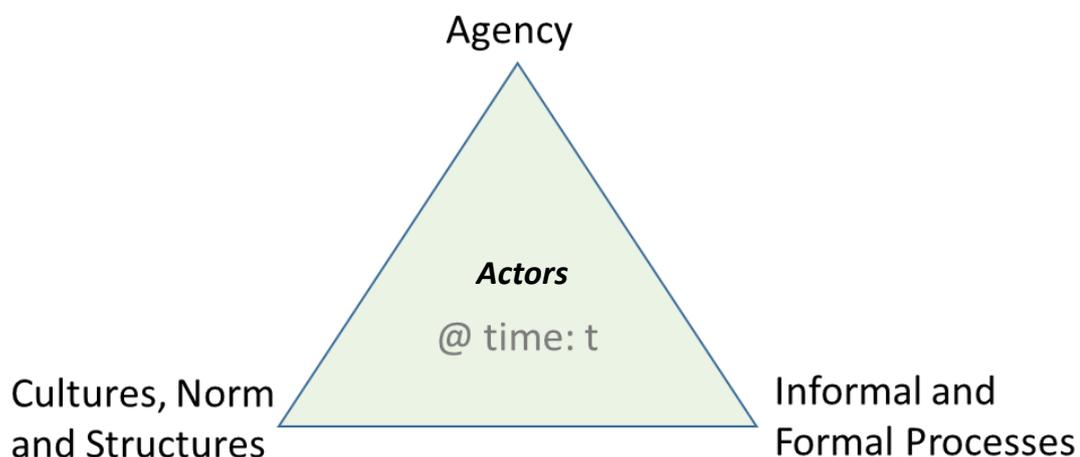
Figure 4: Agency and the Soft and Hard parts of Inter-Governmental Organisations[273]

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[272] Idem, p. 724.
[273] Author's drawing. For source of inspiration, see: Cox, Robert W., 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory'*, Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 10 (2), pp. 126-155. 1981, pp. 135-136.

An inter-governmental organisation's functioning through formal decision-making mechanisms can be divided into representative and participant subsystems, as described above.[274] The decision categories can be:

a) representational;

b) symbolic;

c) boundary;

d) programmatic;

e) rule-creating;

f) rule-supervisory; and

g) operational.[275]

These categories get to the essence of decision-making *within* the inter-governmental organisation, recalling that decision-making is a process of inputs and outputs with a feedback structure.[276] If the executive head can navigate the different categories well and not 'waste' agency and credibility on decisions categorised as b) or c) in particular, much effectiveness can be gained. The type of decision-making we have described above can be described as: 'a process of phases: a "barrier model", where an issue goes from preparation to decision and to implementation, or from agenda setting through deliberation on causes and alternative solutions..'[277] before the preferred one is decided upon. The themes of decision-making by inter-governmental organisations can vary to a great degree. The organisation can show the leadership needed in making member states adopt new policies. They can help build consensus around difficult collective problem-solving; but, unfortunately this is often seen as playing to the lowest common denominator rather than achieving a first- or second-best outcome. Taking into consideration the hats worn by not only state representatives, but also secretariat staff, as both the organisation and their country of pertinence make claims on their loyalty,[278] the more supranational the organisation is the higher the likelihood that the inter-

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[274] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004.

[275] Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973, p. 117.

[276] Easton, David, *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1965.

[277] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 14.

[278] 'The OECD regularly invites national civil servants to Paris and thus attempts to socialize them'. Idem, p. 240.

governmental organisation will win. For a policy to be adopted or agreed upon it is has to appear in a so called 'policy window', where it is politically possible to reach such agreement.[279]

Implementation follows once a decision has been taken and formulated, and this is where the problem of measuring the success or performance[280] of such implementation arises. Generally, 'some international organizations … are subject to constant criticism for producing poor results while others are praised for accomplishing difficult tasks despite political and resource constraints.'[281] The political relevance of the organisation in question is the big unknown factor here. Irrelevance is more easily embraced, with fewer possible implications and consequences for member state representatives, than issues and policies that really matter.

Monitoring the organisation means that executive head and secretariat are combined, from the normal principal-agent perspective. Allowing the executive head to effectively deal with the secretariat without interference depends on trust. Who gets to decide or have the upper hand in designing the metrics is a critically important. A well-established bureaucracy can make a performance framework an extension of its normal operations, reject it like an unwanted transplant, or embrace it. The executive head can greatly facilitate this or ensure it never happens, by either building or failing to build the right bureaucratic incentives.[282] However, 'those who want to know what executive heads of IGOs [inter-governmental organisations] have contributed to the results of their organizations will not find this in the presentations by the IGO itself or on IGO websites

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[279] Idem, pp. 237-241.
[280] On the performance discourse: 'While performance evaluations has been a hot topic inside individual organizations [and with member states] and in the policy literature, it has not been on the radar screen of most international relations scholars. Those seeking to expand IO [international organisation] theory remain focused on distinct questions of why states create institutions, how they pursue their interests through institutions, and whether or how IOs "matter". This scholarship appears largely removed from the from debates in the policy world on the performance of IOs, which tend to concentrate on more narrow issues of importance to particular institutions. Obviously, distinct and specific criteria must be used to evaluate individual organizations; analyzing the performance of an international court is different from analyzing the performance of UN Peacekeeping in the details of what is being measured. The same can be said of at different aspects of a single organization's performance.' There is clearly a research gap that more directly addresses implementation and more concretely than for example Barnet and Finnemore's pathologies. Gutner, Tamar, Thompson, 'The Politics of IO Performance: A Framework', *Review of International Organization* 5, 2010, p. 228.
[281] Idem, p. 227.
[282] Ibid.

... nothing about what the individual as leader of the secretariat .. unless being awarded an important prize.'[283]

2.5.3   *Tenure as Transitory – within an Elite Pool*

It is perhaps unsurprising that very little research and theoretical thinking has been spent on the implications of the transitory nature of executive head tenures. However, it is important to understand where the executive heads come from and where are they going. Executive leadership should in this environment be seen as a trajectory for future opportunity and past legacy, which can be formed into opportunity as well, e.g., the Kofi Annan Foundation.

Beyond the executive head all secretariat staff are in a potentially similar position, begging the question as to who are the people in the governance and organisational structures of inter-governmental organisations, and where do they come from? Figure 5 illustrates the elite circulation within what is very similar to the monitoring and influencing structure surrounding the organisations.

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[283] Reinalda, Bob, *International Secretariats – Two Centuries of International Civil Servants and Secretariats*, Routledge, London, 2020, p. 186.
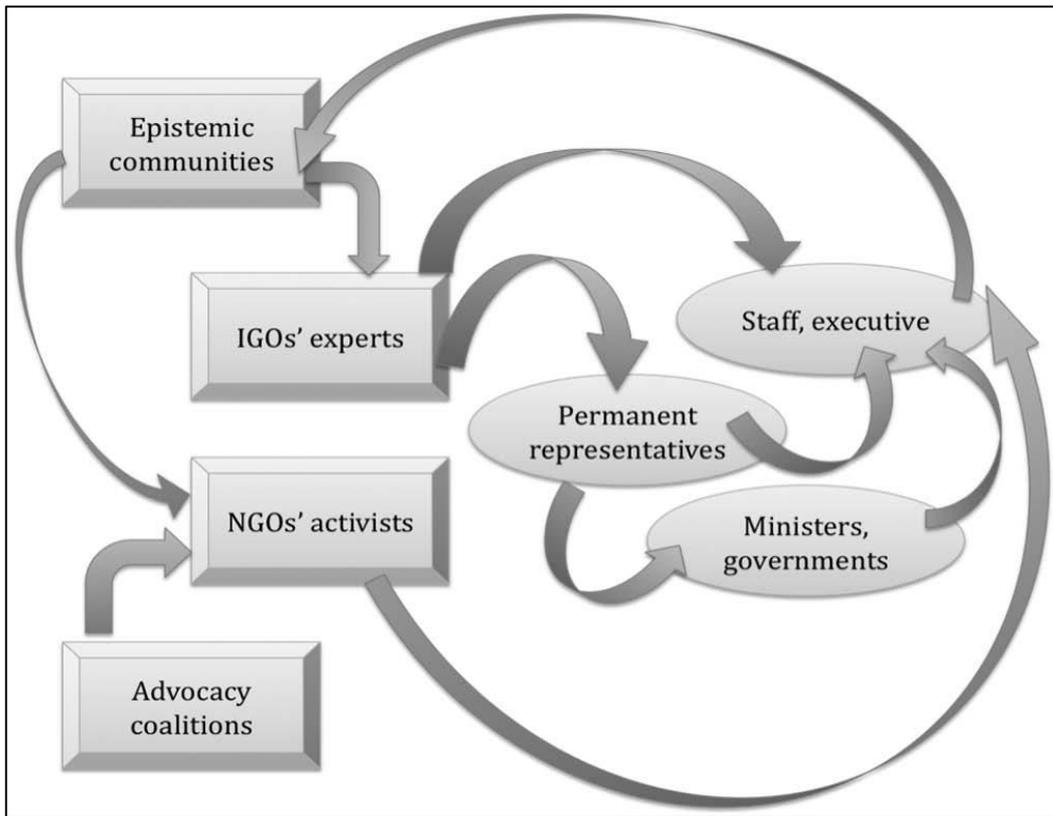
Figure 5: Elite circulation[284]

The world of inter-governmental organisations is small, even if it consists of many categories of actors.[285] 'Assuming that iterative multilateral negotiations are repeated over time and each requires dozens of participants, the conclusion is clear: the same people circulate from one venue to the next.'[286] As individuals circulate and construct their own experiences, the set of norms and norm expectations would permeate the communities. This means not only people, but policy ideas are recycled among inter-governmental organisations.

Viewing tenure as executive head as a stepping stone in a career, which will bring the individual to the next level, means that the incumbent's career progression and the speed

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[284] Schemeil, Yves, 'Bringing International Organization In: Global Institutions as Adaptive Hybrids', *Organizations Studies* 34 (2), pp. 219-252, 2013, p. 240.
[285] See 2.3.2
[286] Schemeil, Yves, 'Bringing International Organization In: Global Institutions as Adaptive Hybrids', *Organizations Studies* 34 (2), pp. 219-252, 2013, p. 239.

of career ascendance might affect the possible willingness to take risks in office to achieve significant results.

2.6   Summary: Towards a Codification of the Role of the Executive Head

In order to be effective, the executive heads self-perception of agency has to be close to the actual agency. In this chapter I have firstly analysed the nuts and bolt of the inter-governmental organisation: its structure, the actors who are part of it, the processes they populate, and what influence the organisational culture has on these parts functioning together. The functions the executive head has to undertake within this framework have been outlined and discussed, in particular the 'life-cycle' of the incumbent executive heads: their appointment process and what this might mean to the way they exercise their mandate and an analysis of how the executive head may try to navigate the organisation whilst seeking to maximise their agency.

I further proposed a relational model (Figure 4) centred around the pivotal role of the executive head, clearly illustrating the translational role of the executive head between the political and bureaucratic. This also evidences the at time disjoined member state coordination between political levels and the bureaucratic substantive level of representation and participation, which also could be exacerbated by national inter-ministerial competition. Rather than seeing the forces facing the organisation and the executive head solely as constraints the model revealed them as potential forces for leveraging.

The secretariats tend to be a sponge for professional staff and in most inter-governmental organisations the professionals tend to be permanent staff,[287] which enhances the likelihood of developing bureaucratic autonomy over time. The world of inter-governmental organization world is relatively small, where the circulation of elites also means the circulation of ideas and of own bureaucratic autonomy.[288]

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[287] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders*, Routledge, New York, 2015.
[288] Schemeil, Yves, 'Bringing International Organization In: Global Institutions as Adaptive Hybrids', *Organizations Studies* 34 (2), pp. 219-252, 2013.

The principal-agent theory discussed earlier emphasises the external, 'political', and their dominance in shaping an inter-governmental organisation's policies and operations. However, constructivist theory would be better suited to analyse the political influence on the organisations and how their bureaucratic norms and culture influence the inter-governmental organisation's practises.[289] This means that this this thesis ends up with what Reinalda and Verbeek coins a 'middle-range' theoretical approach:

> The discussion between rationalists [proponent of principal-agent theory] and constructivists is not limited to substantive issues such as the origin of preferences and the impact of ideational factors. It also extends to the question of the role of theory should play in social science. Some constructivists would go as far as to reject the rationalist position completely on epistemological grounds. They consider the starting point of individual actors giving meaning to, or constructing, their environments as inherently irreconcilable with the behaviouralism of many rationalists and see the latter's interest in sweeping generalizations.[290]

This thesis takes the middle ground on this issue and embraces the duality of subject matter. Since states and only states can decide to found an inter-governmental organisation, the construction – literally – starts only when the first incumbents of the secretariat picks up the pieces from states and starts to add the flesh to the skeleton.

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[289] Weaver, Catherine, 'The World's Bank and the Bank's World', *Global Governance* 13 (4), pp. 493-512, 2007.
[290] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 27. See also: Zehfuss, M., *Constructivism in International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 5-6 and pp. 38-39, for a discussion on this position.

Table 1: The sources of inter-governmental organisation performance[291]

	Internal ['Bureaucratic']	External ['Political']
Social	- Organisational culture - Leadership deficit	- Competing norms - Lack of consensus on problem
Material	- Inadequate staffing, resources - Bureaucratic self-interest	- Power politics among member states - Incoherent mandates - On-the-ground constraints

In my adaption, Table 1 'Bureaucratic' and 'Political' are not separate forces, but are rather interwoven as the important exchange takes place in their nexus symbolised by the ><. In real life they are both interwoven and overlap. As we have seen above the selection and appointment of an executive head that will have a resultant effect on the exercise of leadership and implementation of mandate by this individual.

To conclude: The codified duality of the role of political versus bureaucratic function is imperative. The recognition that the executive head's role is in the nexus between the two is the only way that a reasonable understanding of the role can emerge. For the purpose of the analysis of the case studies in Chapter 3, I will, in particular, rely on the important codification of actors and different relational levels made in Figure 3, section 2.3.5, as the figure clearly illustrates the pivotal role of the executive head. The analysis in Chapter 3 will take this starting point and view the role of the executive head through this prism. Attention will also be given to the individual executive head's career journey as they are observable and shape individual preferences and interests.

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3. Case Studies: the UNECE and the OECD

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the two case studies, the UNECE and the OECD, with a detailed overview and discussion of the historical aspect of the two organisations and in particular their common and somewhat adversarial beginnings. The discussion includes the historical trajectories of the two organisations with respect to the overarching political (be it geopolitical or ideological) paradigm within which they had to operate, and what this did to their relevance and effectiveness as inter-governmental organisations. The sections focused on the individual organisations relates and aligns them to the particular elements of the analytical framework being brought forward from Chapter 2.

The chapter outline is as follows:

1. The UNECE and the OECD: their common historical background;
2. The UNECE;
3. The OECD; and
4. Summary of case study findings.

3.2 The UNECE and the OECD: Their Common Historical Path

3.2.1 Introduction

My original purpose of the thesis project was to investigate new world orders and their effects on intergovernmental organizations, with a particular emphasis on providing a historical context for the discussion. Reducing the scope I ended with a framework, where I will look at this situation from the inside out rather than from the outside in. Because the framework for international relations, which is mostly composed of its own internal references, can only take you so far,[292] it is essential to incorporate elements of organizational conception and development. The connection between historical study and

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[292] Williams, Andrew, *Failed imagination? – The Anglo-American new world order from Wilson to Bush*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2007, p. 1.

engagement in international affairs is sometimes seen as a neglected one. [293] This section will examine the common historical journey of the two organisations up to the formation of the OECD in 1961.

Bob Reinalda's 2009 volume 'Routledge History of International Organizations – From 1815 to the Present Day'[294] draws up the very long lines in the history of as well as the inter-governmental organisations and the history they have been embedded in. He notes:

> 'in the theoretical debates during the last 25 years, more attention has been paid to cooperation between states and contributions of international organizations to international relations. This applies to the debate … [on the general international landscape], which confirmed that even distrustful states may cooperate on a long-term basis through decision-making approaches and social-constructivism, which stressed the relevance of new ideas, expertise and authority. These debates gradually entailed greater empirical attention.'[295]

This thesis acknowledges that empirical attention is needed to set the scene for the executive head and their undertakings in more than just a self-referencing international relations fashion. The present section therefore lays out the commonality of the history of international, and thereby inter-governmental, organisations which trace their origin back to the peace treaties of Westphalia[296]. The two conferences in 1648 that agreed the

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[293] Idem, p. 5.

[294] Reinalda, Bob, *The Routledge History of International Organizations - From 1815 to the Present Day*, Routledge. London, 2009.

[295] Idem, p. 1.

[296] Some international systems existed in and around the Chinese, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian civilisations between the years 3500 B.C. and 1500 CE, which correspond to the ancient times and the Middle Ages, respectively. However, the end of the Wars (Thirty Years and Eighty Years) in 1648 resulted in an international treaty, which, starting with the state building that began with the Italian wars in 1494-1518, laid the foundation for the modern state and the modern state system. Most importantly, Article 64 discusses the territorial right of non-intervention by other states, Article 65 states the sovereign right and authority with respect to foreign policy, and Article 67 elaborates the sovereign states' right to determine its own domestic politics without foreign interference. As a result of the Westphalia treaty the power relation on the European continent changed. The state system was now based on a combination of flexible alliances and extensive state competition in its management of the balance of power. According to Pelz balance of power systems are regarded as stable if they satisfy three conditions: '[i]] an alliance structure in which the distribution of benefits reflects the distribution of power among its members, [ii]] a substantial ideological agreement among the principal powers on what the system is intended to protect, and [iii]] commonly accepted procedures for managing changes within the system.' See: Pelz, S., 'Balance of Power', in Hogan, M.J, Paterson, T. G. (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 113; Kegley Jr., C. W., Wittkopf, E. R.,

treaties are seen as the first European congresses, that laid the foundation for the nation-state centred international architecture.[297] Subsequently multilateral conferences became an instrument for states to exercise and implement multilateral diplomatic processes.[298] Interestingly the first truly global entities emerging were the international unions, The International Telegraph Union (established in 1865) and the Universal Postal Union (established in 1874).[299] It is worth noting that these unions', as precursors to inter-governmental organisations, mandated scope were and is technical in essence, as opposed to wholly politically driven organisations. Synthesising this, Amstrong et. al. (2004) suggest that that are three essential conditions for an international inter-governmental organisation to exist:

1. Independent political communities – if not, they world would be dominated by a hegemon or colonial;
2. Rules agreed among such communities that purport to regulate their relations with each other – of not, the relations would just be random informal interactions; and
3. A formal to structure to implement and enforce the rules [or statutes] – otherwise this would depend on national diplomatic efforts rather than with some element of management by standing entity.[300]

With these conditions laid out and the precursors of the organisations analysed here, the elements to describe the founding of the organisations are present.

3.2.2 The Founding

The antecedents to the formation of the UN and international organisations have been covered above. However, 'the League [of Nations] bequeathed to World War II policy-makers a blue print for issues that would face a future international organization in the post-war world.'[301] However, as the historian Mark Mazower remarked:

> Like the League, the United Nations was much more than a mere alliance, an international organization with global aspiration … Like the League, it spoke for humanity but acted through national governments. Like the League it talked about international law but deliberately avoided turning rhetoric into substance. But this time round, both the commitment to national self-determination and the turn away from law were more extensive. Tension and ambiguity were hardwired into the UN from the start.[302]

Despite and because of this and in the ruinous aftermath of World War II in Europe, the United States was:

> Anxious to avoid the mistakes made after the First World War and counterbalance the communist threat posed by the USSR … Under their [United States Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman] auspices, a rash of international institutions appeared to promote international cooperation and deter another military conflagration. Somewhat surprisingly, given the importance attached to European unity and prosperity … it did not [originally] envisage a specific institutional apparatus around which European could coalesce or which would supervise European recovery.[303]

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[301] Rofe, J. Simon, 'Prewar and Wartime Postwar Planning: Antecedents to the UN Moment in San Francisco', Chapter 1, pp. 17-35, in Plesch, Dan, Weiss, Thomas G. (eds.), *Wartime Origins and the Future United Nations*, Routledge, London, 2015, p. 20.

[302] Mark Mazower quoted in: Weiss, Thomas G., Carayannis, Tatiana, Emmerij, Louise, Jolly, Richard, *UN Voices: The Struggle for Development and Social Justice*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2005, pp. 412–413.

[303] Woodward, Richard, The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Routledge, London, 2009, p. 13. However, 'ECE's creators at the UN anticipated the international coordination of reconstruction plans to be a key activity for the new organization. With state planning on the rise across Europe, reconstruction plans were often at conflict with each other.' The politic setting and the emerging blocs outside and within the UN made the purposeful usage of the UNECE impossible. See: Stinsky, Daniel, 'A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission

The United States invested $9 billion[304] in helping Europe get back on its feet during the years 1945 and 1947. However, the majority of this money came from one party to another in the form of ad hoc or bilateral transactions or agreements. The majority of European states were given the responsibility of directing their own rehabilitation with the assistance of financial aid flowing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.[305] If we are to find a political fork in the road on where the impossibility of the UNECE and the OEEC could be one organisation, it can be found in what then became 'The political background to Marshall Aid' namely, ' the failure of the conference organized by the four occupying powers on the future of Germany, which was held in Moscow at the beginning of 1947. During the conference Marshall resisted the Soviet policy, which was based on high reparations from Germany and its industrial dismantlement.'[306] As well, by the middle of 1947, it had become abundantly clear that this strategy was not successful. As a result of dwindling international liquidity, intra-European trade has become paralysed, which has exacerbated the shortages of food, fuel, and raw materials that were caused by the harsh winter that occurred in 1946. The United States of America decided to get involved at this moment because various economies in Europe were on the verge of collapse, there was growing social discontent, and communist parties were making inroads in both France and Italy.[307] This meant that the UNECE, having received UN General Assembly approval by December 1946, by the time of its first session in May 1947, had the failure of the above mentioned Moscow conference and 'enunciation of the Truman Doctrine, and uncertainty over the position of the USSR.'[308] This left the UNECE treading water politically.

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for Europe, 1947-1957', chapter in Christian, Michel, Kott, Sandrine, Matejka, Ondrej (eds.), *Planning in Cold War Europe - Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018, p. 57.

[304] 'As for the Marshall Aid, estimating the contribution of aid is extremely. We must first understand what the Marshall Plan was and what it actually did. The mechanics of the aid and the specific context in which it was supplied were very complicated and involved over seventeen very different nations.' Barbezat, Daniel, 'The Marshall Plan and the Origin of the OEEC', Chapter II in Griffiths, Richard T. (ed.), *Explorations in OEEC History*, OECD Historical Series, Paris, 1997, pp. 40.

[305] Idem, p. 13.

[306] Reinalda, Bob, *The Routledge History of International Organizations - From 1815 to the Present Day*, Routledge. London, 2009, p. 407

[307] Woodward, Richard, The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Routledge, London, 2009, p. 13.

[308] Rostow, Walt W., 'The Economic Commission for Europe', *International Organization 3 (2)*, pp. 254-268, 1949, p. 257.

'He [Marshall] did not want to end with a 'new' UNRRA[309], nor did he have much faith in the UN's Economic Commission for Europe [UNECE] (established in December 1946) due to the likelihood of Soviet opposition.'[310] The United States' preferences were laid bare in Marshall's famous speech, as the Department of State was of the opinion that the United States did not have sufficient control over the coordination of UNRRA and did not want the UN to dictate the policy of European recovery.[311] In June 1947 the USSR would not discuss 'co-operative recovery plan', they neither were receptive to proposals, nor presented any real alternative to American aid and recovery plans for Europe.[312]

The years of the European Recovery Program[313] are when the beginnings of the intertwined histories of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) may be traced back to. The two organizations were established in 1947/1948 with mandates that substantially overlapped one another, namely, to aid the economic recovery and collaboration in Europe after World War II. At least to all appearances, the delegates representing the member states were of this opinion.[314] Both organizations were named after the years in which they were established. The Economic and Social Commission for Europe, which is a regional commission in the United Nations system, referred back to an organization that had worldwide reach. Of the United Nations, it can said, that its 'first characteristic .. undoubtedly [is] its universalism, demonstrated from the outset by the presence of the United States and the Soviet Union.'[315] The organisations were conceived of at the same point in history, as seen in Figure 6:

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[309] 'The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [UNRRA] was set up by the Allies in November 1943 and operated under Allied command. Its mandate was restricted to assisting civilians from Allied states and displaced persons in states liberated by their troops.' in Reinalda, Bob, *The Routledge History of International Organizations - From 1815 to the Present Day*, Routledge. London, 2009, p. 349.

[310] Reinalda, Bob, *The Routledge History of International Organizations - From 1815 to the Present Day*, Routledge. London, 2009, p. 407

[311] Ibid.

[312] Barbezat, Daniel, 'The Marshall Plan and the Origin of the OEEC', Chapter II in Griffiths, Richard T. (ed.), *Explorations in OEEC History*, OECD Historical Series, Paris, 1997, pp. 34.

[313] The official name for the Marshall Plan.

[314] See: Stinsky, Daniel, 'Western European Vs. All-European Cooperation? The OEEC, the European Recovery Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 1947-1952', Chapter 4, pp. 65-88, in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, pp. 65-66.

[315] Gerbet, Pierre, 'Rise and Development of International Organization: a Synthesis', pp. 27-49, in Abi-Saab, Georges (ed.), *The concept of international organization*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), Paris, 1981, p. 46.

Year	1947	1948	.....	1961	.....	.....	*2022*
UNECE	♦ ────────────────────────────────→						
OEEC		♦ ──────→ †					
OECD				♦ ──────────────→			
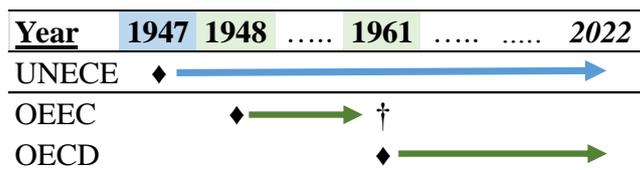
Figure 6: Timeline

Many Marshall Plan and OEEC/OECD centric studies on European integration after World War II treat the UNECE as an absent entity or an appendix.[316] The focus is usually on Western European and the United States. It is important to bear this in mind, as much of the literature and research consulted have (Western) European integration[317] per se as their scope not the historic paths of the organisations partaking in it.[318]

To enact the Marshall Plan, the Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC)[319] met in March 1948 and the 'Convention for European Economic Cooperation' was agreed as a result. The first article of the convention outlines the establishment of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). [320] The UNECE was set up in March 1947, a year before the OEEC, with strong support from Western-European countries and the United States.[321] The tensions between the West and the Soviet Union

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[316] Ventresca, Roberto, 'The OECD as a Global Preacher for Capitalism', pp. 301-326, in Grin, Gilles, Nicod, Françoise, Altermatt, Bernhard (eds.), Forms of Europe. European Union and Other Organisations, Cahiers rouges, Volume 218, 2018, p. 303.

[317] 'The idea of European integration in various forms is a very one but it was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that cooperative European integration began to take place on a significant scale. It is true that this was preceded by a flurry of activity in the interwar years – most notably, the establishment of the Belgo-Luxembourg customs union (1922), the Briand Memorandum (1930) and the activities of Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-European Community, which advocated a European federation. However, it was to take a second world war before European integration and a "community" of European nation states could begin to become a reality. European integration was now an idea whose time had (finally) come. The aftermath of the war created a unique situation which made cooperation in (western) Europe essential, although its form and extent were, and still, are subject to extensive debate.' Amstrong, David, Lloyd, Lorna, Redmond, John, *International Organization in World Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2004, p. 141.

[318] Williams, Andrew, '"Reconstruction" before the Marshall Plan', *Review of International Studies* 31 (3), pp. 541-558, 2005, p. 548.

[319] With the stated goal of: i) increase production, ii) eliminate inflation, iii) promote economic cooperation, and iv) solve the dollar payment problem.

[320] Barbezat, Daniel, 'The Marshall Plan and the Origin of the OEEC', Chapter II in Griffiths, Richard T. (ed.), Explorations in OEEC History, OECD Historical Series, Paris, 1997, pp. 34-35.

[321] Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, pp. 10-11.
Further, 'As for those countries that were not members of the United Nations [Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland], Article 8 of the [UN]ECE mandate stipulated that the Commission could admit them in a consultative capacity, without limitation, to "the consideration of matters specially affecting them," as suggested by the Soviet Union … These

were ever increasing; however, no formal break had happened between the two, who were soon to become blocks.[322] However:

> On June 5, 1947 – between the first and second sessions [of the UNECE] – Secretary of State Marshall delivered his speech at Harvard, and suddenly European reconstruction became a matter of policy at the highest political level. By the opening of the second session, on July 5, the Soviet delegation had already left Paris and the possibility of executing the Marshall Plan on an all-European basis was lost, and in this tense and uncertain atmosphere the second session of the [UN]ECE convened.[323]

In the words of the UNECE Executive Secretary Gunnar Myrdal[324], the tension was greatly felt and impacted the work during the first two sessions:

arrangements and practices, concerning Germany and other non-members of the United Nations'.. made, in the words of Myrdal, the '[UN]ECE an all-European organization right from the start, at a time when the question of admission to membership of the United Nations of a number of countries was unresolved.' UNECE, *ECE The First Ten Years 1947-1957*, United Nations, Geneva, 1957, p. II-3.

[322] Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, p. 11.

[323] Rostow, Walt W., 'The Economic Commission for Europe', *International Organization 3 (2)*, pp. 254-268, 1949, p. 257.

[324] About the persona Gunnar Myrdal: Gunnar Myrdal was a public intellectual and a theorist of modernity, probably more known at this present day for his work 'An American Dilemma' from 1944. He was though more of an economist than a politician and statesman, being the Nobel Prize winner in economics in 1974. Not to forget his wife, Alva Myrdal, who herself as a diplomat and UN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. His subject matter knowledge of the mandated activities of the UNECE definitely were on a much higher level than that of his counterparts in ministries and at the OEEC. He is deeply entangled with the development of the Swedish Welfare state and is regularly credited as the key architect of the "Swedish Model". Barber, William, Gunnar Myrdal: An Intellectual Biography, Pelgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2008, Stinsky, Daniel, 'A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1957', chapter in Christian, Michel, Kott, Sandrine, Matejka, Ondrej (eds.), Planning in Cold War Europe - Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s), De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018. See also: Eliæson, Sven, 'Gunnar Myrdal: A Theorist of Mordernity', Acta Sociologica 43 (4), pp. 331-341, 2000, Balabkins, Nicolas W., Gunnar Myrdal (1898-1987): A Memorial Tribute', Eastern Economic Journal 14 (1) , pp. 99-106, 1988. See appendix 6.6 for a list of UNECE Executive Secretaries and OECD (and OEEC) Secretary-Generals.

Further, as an economist: 'By the time Myrdal took over the ECE he was known as an institutional economist and in a major work, The American Dilemma, which appeared in 1944, had demonstrated his strong attachment to inter-disciplinary research and his belief that it was illegitimate to isolate economic variables from their political and social setting. Among his original contributions to theory were the concepts of ex ante and ex post, which emphasized the role of expectations and uncertainty in the economy, and of cumulative and circular causation. Both ideas broke away from the traditional static framework of economic theory, and both are important when considering the process of adjustment and structural change and the relative roles of the market and the State. A key element in his approach to research was his view that no research is ever free of political and moral preferences and therefore value premises should be stated explicitly.' Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, Looking Back and Peering

'at its first session in May 1947 [the Commission] after much acrimonious wrangling unanimously requested the Executive Secretary … to draw up plans for an infrastructure of technical committees[325] and when the Commission at its second session in July 1947 unanimously decided to accept this organizational structure, this was again probably the last time such intergovernmental agreements could have been reached.'[326]

At least at the executive head level at the UNECE there was the sense of a shared place in history, and the OEEC was very much on the mind of Executive Secretary Gunnar Myrdal. [327] It is unclear whether this sentiment was shared by the OEEC Secretary-General Robert Marjolin[328] at the time. Despite the fact that the UNECE had pan-European membership[329] and therefore would have been enabled to comprehensively and perhaps more meaningfully address the enormous issues of the reconstruction and development of Europe the big 'if' is what would have happened if the UNECE had been involved in the Marshall Plan: 'in his speech, Marshall did not mention the [UN]ECE: he

Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, pp. 24.

[325] See appendix 6.5 for an overview of the present structure.

[326] Myrdal, Gunnar, 'Twenty Years of the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe', *International Organization* Vol. 22, 1968, p. 618.

[327] We recall Myrdal's correspondence: 'Right from the start, we in Geneva [at the UNECE] have been deeply conscious of the community of destiny we share with the ERP [European Recovery Programme]. When things go well in Paris [at the OEEC], conditions for cooperation in Geneva are also good. When the work in Paris is up to difficulties, the Western countries get sick and tired of international conferences and can, already for political reasons, not allow much progress to be made on an all-European level in Geneva. This is one side of our relationship with OEEC. I am quite conscious of the fact that things can go so "well" in OEEC that there is no space left for us and UN.' United Nations Offices (UNOG) Archives, ARR 14/1360, Box 71, Gunnar Myrdal, Notes on ERP, December 1949, and Stinsky, Daniel, 'Western European Vs. All-European Cooperation? The OEEC, the European Recovery Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 1947-1952', Chapter 4, pp. 65-88, in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, p. 66.

[328] About the persona Robert Marjolin: 'The Organization's [OEEC] first Secretary-General, Robert Marjolin (1911-1986), OEEC mandate: 1948-1955) was a young French politician and economist who had been involved in Charles de Gaulle's government-in-exile during World War II and closely collaborated with Jean Monnet. Born in a Parisian working class family in 1911, he took evening courses at the Sorbonne and became particularly influenced by two years studying sociology and economics at Yale as a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1930s, which turned him from a young socialist into a fervent advocate of capitalist growth, state planning, and economic integration.' Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer, Matthias, 'From the Marshall Plan to Global Governance: Historical Transformations of the OEEC/OECD, 1948 to Present', Chapter 2, pp 23-58 in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, p. 30.

[329] See appendix 6.7 for a membership overview for UNECE and OEEC/OECD.

simply invited the Europeans to work out a plan and present it to the United States.'[330] The discussion took place, but in the end the British concluded:

> ..action will be obstructed and perverted by Russia and her satellites. … It ought not to be too difficult to keep on the outside the purview of the [UN]ECE. The simplest course, if it can be managed politically, would seem to be for us and France, to issue an invitation to a conference on the basis of a … draft plan which we might square informally in advance with like minded countries. … This does not, of course, exclude keeping the [UN]ECE in touch with developments , or bringing them in more positively at later stages.[331]

However, this did not happen and the UNECE and the OEEC/OECD started their diverging paths.[332] As the Cold War raged on, the ability of the UNECE to politically be a force and player to be reckoned with diminished and its work became more and more technically driven. In the words of Roberto Ventresca:

> The end of the Second World War bequeathed to the most part of Western countries, and in particular to Western Europe, a condition of massive prostration, in material as well as political terms. After the military defeat of Nazi- and fascist regimes, the ensuing political, economic and ideological clash between the US and the USSR led to the beginning of the so-called Cold War. Within this framework, the European continent became the epicentre of the superpowers' confrontation: both the United States and the Soviet Union perceived the economic and political fragility of Europe as a threat for the creation of a global post-war order. Both blocs wanted to strengthen their grip on their respective

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[330] Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, p. 11.

[331] Kostelecky, Vaclav, *The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe: The Beginning of a History*, Graphic Systems AB, Gothenburg, 1989, p. 108.

[332] Rostow remarked in 1949: 'Thus [UN]ECE has survived its precarious first year and a half. It has proved its technical usefulness in a modest but real set of initial activities. Negotiations in its various committees have resulted in increases in European production totaling many times the [UN]ECE budget, or even the total annual budget of the United Nations. Its real testing, however, both technical and political, remains for the future, in the larger economic issues with which its existing committees are now confronted and in the new terrains which it is about to enter.' Rostow, Walt W., 'The Economic Commission for Europe', *International Organization 3 (2)*, pp. 254-268, 1949, p. 268.

spheres of geo-political influence, which conditioned the establishment of their respective forms of "imperial" hegemony.'[333]

In other words, not so much the OEEC, but the UNECE would most likely be forced to either take sides or be at constant odds with both blocs.

3.2.3   Administrating in the Shadow of the Cold War

At the tail end of the 1950s the OEEC successfully administered the Marshall Plan, but found itself in a deep organisational crisis. It could not unlock the European states in their different groupings, and solve problems related to payments and trade:

> During discussions within the OEEC, the 'six' of the ECSC, EEC, and EURATOM[334] wanted to pursue their goal of a common market, whereas the UK expressed a preference for establishing a free trade area on an intergovernmental basis, which in 1960 became EFTA. These developments were related to changes in French leadership[335], with De Gaulle's hostile attitude toward cooperation with the UK. To prevent the potential spread of protectionism in Europe, the US government took the initiative to remodel the OEEC .. as the key forum for Western economic cooperation ..'[336]

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[333] Ventresca, Roberto, 'The OECD as a Global Preacher for Capitalism', pp. 301-326, in Grin, Gilles, Nicod, Françoise, Altermatt, Bernhard (eds.), Forms of Europe. European Union and Other Organisations, Cahiers rouges, Volume 218, 2018, p. 301.

[334] The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Economic Community (EEC), European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), six founding states: France, West Germany, Italy and the three Benelux countries: Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg

[335] De Gaulle became president on 8 January 1959.

[336] Reinalda, Bob, International Secretariats – Two Centuries of International Civil Servants and Secretariats, Routledge, London, 2020. p. 117.

Originally, the United States had expected the OEEC to be a driver for European integration by requiring that the organisation allocate the aid provided by the Marshall Plan, but the OEEC was unable to handle this responsibility.[337] In hindsight, it also difficult to imagine how a newly minted inter-governmental organisation, without a developed authority by itself, could equitably undertake this enormous task, while its members clearly had their own interests at heart and while post-war ill feelings still lingered. Secretary-General Marjolin also saw it as his task to equip the OEEC by developing networks of officials and the disciplines of cooperation, which then proved a basis for further and later efforts at European Integration.[338] Marjolin succeeded in placing a foundation in the OEEC for the future. Beyond the implementation of the Marshall Plan, the OEEC also developed as an organisation:

> The OEEC had developed an increasing number of specialised committees that enabled members to scrutinise ('confront', as originally described) their colleagues' implementation of the Marshall Plan aid. It was a system then applied, increasingly, for guiding the development of policy ideas and instruments as the OEEC expanded beyond its original role.[339]

In a twist of the principal-agent relationship, the member states preferred the committee solution, where the technical subject could be depoliticised and given to a delegated authority on the monitoring of implementation, and, importantly, on the shaping of the organisation for the future.[340] Canadian diplomat Wynne Plumptre further recalled the development of:

> an elaborate code and procedures for European trade liberalization … supported by credit facilities provided through the European Payment Union (EPU) … during the 1950s, the OEEC code of intra-European commercial conduct was supplemented by the introduction of other codes of regional economic conduct

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[337] Wolfe, Robert, 'From Reconstructing Europe to Constructing Globalization: The OECD in Historical Perspective', Chapter 1, pp. 25-42, in ; Mahon, Rianne, McBride, Stephen (eds.), *The OECD and Transnational Governance*, UBCPress, Toronto, 2008, p. 26.
[338] Marjolin. Robert, *Architect of European unity: Memoirs, 1911-1986*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1989.
[339] Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011, p. 9.
[340] Ibid.

dealing with capital movements, shipping and other forms of transportation [each] supervised by a committee, and other committees concerned with the problems and possibilities of each of the main European industries were set up. The headquarters of the OEEC … became a centre for intra-European consultation on economic matters.[341]

This clearly indicates the nascence of the think tank one knows today, namely, policy development with direct interaction with states' representatives in substance-driven committees ensuring a consultative approach. Politically the European scene was not conducive for the OEEC in its present form, even if it had done what it set out to do with relative success.

[341] Plumptre, Wynne A. F., *Three Decades of Decision: Canada and the World Monetary System 1944-75*, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1977, p. 129-130.

Table 2: Member States of the UNECE and the OEEC/OECD[342]

UNECE	OEEC/OECD
Albania (1955)	
Austria (1955)	**Austria**
Belgium	**Belgium**
Bulgaria (1955)	
Belorussian SSR	
Canada (1973)	Canada (1961)
Czechoslovakia	
Cyprus (1960)	
Denmark	**Denmark**
Federal Republic of Germany (1956)	**Federal Republic of Germany**
France	**France**
Finland (1955)	Finland (1969)
German Democratic Republic (1973)	
Greece	**Greece**
Hungary (1955)	
Iceland	**Iceland**
Ireland (1955)	**Ireland**
Italy (1955)	**Italy**
Luxembourg	**Luxembourg**
Malta (1963)	
Netherlands	**Netherlands**
Norway	**Norway**
Poland	
Portugal (1955)	**Portugal**
Romania (1955)	
Spain (1955)	Spain (1959)
Sweden	**Sweden**
Switzerland (1972)	**Switzerland**
Turkey	**Turkey**
Ukrainian SSR	
United Kingdom	**United Kingdom**
United States	United States (1961)
USSR	
Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia (observer status)[343]
	Japan (1964)
	Australia (1971)
	New Zealand (1973)

 Symbolises overlapping memberships

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[342] Member states up to 1989 in Stinsky, Daniel, 'Western European Vs. All-European Cooperation? The OEEC, the European Recovery Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 1947-1952', Chapter 4, pp. 65-88, in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, pp. 67.

[343] One might ask: what does a socialist developing country do in a Western capitalist club? 'The unique relationship … began in 1955 … [the] association with the OEEC was a result of the extremely complicated international position in which its regime found itself after the Tito-Stalin split. The … struggle against Stalin and the detrimental effects of the resulting Eastern Bloc's economic boycott forced Yugoslavia to pivot toward the West … even though Yugoslavia had only observer status in the OEEC, Belgrade's participation went well beyond this … This relationship was a testament to the pragmatism of Yugoslavia's foreign policy doctrine of peaceful coexistence and Western powers' support for the socialist renegade.' Markovic, Andrej, Obadic, Ivan, 'A Socialist Developing Country in a Western Capitalist Club', Chapter 5, pp. 89-112, in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017.

It was clear that the UNECE in this period was in a very different place, but 'despite the trend toward bloc formation that dominated Europe in the late 1940s, [UN]ECE tried to maintain East-West cooperation. Myrdal called East-West trade [UN]ECE's "responsibility par préférence. It cannot be taken over by the OEEC."'[344] Myrdal's real problem was how he and the UNECE could be of use to all members. As seen in the table of member states (Table 2) and at the table of real and relative overlap of members (Table 3), it was clear that it was impossible not to take the main issues that presented themselves at the OEEC into account, when formulating the strategy at the UNECE. The UNECE needed the OEEC more than the OEEC needed the UNECE.

Table 3: Overlap of Member States of the UNECE and the OEEC/OECD

UNECE members before 1989:	34
OEEC/OECD members before 1989:	24
Overlapping members:	21
% of overlapping membership for	
UNECE:	62%
OEEC/OECD:	88%

Myrdal settled a strategy that still took the 38% non-OEEC members of UNECE into account:

> The preference for a recovery of East-West trade over a full *Westintegration* that guided Myrdal's actions as minister of commerce now became the leitmotif for [UN]ECE. Without a resurgence of East-West trade, he feared that economic recovery would be deterred. An exclusive consolidation of Western Europe as a viable economic area seemed impossible not only to Myrdal. A study by the Marshall Plan organization OEEC assumed in 1948 that without continued influx of UD dollars, Western Europe could only become sustainable if the volume of intra-European traded tripled from its 1947 value.[345] In practise, however, the volume of East-West trade declined sharply each year between 1946 and the

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[344] United Nations Offices (UNOG) Archives, ARR 14/1360, Box 71, Gunnar Myrdal, Notes on ERP, December 1949, and Stinsky, Daniel, 'A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1957', chapter in Christian, Michel, Kott, Sandrine, Matejka, Ondrej (eds.), *Planning in Cold War Europe - Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018, p. 56.
[345] This may have seemed daunting, but 1947 levels of trade were a far cry from where they had been relatively to economic activity prior to the protectionist years and World War II.

summer of 1953, when it began to recover by 15-25 % annually.[346] Despite this trend, Myrdal and the secretariat sought to establish the ECE as the champion of East-West cooperation…'[347]

This strategy quickly showed its limitation as American security interests clashed with the idea of providing a bridge between East and West:

> At an [UN]ECE Trade Committee meeting in May 1949, 'a deadlock developed', wrote Myrdal's assistant Melvin Fagen, when 'the eastern European countries stressed the futility of any efforts … as long as discriminatory export licensing policies were practiced against them'[348] The embargo policy became the dominating issue in [UN]ECE's annual Commission sessions, and rendered its Trade Committee almost useless.[349]

The political paralyses of the organisation meant that other ways of cooperation had to be sought. Stinsky (2021) elaborates:

> Both [UN]ECE and OEEC eventually abandoned grand schemes of international economic policy coordination in favour of less politicized, trade- and productivity-related issues. From the mid-1950s onward, both IOs became increasingly entrenched in their respective niches of international cooperation, defusing their antagonism.[350]

[346] Fagen, Melvin M., 'The Work of the Committee on the Development of Trade, 1949 – 1957', in UNECE (ed.), *The Economic Commission for Europe. A General Appraisal*, United Nations, Geneva, 1957, VII-1.

[347] Stinsky, Daniel, 'A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1957', chapter in Christian, Michel, Kott, Sandrine, Matejka, Ondrej (eds.), *Planning in Cold War Europe - Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018, p. 56.

[348] Fagen, Melvin M., 'The Work of the Committee on the Development of Trade, 1949 – 1957', in UNECE (ed.), *The Economic Commission for Europe. A General Appraisal*, United Nations, Geneva, 1957, VII-2.

[349] Stinsky, Daniel, 'A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1957', chapter in Christian, Michel, Kott, Sandrine, Matejka, Ondrej (eds.), *Planning in Cold War Europe - Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018, p. 61.

[350] Stinsky, Daniel, *International Cooperation in Cold War Europe – The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-64*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, p. 150

As the Cold War intensified, other organisations in particular in the Western European front made inroads on the integration agenda. The OEEC in particular was an organisation, which needed a re-orientation.

3.2.4 Transforming Organisations

Leimburger and Schmelzer (2017) propose that the OEEC not only went along one linear path, where the successful implementation of the Marshall Plan 'awarded' the organisation new leverage, full membership by the United States, and an important role in shaping the global post-colonial economy. Rather, the OEEC was also threatened twice by demise as political circumstance and inability nearly killed it.

Firstly, the two things the OEEC had put in place to tackle: implement the Marshall Plan, and facilitate European economic integration - both were fading:

> With the phasing out of Marshall Plan aid, the OEEC was losing its original raison d'être: European integration was pursued through competing routes such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and, in the wake of the Korean War, several countries, most importantly the US and Britain, shifted their focus to NATO.[351]

One possibility would have been to close the OEEC or amalgamate it with NATO. This was however resisted by, in particular:

> small countries, which valued the technical work of the OEEC, and of the neutrals, which resisted its militarization, but most importantly the interests of the US, which rejected cooperation with the Europeans on economic issues "as an equal with each of the other fourteen members of NATO or seventeen members of OEEC."[352]

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[351] Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer, Matthias, 'From the Marshall Plan to Global Governance: Historical Transformations of the OEEC/OECD, 1948 to Present', Chapter 2, pp 23-58 in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, pp. 31-32.
[352] Idem, p. 32.

Secondly, the OEEC had through its Trade Liberalization Program on removing trade restrictions in Europe, become entangled on one side with the six ECSC members who wanted a customs union, and on the other with the seven non-ECSC members who wanted a supranational free market.[353] The 'antagonism culminated in the hostile break-up of the OEEC's Ministerial meeting in December 1958, which gave a final blow to an organisation whose final two years were characterized by the continuous crisis and dissolution of its Secretariat.'[354]

The more conventional wisdom of the OEEC portrays an organisation that was nearly too successful.[355] The self-produced 'Explorations in OEEC History'[356] quotes the Deputy Secretary-General Cahan as writing in 1958: 'I can no longer doubt that our troubles over the Free Trade Area will shortly be resolved.'[357] They clearly were not, as EFTA was established in 1960. Griffiths continues: 'In December 1958 one could argue that the European trade and payment schemes … had been too successful.'[358] Cleary that was not the case, if seen with American eyes, because of quota discrimination.

The OEEC was at the end of the road in 1960, where 'A Conference on the Reconstitution of the OEEC … commissioned a working party to devise a draft convention.' [359] This convention was signed on 14 December 1960 by twenty states (the eighteen OEEC

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[353] This eventually became the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960.
[354] Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer, Matthias, 'From the Marshall Plan to Global Governance: Historical Transformations of the OEEC/OECD, 1948 to Present', Chapter 2, pp 23-58 in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, pp. 33.
[355] Another important angle is the regional differences within the OEEC member countries. Their development was a 'contested issue within the OEEC, most importantly due to the ambivalent position of the poor member countries in the "club of the rich". For example, their official classification as "underdeveloped areas" was criticized as stigmatizing and so later was changed to "areas in progress of economic development", thus dividing member countries receiving development assistance from the developing countries in the Global South. Furthermore, in the mid-1950d the European countries receiving aid successfully resisted attempts to the OEEC into a global aid agency.' Schmelzer, Matthias, 'A Club of the Rich to Help the Poor? The OECD, "Development", and the Hegemony of Donor Countries', Chapter 8, pp. 171-195 in Frey, Marc, Kunkel, Sonke, Unger, Corinna R. (eds.), International Organizations and Development, 1945-1990, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2014, p. 175.
[356] Griffiths, Richard T., '"An Act of Creative Leadership": The End of the OEEC and the Birth of the OECD', Chapter XVIII, pp. 235-256, in Griffiths, Richard T. (ed.), *Explorations in OEEC History*, OECD Historical Series, Paris, 1997.
[357] Idem, p. 325.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Woodward, Richard, *The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 18.

members, which now included Spain, and Canada and the United States). The convention became operational on 30 September 1961 as the OECD.[360]

The OEEC turned into the OECD and the UNECE remained a commission where 'most issues dealt with … were highly specialized [and] governments often sent technical experts rather than diplomats.'[361] The UNECE was moving away from political topics and depoliticising others by turning them into technical issues. Substantively this was possibly the only way the UNECE could be effective, but it came at a cost of retreating into political irrelevance, even if the UNECE like other 'International bureaucracies gained an important role as providers of statistical data and reports on which technical committees based their decisions, effectively turning secretariats into agenda-setters.'[362] The UNECE had to take a technocratic approach to its work to be able to function, whereas the OECD could much more effectively leverage its agenda-setting capabilities politically.

Both the UNECE and the OECD were norm and standard setting institutions and thereby proponents of soft power[363]. From a perspective of more global international relations Acharya and Buzan suggest, that 'while the OECD, GATT[364] and IMF could .. be seen as instruments of a Western economic bloc, they were perhaps better seen as the institutions of a global economy from which the communist bloc countries chose to exclude themselves.'[365]This makes the distinction between the OECD and the UNECE even clearer.

It is clear from this section, that the way in which the inaugural executive heads, i) Gunnar Myrdal at the UNECE and ii) Robert Marjolin at the OEEC, went about initiating their work had some similarities. They understood the political limitations surrounding the mandate of the organisation and formed a strategy to implement it. Myrdal was locked in

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[360] Ibid.

[361] Stinsky, Daniel, 'A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1957', chapter in Christian, Michel, Kott, Sandrine, Matejka, Ondrej (eds.), *Planning in Cold War Europe - Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018, p. 58.

[362] Ibid.

[363] Nye, Joseph S., *Soft Power – The Means to Success in World Politics*, Public Affairs, New York 2004.

[364] GATT: The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, see: https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/gatt47_01_e.htm <accessed 3 April 2022>

[365] Acharya, Amitav, Buzan, Barry, *The Making of Global International Relations – Origins and Evolution of IR at its Centenary*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, p. 119.

the East-West conflict and mitigated this by increasingly focusing on more technical issues while still keeping an all-European angle to the work – this was something that spurred conflict.[366] However, if he had not kept this angle an East-ECE and West-ECE would have existed concurrently, resulting in organisational hubris for the UNECE. Marjolin had in the other organisation the competition in the West on the issue of (Western) European integration. He reacted by shaping and, so to speak, preparing the organisation for its next step, which was wholly embraced by the first OECD Secretary-General, the Dane, Thorkil Kristensen:

> Kristensen, who gave the various directorates in his Secretariat considerable autonomy, believed that the OECD should work as an avant-garde think tank with a catalytic role to provide innovative ideas that member states might pick up if they became interested. The OECD therefore focused on soft power mechanisms such as the production, legitimation, and diffusion of policy ideas and conceptual frameworks, and harmonization through peer pressure and naming-shaming techniques.[367]

Even if Kristensen had a vision for where the OECD could be, 'he felt frustrated about the OECD's inability to tackle long-term problems such as brought up by the Club of Rome.'[368] These fundamental questions on economic growth sustainability and economic

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[366] Myrdal himself writes: 'In these difficult years there were some in the Western countries who occasionally looked with disfavor on these protracted efforts by the Secretariat to preserve the all-European character of the Commission. But on the whole the Secretariat continued to have the confidence and backing of all governments in these efforts, partly because it was generally recognized that we followed what we considered our moral duty to the UN and partly because even at that time of the intensifying Cold War they appreciated the value for themselves of preserving the Commission as an organ for all-European economic cooperation on a larger scale in that future time when such cooperation would become possible.' Que 1989-1992, many years of less the desired cooperation. See: Myrdal, Gunnar, 'Twenty Years of the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe', *International Organization* Vol. 22, 1968, 619.

[367] Reinalda, Bob, *International Secretariats – Two Centuries of International Civil Servants and Secretariats*, Routledge, London, 2020, p. 118.

[368] What could be characterised as the 'problems of the modern society'. See: Schmelzer, Matthias, 'The Crisis before the Crisis: the "Problems of modern society" and the OECD, 1968-74', *European Review of History* 19 (6), pp. 999-1020, 2012, pp. 1004-1005. Kristensen had during the end of is his tenure at the OECD a role in establishing the Club of Rome, and he became a member after this tenure ended. The Club of Rome has played an important role in shaping the discourse on sustainable development, that ended up in the Brundtland Report (1987) and continues to shape our daily lives (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf <accessed 15 July 2022>). 'The Club's first report, *The limits to growth*, was published in 1972, but forty years later its electrifying conclusions, which modelled the "overshoot and collapse" of the global system by the mid twenty-first century, still provokes intense debates. The result of a ground-breaking exercise in cybernetic modelling at MIT … made many people aware for the first time that with continuing growth the world

systems will be taken into account in the coming sections. Here, I will consider the two organisations one by one, with a first look into the 'black box' of the organisation, then present and analyse the findings of, predominantly, the interviews held up against the organisational context and the historical trajectory presented in this section.

would eventually run out of resources.' These were the issues Kristensen would have wanted the OECD to engage with. See: Schmelzer, Matthias, '"Born in the Corridors of the OECD": the forgotten origins of the Club of Rome, transnational networks, and the 1970s in global history', Journal of Global History 12, pp. 26-48, 2017, p. 27.

3.3 The UNECE

Investigating the role of the executive head at the UNECE is a tall order, as has been established, the general lack of research on the organisation, even if Stinsky (2021) fills an important gap, the time period is still focused on post-World War II. Further, most of the research, except perhaps for the 'short history' authored by former Executive Secretary Yves Berthelot[369], is focused on the immediate post World War II period. This has though through the previous section chapter given an in-depth view into the thoughts of the first UNECE Executive Secretary Gunnar Myrdal,[370] and his tribulations in leading an organization, that within weeks was sought pushed to the margins.

I this section, I will focus the application of the analytical framework on the tenures of three executive heads:

i)   Gunnar Myrdal, as there is sufficient research available to undertake the analysis, and as he his was the inaugural Executive Secretary with a large impact in shaping the culture and norms of the organisation;

ii) Yves Berthelot; and

iii) Christian Friis Bach, as both were interviewed at length and since, in particular for Yves Berthelot, their tenures fell at important junctures in time.

In the following subsection the inside of the organisation will be considered to add to the context in a more mechanical organisational sense.

3.3.1   Inside the UNECE

It is clear that Myrdal only would have been able to succeed with the politics delineated as they were, by being fiercely independent. The Eastern countries did not actively participate in the work in the technical committees for the first five to six year, he writes:

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[369] See: https://unece.org/yves-berthelot-france <accessed 3 April 2002>, Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, *Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007*, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, and see appendix 6.6 for a list of UNECE Executive Secretaries and OECD (and OEEC) Secretary-Generals.
[370] See: https://unece.org/gunnar-myrdal-sweden <accessed 2 April 2022>

The Commission could have accepted this development and become, in fact, a Western organization, the more naturally so as the Western countries constituted the majority.[371] However, the position I took as Executive Secretary was that I felt bound by the terms of reference given the Commission by the UN to do whatever I could, against all odds – and forsaking the greater practical responsibilities the Commission could have attained by restricting itself to a Western Orientation – to preserve the Commission as an all-European body.[372]

Beyond that he also insisted, that the work was carried out reflecting this all-European outlook. He insisted, 'as a matter of basic principle, that the members of the secretariat engaged in economic analysis and research, investigating technical problems or collecting and evaluating statistical data, should be guided only by the professional standards of scientific research while remaining aware that governments may have other preoccupations..'[373] Myrdal, a scientist himself, had very high ideals and standards for the work, and guarded the integrity and credibility of the UNECE in this sense:

… a research group, and consequently also the secretariat of the [UN]ECE insofar as its research work is concerned, should be a free and independent scientific agent, which approaches the problems and reaches and states its finding guided only by the inherent and established standards of the profession, without sideward glances at what would be politically opportune … In scientific inquiry governments cannot be granted any monopoly of truth. This implies among other things that official statistics and assertions by governments about facts and causal relations cannot be accepted at their face value, but have to be scrutinized in a scholarly manner.[374]

Myrdal himself was an outlier: he had three prominent careers in his lifetime: Scientist, Nobel Prize winner; Politician, Minister; Diplomat, Executive Secretary. This probably

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[371] See Table 2, Subsection 3.3.3
[372] Myrdal, Gunnar, 'Twenty Years of the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe', *International Organization* Vol. 22, 1968, p. 618.
[373] Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, *Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007*, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, p. 15.
[374] Myrdal, Gunnar, 'The Research Work of the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe', pp. 267-293 in *25 Economic Essays in Honor of Erik Lindahl*, Ekonomisk Tidskrift, Stockholm, 1956.

also meant that the way that he approached his agency was in a very dogmatic fashion. This is symbolised in the choice of words from Wightman, when describing the UNECE Secretariat: 'The Secretariat of the [UN]ECE has always been a strong one … Mr. Myrdal has maintained both a hard-hitting team[375] and the respect of the member government.' However, was, when writing in 1957, very realistic in his assessment of the limits of the UNECE: '… most observers would agree that the political temper of east-west relations still sets definite limits on the scope of the problems government are prepared to see taken up by [UN]ECE.'[376]

To put it mildly:

> The Cold War, and the consequential East-West split, forced the UNECE to adjust its role and develop alternative agendas, in order to legitimize its existence and to underline its usefulness. This turned the UNECE into an independent actor, with its own distinct set of values and aims. As a consequence, the Geneva-based institution regularly deviated from the preferences of the bigger member-states, and the relationship with nation-states was often complicated.[377]

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[375] 'In Gunnar Myrdal and Nicholas Kaldor, the first director of economic research (or, as it was known then, the Research and Planning Division), the nascent ECE had two of the outstanding economists of the twentieth century. Both men had not only powerful intellects but also strong personalities and gifts for leadership. The team they put together in the first three years of the ECE's existence was outstanding: six of them (Gunnar Myrdal, Nicholas Kaldor, W. W. Rostow, Hans Staehle, Ingvar Svennilson, and Pieter Verdoorn) rate entries in the latest edition of the Palgrave Dictionary of Economics, and at least over half of the original group went on to professorships or to produce important books and papers. Myrdal would receive the Nobel prize for economics in 1973 and there are many in the economics profession who think that Kaldor should have been given one as well ... Both men had established reputations before joining the ECE, both had made significant contributions to pure theory, and both were highly critical of the neo-classical general equilibrium school. Moreover both had expressed fears for the post-war period and were not over-confident that recession and unemployment would be avoided ... Kaldor had made major contributions to Keynesian theory before joining the ECE and in 1939 had made a seminal contribution to welfare theory in proposing the compensation principle, namely, that if those who gain from an economic or policy change could potentially compensate the losers and still be better off then the change must be for the better (since productivity must have risen). His work had also focused on imperfect competition, economies of scale, and the functional distribution of income, growth and technical progress. Like Myrdal, Kaldor rejected the neo-classical assumptions as a useful description of the real world in which economic policy had to be formulated and he was also to develop the principle of cumulative causation in his later work on economic growth and productivity.' Note the divergent, respective to US orthodoxy on economic theory. See: Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007, pp. 24.
[376] Wightman, Davis, 'East-West Cooperation and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe', *International Organization* 11 (1), p. 1-12, 1957, p. 2
[377] ' Lagendijk, Vincent, 'The Structure of Power: The UNECE and East-West Electricity Connections, 1947-1975', *Comparativ* 24 (1), pp. 50-65, 2014, p. 54.

One could get the idea that it was the first executive head of the UNECE, the executive head of ILO, Robert W. Cox (1969), pointed in this direction when looking for agency and determinants for inter-governmental organisation autonomy. Again:

> The role of Gunnar Myrdal needs emphasis, as he was instrumental in shaping the set of cultural values of the organizations … [he] endeavoured to make the UNECE an all-European organization which included the Soviet Union and its satellite states. He therefore insisted on having a Soviet deputy working him.[378]

Practically this meant, firstly aiming at:

> establishing the UNECE as a research group with a sciectific take on European economic issues .. This implied conducting research along scientific lines and independent from any government's view … The research should also lead to practical and useful results that could inform policy was not just meant as l'art pour l'art. This seemed to pay off immediately: while the OEEC had its own statisticians and rapporteurs, it was the UNECE's publication The Economic Survey of Europe that was used as the scientific basis for the Marshall Plan in 1948 … [the] second aim was nurturing practical forms of cooperation. Proposals were only brought to a vote after informal had resulted in consensus … Overall … the working method tried to mitigate internal tensions and conflicts as much as possible. [379]

The term that captures the antinomies put forward by Eliæson (2000)[380] is 'pan-European Cold Warrior'.[381] The legacy Myrdal left at the UNECE cannot be underestimated. The ideas and scientific norms left behind by his team, and the very dogmatic approach to

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[378] Idem, p. 55.
The nationality of the Deputy Executive Director followed the tradition started by Myrdal, and as such I interviewed a former Soviet, now Russian Deputy Executive Director.
[379] Lagendijk, Vincent, 'The Structure of Power: The UNECE and East-West Electricity Connections, 1947-1975', *Comparativ* 24 (1), pp. 50-65, 2014, p. 56. See also: Milward, A. S., *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-1951*, Berkeley, 1984.
[380] Eliæson, Sven, 'Gunnar Myrdal: A Theorist of Mordernity', Acta Sociologica 43 (4), pp. 331-341, 2000.
[381] Stinsky, Daniel, 'A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1957', chapter in Christian, Michel, Kott, Sandrine, Matejka, Ondrej (eds.), *Planning in Cold War Europe - Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018, p. 68.

implementing the mandate, within its given parameters, even if this was not a pleasant exercise. There is no doubt that without the pan-European outlook, the UNECE would have fallen prey to the end of the implementation of the Marshall Plan, the transformation of the OEEC, and the emergence of stronger Western European institutions.

I will now turn the attention to the interview undertaken with current and former UNECE staff.[382] The reality they met were deeply shaped by the circumstances under which the UNECE was founded and the mandate interpretation of its first Executive Secretary. The elements of the analytical outlined in Chapter 2 were all brought into play.

3.3.2 Mapping Structure versus Agency

Structure in the sense of the formal set up of the UNECE remained largely unchanged over but mapping staff, who operated in the nexus between

In the chronological order, the first interview with Christian Friis Bach, then Executive Secretary UNECE[383]. The interview was conducted in Danish[384] and it started off well. Friis Bach was very engaged and helpful. Walking through the interview guide it was clear that one of the main questions around asymmetry of information was well placed. The interviewee had not thought too much about how his agency through the appointment would work in the structure at hand. It seemed that there were a 'structure deficit' in his knowledge base. This clearly meant that the agency possessed at entry was overestimated. The conversation stayed very much in the political part of the nexus I am inquiring. All topics were viewed and analysed from this side of the spectre. The wish for increased visibility of the work of the UNECE was a common thread. It was clear that the EU, who is an observer to the UNECE, plays a highly significant role. Most standards agreed in the UNECE end up as EU directives, e.g. areas of foresting, the TIER long-haul convention, etc. The interviewee pointed to the UNECE ability of be under the radar during the Cold War and thereby still remain effective substantively and bureaucratically, e.g., the ability to establish the Vienna Convention related to Road Traffic three months after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. When the conversation turned to the

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[382] See appendix 6.4.
[383] via Skype, 26 January 2017
[384] the mother tongue of both interviewer and interviewee

structure and dynamic, which the interviewee had learned 'on the job'. Firstly, the discussion turned to the fact the tenure of the Executive Secretary is in blocks of three years, whereas the directors in the Secretariat[385] have permanent contracts. The dynamic of an overestimation of agency combined with a change agenda focused on the external and entrenched Secretariat meant friction. Given the span of member states across old blocks, NATO and Warsaw Pact[386], a certain degree of 'mandate tyranny' was exhibited to control the Secretariat's ability to engage with new potential external partners.

The more managerial aspects came through this time and it was clear that there was a sense of frustration with the possibility of delegation and capacity of the Secretariat. Clearly, again, the incumbent had overestimated the agency of the role and felt there was a too narrow space for leadership. The 2005 reform process, seen as a conflict between member states, did not deliver the basics in organising the executive office, strategy and knowledge management. Most issues are now channelled through the Executive Committee (EXCOM)[387] indicating dwindling trust in the Secretariat from member states. Implementation of the reform started in 2013, but still four years later unresolved issues from the mid-2000s are blocking the implementation. The interviewee saw the way forward through a strategy cycle, where formulation, implementation and monitoring could earn the Secretariat the trust back and increase flexibility and thereby autonomy from member states. I was able to secure a second interview with Christian Friis Bach,[388] now the exiting Executive Secretary UNECE, which did not bring further substantial knowledge. Mr. Friis Bach ended as one-term Executive Secretary 2014-2017.

The second interview took place during the field work, and was the first interview with Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary UNECE[389]. The Deputy Executive Secretary was very interested in meeting me and he was very generous with his time. The conversation was difficult to keep on track with the interview guide as it had many tangents. If the first interview was seen from the political side of the second with the then

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[385] D1 level, see: https://icsc.un.org/Home/SalaryScales <accessed 2 April 2022>
[386] Now in the reincarnation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), comprising of the states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. see: https://cis.minsk.by/ <accessed 3 April 2022>
[387] UNECE, Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE, Adopted 11 April 2013, https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Key_documents/Decision_A65.pdf <accessed 21 May 2017>
[388] Telephone, 24 May 2017
[389] Face-to-face, Geneva, 23 March 2017

Deputy Executive Secretary (Russian) was at the other end of the spectre. The interviewee was deeply rooted in the Secretariat and viewed the substantive part of the work as the most important regardless of its relevance politically. With respect to the attributes of the Executive Secretary the interviewee put a primer on the substantive knowledge and credibility, then diplomatic skills and political acumen, which should come from an altruistic value set and with an agenda of less individual character. Generally, he felt that the quality of leaders had declined over the past 20 years in the UN. The interviewee was on his 6th Executive Secretary. The interviewee saw the UNECE as a norms commission, where the EU played a not unimportant role. The UNECE could be seen as having a 'consultancy role' for the EU given the power dynamics at play. The EU was likened to the Roman Empire, in particular as EU member countries have given up part of the sovereignty being members. On structure it was felt that permanent contracts gave the incumbents more autonomy and thereby agency. The mandate was according to the interviewee on slightly checked by member states. I was able to secure a follow up interview with the Deputy Executive Secretary.[390] The main focus of the second interview with Mr. Vasilyey was his immediate supervisor the Executive Secretary Mr Friis Bach. It was clear that the interviewee viewed Mr Friis Bach as being a light-weighter in substantive matters and therefore felt that the UNECE had a credibility issue. The Executive Secretary should delegate technical discussions and follow briefs. Politics was seen as being an inhibiting factor with examples in the trade area, where experts at working committee levels agree, but politically the discourse was difficult. Much grind to a halt if the Executive Secretary did not play his diplomatic role. Mr Vasilyey sadly passed away in 2019[391].

Contrasting the findings from the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary, referencing Figure 3, Chapter 2, it is clear that Mr Friis Bach viewed the UNECE from the role of the executive head towards the political level and relevancy there, whereas Mr Vasilyey viewed the UNECE from within the bureaucracy. Given the UNECE's low political relevance level to states and its high level of substantive

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[390] Telephone, Geneva, 24 May 2017
[391] See: https://unece.org/general-unece/news/memoriam-andrey-vasilyev <accessed 3 April 2022>

technicality, it seems that there between states and Executive Secretary not to have been an alignment of interests, which also could have contributed to the length of the tenure.

In the running up to the field work in Geneva. I also managed to secure an interview with Michael Møller, the Director General United Nations Office in Geneva.[392] The interview took place in the DG's office at the UNOG. The interview language was English, yet pleasantries were exchanged in Danish.[393] The interviewee's long and high-level career within the UN should place him straight in the nexus between the political and bureaucratic the thesis is inquiring about. [394] The interviewee called the UNECE "the hidden pearl nobody knows about", in reference to the norms and standards it produces and regulates, their impact on our daily lives – not only within the Commissions member states, but also worldwide, as some standards are further adopted. He saw the UNECE as small organisation with a global impact in norm setting. This held up against its seemingly lack of political relevance. Mr Møller felt that the UNECE needed to be better known, and he pointed to a communications gap and Mr. Friis Bach's efforts to address this. He viewed the present (2017) efforts as an expansive interpretation of the Executive Secretary role. Essentially pointing to political leadership as the determining factor, Mr. Friis Bach being a former Minister for Development Cooperation in Denmark[395]. The interviewee mentioned the EU as a spoiler in the cooperation efforts of the Commission. One interviewee referred to a leadership study by UN colleague Fabrizio Hochschild.[396]

What neither Mr Friis Bach nor Mr Møller seems to have understood, it that it is next to impossible to turn a politically irrelevant organisation into a relevant through communication. Deeper, also external, shifts are needed. The structure in this case is too strong and too embedded to offer the executive head the necessary agency to change the trajectory of the organisation both politically and bureaucratically.

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[392] Face to face, Geneva, 23 March 2017
[393] the mother tongue of both interviewer and interviewee.
[394] See for example: https://www.weforum.org/people/michael-moller <accessed 3 April 2022>
[395] See: https://unece.org/christian-friis-bach-denmark <accessed 3 April 2022>
[396] Hochschild, Fabrizio, "In and Above Conflict – A study on Leadership in the United Nations", Geneva, 2010. Fabrizio Hochschild was fired from the UN 26 January 2021 after an investigation found proof of harassment and abuse of power, see: https://www.politico.eu/article/un-fires-tech-envoy-probe-harassment-claims/ and https://twitter.com/HochschildF (tweet 26 January 2021) <accessed 3 April 2022>

The interview with Yves Berthelot, Former Executive Secretary UNECE took place in his apartment in Paris.[397] At the time, he was 80 years old at the time of the interview but came across as vibrant and engaging. Both being former Executive Secretary and the co-author of the 70 year historical document on the UNECE. The conversation started off with role and significance of the 'The Survey', the UNECE main product up until the reform efforts of the Secretariat after the end of the Cold War. Berthelot was referring to Myrdal when explaining the value of an economic that straddled the entirety of the Commissions membership, and thereby lend the UNECE as a forum for discussion across the line, much like the CSCE on security matters[398]. Further when looking to the OECD, the UNECE was not trapped in one paradigm[399], and could therefore offer alternative viewpoints, also on Western European countries. The UNECE was famously against the economic shock therapy of the former Eastern Block, foresaw the oil crisis in the 1970'ties (Myrdal), so the Survey survived the first Secretariat reform at 'the end of history'[400]. However, with EU expansion and economies transitioning it was no longer deemed necessary and the Survey was scrapped in 2005. The interviewee saw part of the history of the UNECE as lost opportunities, namely the Marshall Plan, the end of the Cold War, and the EU enlargement. Berthelot felt that the UNECE suffered among other things from the trade-off between level of technicality and political relevance and because of the nearly impossible political situation during the Cold War the Commission took the only possible route and became highly technical to enable it to operate under the political radar. This also structural implications and meant that the sectoral director had a large degree of autonomy from the Executive Secretary. Berthelot alleged a high degree of Soviet intelligence officer operation within the UNECE in staff positions.

Relating back to the analytical framework Mr Berthelot was acutely aware of the how the political interacted with the bureaucratic,[401] as well from his time at UNCTAD[402], and

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[397] Paris, 6 June 2017
[398] The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), see: https://www.osce.org/who/87 <accessed 3 April 2022>
[399] See: Schmelzer, Matthias, "The Hegemony of Growth – The OECD and the making of the Economic Growth Paradigm", Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, for a discission on the solidification of US economic norms in Western Europe through the OEEC and the OECD.
[400] See: Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Free Press, New York, 1992.
[401] This is clear when reading: Berthelot, Yves, Rayment, Paul, Looking Back and Peering Forward: A Short History of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-2007, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007.
[402] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, see: https://unctad.org/ <accessed 27 April 2023>

therefore had a very good understanding on what the structure, the historical and current circumstances meant to his agency. Going against the Washington consensus at the time of the breakup of the Easter Block had no real consequences, even if it may have tested the structures and some member states views.

The fieldwork made it possible to attend a special event organised as part of the 70 years anniversary programme. The side-event took place 26 April 2017 at the UN Office in Geneva and presented a panel of four UNECE Executive Secretaries[403], who debated the UNECE's changing role over the decades. A large part of the debate was about the Economic Survey, which was the UNECE 'flagship' product until 2005 after being conceived and instituted by the inaugural Executive Secretary Gunnar Myrdal.

3.3.3   Summary

Gunnar Myrdal's tenure as Executive Secretary was one that both tested the UNECE as organisation and Myrdal as executive head. He had to be a diplomat, politician, and bureaucratic leader, all three, all the time. Weeks into his tenure political events threatened to side-line the organisation. Rather than finding informal ways to apiece states, he went back to the formal starting point, his role and function and held it against the mandate. The all-European strategy was therefore the only one possible. Had Myrdal been an unknown capacity on the UNECE's field of expertise, economist, I think it: i) would have been impossible to attract the talented staff he did, ii) continue to operate with integrity and credibility for the period of time he managed. A less substantive grounded and more politically oriented Executive Secretary would most like have meant the demise of the UNECE. There is no doubt that Myrdal got the maximum out of the agency he had, given the extreme political circumstances the UNECE was facing.

Yves Berthelot was Executive Secretary in the aftermath of the break-up of the Eastern-block. He himself felt side-lined by the larger multilateral organisations, such as the IMF and the World Bank. He did not agree with the economic shock therapy and mass privatisation of public companies and goods. With good reason. Again, being a small

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[403] The at time incumbent Christian Friis Bach 2014-2017 (Denmark), and former incumbents Yves Berthelot 1993-2000 (France), Jan Kubis 2009-2011 (Slovakia) and Brigita Schmognerova 2002-2005 (Slovakia). See https://unece.org/former-executive-secretaries <accessed 3 April 2022> for complete list.

marginalised technical player, without political leverage, caught in the largest world political reset since World War II meant that his hands were tied. Both by East and West, as with Myrdal, but without any significant agency.

Christian Friis Bach was the more politically oriented Executive Secretary, who was keen to use the sustainable development goals as a lever to communicate about the UNECE. However, the underestimation of the inert technical focus and the legacy of Myrdal. On the face of it, after Myrdal, any Executive Secretary would fall short, especially, as he brought Nobel Prize level substantive expertise with him.

The findings from studying Myrdal, Berthelot and Friis Bach clearly underpins the analytical framework outlined in Chapter 2, and underscores how important the understanding of formal and informal structures are for the ability of the executive head to apply agency. It is clear that individual capability also play a part, and one could argue that gifted with the capabilities of Myrdal and his team Berthelot may have been able to impact the discourse around the breakup of the Eastern Block.

3.4 The OECD

Research on the role of the executive head in the OECD is, as we have seen, intrinsically linked to the OECD's predecessor the OEEC. Even if most of the research, which touches on the OEEC, has the Marshall Plan or European integration as their main focus. It is possible to learn about the executive heads through this research. Prior to the renewed focus and interest on the 'degrowth' agenda[404] and thereby in the originators and promoter of the growth paradigm,[405] only three monographies has been authored about the OECD.[406] The previous historical section does though give a good overview and understanding of what faced, especially, the first Secretary-General of the OECD, Thorkil Kristensen.

I this section, I will focus the application of the analytical framework on the tenures of two executive heads:

i) Thorkil Kristensen, as there is sufficient research available to undertake the analysis, and as he his was the inaugural Executive Secretary with a large impact in shaping the culture and norms if the organisations;

ii) Angel Gurria, as he by coming from neither North America or Western Europe in that way stands out, and that his background as Finance Minister was a first return to an economist leader as the executive head since Thorkil Kristensen.

In the following subsection the inside of the organisation will be considered to add to the context in a more mechanical organisational sense.

3.4.1   Inside the OECD

In the words of the former Secretary-General of the OECD (2006 - 2021), Angel Gurria, the OECD has: 'Over the past 60 years, the OECD has established itself as a reference

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[404] Which originates and have common a founding as the Club of Rome's report 'the Limits to Growth' (1972).

[405] See: Schmelzer, Matthias, *The Hegemony of Growth – The OECD and the making of the Economic Growth Paradigm*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016.

[406] Caroll and Kellow (2011), Mahon and McBride (2008) and Woodward (2009).

for objective analysis, the sharing of best practices, the production of reliable data and recommendations for public policies.[407]

To recapitulate, the first Secretary-General gave considerable autonomy to the various directorates in his Secretariat, as he believed that the OECD should function as an avant-garde think tank with a catalytic role to provide innovative ideas that member states might pick up if they became interested. Kristensen also believed that the OECD should provide a catalytic role to ensure that member states are treated fairly. Therefore, the OECD concentrated its efforts on the use of soft power mechanisms such as the generation, legitimation, and dissemination of policy ideas and conceptual frameworks, as well as harmonisation via the use of tactics such as peer pressure and naming and shaming. [408]
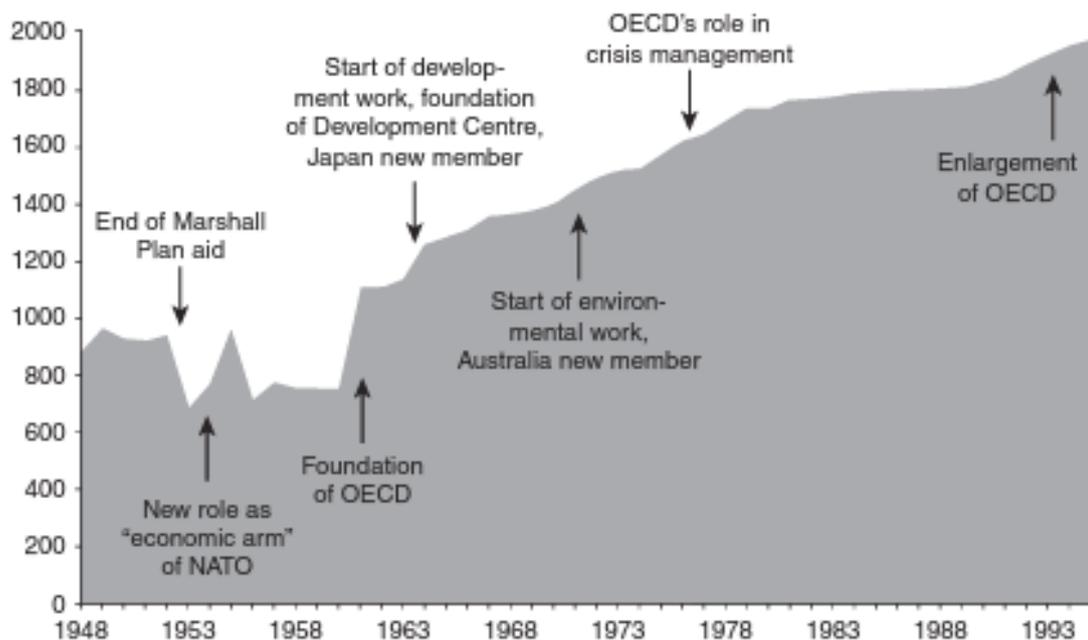
Figure 7: Number of staff working at the OEEC/OECD headquarters in Paris, 1948 – 1995[409]

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[407] https://www.oecd.org/60-years/testimonials <accessed 20 March 2022>
[408] Reinalda, Bob, *International Secretariats – Two Centuries of International Civil Servants and Secretariats*, Routledge, London, 2020, p. 118.
[409] Schmelzer, Matthias, *The Hegemony of Growth – The OECD and the making of the Economic Growth Paradigm*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 42.

Figure 7 clearly illustrates the first more volatile years at the OEEC, and the fact, that the OECD went on to become one of the most important international economic policy organisations in the world. The OECD has traditionally been regarded as a group of market democracies with the goal of achieving a more equitable distribution of wealth working together to achieve long-term economic growth and social prosperity. As a result, the OECD works to disseminate policy ideas and approaches. Kristensen's work and preference for focussing the organisation in a think tank oriented direction has worked well over the course of the last sixty years.

The same way that the United Nations has universal membership or universal criteria for membership, so do the other major international economic organisations. Membership in the OECD is not, theoretically, open to anyone who is not a member of the organisation. The OECD is more selective in its membership (as opposed to the United Nations). However, the OECD has not been slow to seek association with not only the national substantive experts, but also politicians. Either through the links to parliamentarians or to country leaders.

The OECD has never really had a place in the UN system and had therefore been, so to speak, kept away from the policy coordination of the UN, which is an important part of ensuring that policy ideas turn into national legislation. With the emergence of the G7 in 1975 a competing coordination forum arose. One that was not and still is not a formal inter-governmental organisation, but is one that in its different mutations as G20, G8 and G7 wields policy coordination power qua is attachments to the most powerful and rich nations. These nations are coincidentally also OECD members. Fulling a sort of substantive Sherpa function keep the OECD in the centre of this grouping.[410]

It is clear that Kristensen's focus on creating expert knowledge in the areas of economic cooperation and development laid the basis for performing this role. There was a large knowledge reservoir to draw from. Relating this to Figure 3, Chapter 2, and the

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[410] Reinalda, Bob, *The Routledge History of International Organizations - From 1815 to the Present Day*, Routledge. London, 2009, p. 440-441. Further, on the Sherpa system: 'Since the issues on the G7 agenda were complex and solutions chosen had a national impact, a good relationship with the national bureaucracies remained crucial. This was solved by the establishment of the so-called Sherpa system. In the G7 process every government leader or head of state has someone from the official national bureaucracy available.' The OECD Secretary-General also had his own.

knowledge needed to be brought from the bureaucratic realm to the political, and a repacking had to take place in order to seize the opportunities as they arose.

3.4.2   *Mapping Structure versus Agency*

The OECD under Kristensen was about building up the bureaucratic structure to wield agency. Whereas the tenure under Gurria was the opposite re-purposing knowledge for political relevancy means.

During field work the second interview at the OECD was with Patrick van Haute, Director of the Council and Executive Committee Secretariat OECD.[411] He was very interested in the subject matter and eager to share his knowledge. Placed firmly in the nexus of politics and bureaucracy and responsible for the formal operations of the organs in this nexus, the interviewee was the one who had the deepest insights and understanding of the issue at hand. Namely, the link between expertise and the political level and delegates. With a mandate and scope broader than most in the area the OECD has more manoeuvrability than for example the UNECE, this can be traced back to the way the organisations were formed and their country membership. The (then) Secretary-General of the OECD Angel Gurria[412] pursued an expansive interpretation of the OECD mandate with a strong independence from member states' delegations.

The third interview that day was with Mari Kiviniemi, Deputy Secretary-General OECD.[413] It was clear that the interviewee given her high profile mostly were involved

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[411] Face to face, Paris, 24 March 2017. Most interviews were set up during the field work in Paris. The first interview, was a conversation with Jan-Anno Schuur, Archivist OECD (Face to face, Paris, 24 March 2017). It was pleasant conversation with the archivist and many anecdotes were shared. The discussion centred around the monographies on the OECD as well as PhD research conducted related to the history development of the paradigm of economic growth as defined within and by the OECD (See: Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011 and Schmeltzer, Matthias, *The Hegemony of Growth – The OECD and the making of the Economic Growth Paradigm*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016). The conversation also revealed that the OECD archive is not as accessible as one would wish and many document, except the Council Acts, require managerial intervention from outside the Archive Unit. As part of the fieldwork, I was invited to be a part of and observe the OECD Forum in 2017, see: https://www.oecd.org/forum/forum2017/ <accessed 2 April 2022>

[412] See: https://www.oecd.org/about/secretary-general/former-oecd-secretary-general-angel-gurria-cv.htm <accessed 3 April 2022>

[413] Face to face, Paris, 24 March 2017. The fourth interview during this visit was with Greg Cristofani, Results-Based Budget Manager OECD (Face to face, Paris, 24 March 2017). It was a very engaging interview. However, very technical. The interviewee's work at the OECD centres around the budgetary process of the organisation. He provided good insights into the dynamics surrounding the budgetary

in the political level engagements and saw the Deputy Secretary-General role mostly as a representative role. The interviewee saw the OECD as a sort of 'coalition of the willing'. As the only woman eventually interview (by far not the only requested though), the former Finnish Prime Minister and then Deputy Secretary-General[414] of the OECD.

During a visit to Stockholm, Sweden in October 2016, I had the opportunity to sit down with former Belgian Foreign and Prime Minister, and former OECD Deputy Secretary-General, Yves Leterme. He clearly saw multilateralism through a small-state lens. He referred to his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in his capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on 26 September 2009[415]. He took a clear starting point in the liberal democratic world order and advocated for a multilateral approach. However, from a small-state perspective, this is probably also the most realist view and a way of getting out of the ways of the hegemons. The Deputy Secretary-General role seemed to have been a means to an end.

It was clear that both Kiviniemi and Leterme had exposure in the nexus between the political and bureaucratic, but had no real power and thereby agency under the Secretary General they served, namely Gurria.

As mentioned above the OECD has been successful in creating a Sherpa function towards the G20 and it would a good case to illustrate the analytical framework in depth. This is explored on the topic of international tax relations in the next section.

3.4.3 International Tax Relations – a within-Case Analysis

> *One could make a strong case that the OECD's tax work stands at the very center of its relevance for dealing with the forces of globalization – Robert T. Kudrle[416]*

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committee, the assigned delegates of member states and their agendas, being for personal career means or from national interests.

[414] Tenure: 2014-2018

[415] Leterme, Yves, Statement by H.E. Mr. Yves Leterme, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, 64th General Assembly of the Organisation of the United Nations, New York, 26 September 2009, http://www.diplomatie.be/newyorkun <accessed 10 October 2016>

[416] Kudrle, Robert T., 'Tax Policy in the OECD: Soft Governance Gets Harder', Chapter 4, pp. 75-97 in Martens, Kerstin, Jakobi, Anja P. (eds.), *Mechanisms of OECD Governance – International Incentives for National Policy-Making?*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 75.

This section explores a vertical within-case analysis[417] of the OECD's international tax relation substantive area by directly applying the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 to explore the agency of the OECD executive head, the Secretary-General, and the level of autonomy afforded to or taken by the organization. By using within-case analysis it is possible to increase the number of observations and the variation on dependent variables. It builds on Mill's method[418] of difference since it is assumed that some conditions remain constant whereas some critical drivers may change. Namely in this case to approach of the executive head.

Historical Lines: from ECOSOC to the OEEC – to the OECD and G8

The OECD's work in the area of international tax relations has only recently been newsworthy, but the organization has been shaping its knowledge and policy impact long before:

> The OECD's work on taxation began in the OEEC, whose members were increasingly concerned at the situation regarding the double taxation of firms in the mid-1950s, after the ECOSOC's Fiscal Commission and its Committee on International Tax Relations stopped functioning in 1954. The OEEC Council adopted its first recommendation concerning double taxation on 25 February 1955, a recommendation that resulted in the establishment of its Fiscal Committee in 1956. In July 1958, the Fiscal Committee was instructed to prepare a draft convention for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to the taxes on income and capital, as well as concrete proposals for the implementation of such a convention. The Committee prepared four reports to 1961, when its mandate was transferred to the new OECD.[419]

These reports paved the way for: 'The OECD model treaty of 1963 became the starting point for more than 2000 bilateral treaties and is regarded by many observers as the

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[417] King, G., Keohane, R. and Verba, S., *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. Princeton. 1994.
[418] See: Yin, Robert K., *Case study research: design and methods,* Sage, London, 2009.
[419] Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011, p. 103.

OECD's most important contribution to international economic relations.'[420] The work on tax focused on the model tax convention (MTC) that provided a template for bilateral negotiations on tax coordination and cooperation. Carroll (2011) elaborates:

> Dating back to 1958 and the OEEC, the MTC allocates the primary right to tax to the country from which the income originates (the 'source country principle'), and serves as the basis for an estimated 2000 bilateral tax treaties. The OECD also provides a set of commentaries embodying interpretation of the content of the model convention provisions. The increasing liberalisation of global capital markets, the development of which the OECD had assisted, also brought with it a degree of tax competition, and the problem of 'harmful' tax competition (HTC) coming from jurisdictions attempting to lure corporations and wealthy individuals by low rates of taxation. Whether such competition is 'harmful' has never been accepted by all ..[421]

National interests did however slowly but surely start to undermine the treaties based on the MTC, Carroll (2010) writes:

> The OECD's interest in tax began to intensify and broaden in the late 1980s .. A [internal] note .. observed that an extensive network of bilateral tax treaties ('double taxation agreements') formed a reliable basis for tax and related commercial relations between states, but that 'certain Member countries' had adopted legislation that overrode the provisions of all or some of these treaties-There was concern that such legislation could erode confidence in the international tax treaty network, and a belief that the only way to resolve conflict between domestic tax law and bilateral treaties was to negotiate to amend the treaties. The OECD therefore developed a recommendation calling upon members

[420] Quote from: Kudrle, Robert T., 'Tax Policy in the OECD: Soft Governance Gets Harder', Chapter 4, pp. 75-97 in Martens, Kerstin, Jakobi, Anja P. (eds.), Mechanisms of OECD Governance – International Incentives for National Policy-Making?, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 81, see also: OECD, *Draft Convention on Double Taxation of Income and Capital*, Paris, 1963.
[421] Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011, p. 139.

to undertake consultations with treaty partners when problems arose, and to avoid enacting legislation that was in clear contradiction to treaty obligations.[422]

Politically this was also becoming a problem and it was raised within the Group of Eight (G8)[423] and discussed. The communique from the G8 in 1996 stated:

> I. Strengthening Economic and Monetary Cooperation: … 16. Finally, globalization is creating new challenges in the field of tax policy. Tax schemes aimed at attracting financial and other geographically mobile activities can create harmful tax competition between States, carrying risks of distorting trade and investment and could lead to the erosion of national tax bases. We strongly urge the OECD to vigorously pursue its work in this field, aimed at establishing a multilateral approach under which countries could operate individually and collectively to limit the extent of these practices. We will follow closely the progress on work by the OECD, which is due to produce a report by 1998. We will also follow closely the OECD's continuation of its important work on transfer pricing, where we warmly endorse the significant progress that the OECD has already achieved.[424]

The turned in an opportunity for the OECD as this closely followed the organisation's own agenda. From 2000 the OECD focused its work around tax transparency[425] and despite US resistance[426], it received the G20 Leadership Forum endorsement, which combined with the aftermath of the financial and economic that started in 2008, where the G20 acted as an improvised crisis committee,[427] meant an increased legitimacy and

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[422] Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011, p. 103.

[423] Putnam, R., Bayne, N., *Hanging Together: Co-operation and Conflict in the Seven Power Summits*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1987, and see as well: http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/what_is_g8.html <accessed 27 April 2023>

[424] G8 Lyon Meeting 1996 Communique, G7 Information Centre, hosted by the University of Toronto: http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/1996lyon/communique.html <accessed 16 April 2023>

[425] For a comprehensive overview see: Christians, Allison, 'BEPS and the New International Tax Order', *Brigham Young University Law Review*, Vol. 2016 (6), 2017, pp. 1603-1647.

[426] Eccleston, Ricard, Kellow, Aynsley, Carroll, Peter, 'G20 Endorsement in Post Crisis Global Governance: More than a Toothless Talking Shop?', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 17, 2015, pp. 298-317, p.307.

[427] See: Cooper, Andrew F., 'The G20 as an Improvised Crisis Committee and/or a contested 'Steering Committee' for the World', International Affairs, Vol. 86 (3), 2010, pp. 741-757.

efficacy of the OECD agenda.[428] To 'put the word "morality" back into the capitalist system.'[429] This sets the frame for the application of the theoretical framework elaborated in Chapter 2.

Framing the Actors

Recalling the codification of actors and different relational levels done in Figure 3, Chapter 2, and mapping out the actors in the different quadrants engaged in the OECD's international tax relations work, we get the following stylized picture of the actors:

POLITICAL LEVEL	G8 / G20 Politicians		Global NGO/CSO and TNC actors
NEXUS		**Angel Gurria**	
BUREAUCRATIC LEVEL	Member States' (MS) Organs MS Coordination Function *Inter-ministerial competition* Ministerial Counterpart		**Patrick van Haute** **Jeffrey Owens / Pascal St Amans**

IGO Secretariat within – – – – – – – – –
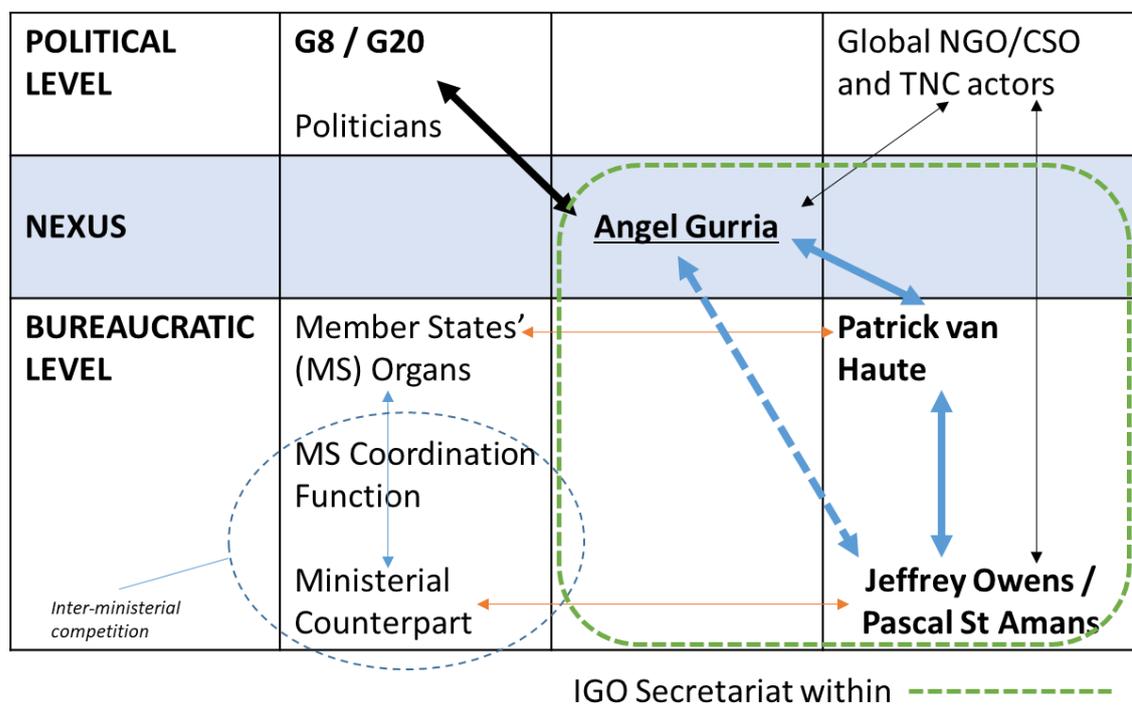
Figure 8: The placement of the executive head among actors, organs and players in the OECD vs the G8.[430]

The OECD's Secretary General 2006-2021, Angel Gurria, saw the opportunities in a legitimate World economic crisis forcing political to take actions that would restore trust

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[428] Eccleston, Ricard, Kellow, Aynsley, Carroll, Peter, 'G20 Endorsement in Post Crisis Global Governance: More than a Toothless Talking Shop?', British Journal of Politics and International Relations, Vol. 17, 2015, pp. 298-317, p. 309.

[429] The Guardian article: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/04/nicolas-sarkozy-g20-progress <accessed 16 April 2023>

[430] Author's drawing, where: NGO: non-governmental organisation, CSO: civil society organisation, and TNC: trans-national corporation.

in the economic system. Offering the OECD as a sort of secretariat on the tax issue was a logical consequence of the G8 and, in particular, the G20 being an informal international organisation without a secretariat. To ensure that the OECD member states were kept happy with this arrangement the role of the Director of the Council and Executive Committee Secretariat, at the time of interviewing occupied by Patrick van Haute, played a not unimportant role. Providing the substance was the Centre for Tax policy and Administration[431], led by Director Jeffrey Owens, and Pascal Saint-Amans, who became the outright Director in 2012 until 2022.[432] Formally the work of the tax area should pass through the substantive committees and be adopted and promoted at the member states' organs, see Figure 8. However, Angel Gurria decided to peg this area to the G20 and thereby enhance the political relevance of the work, its exposure and increase the legitimacy. While conversely increasing the G20 tax discourse by the OECD providing the expert inputs to the conversation. It shows how the OECD could become more effective by relying on a separate informal structure, where the membership was different and more diverse, by 'bypassing' the formal organs of the OECD.

Exercising Agency by Blindsiding Structure

If the tax agenda had remained solely within the OECD, it is clear that the reach and legitimacy would have been much diminished. In the words of Carroll (2010):

> The case shows what the OECD is capable of, in developing among its members, and the spreading more widely, elements of the architecture of the global economic system. IT underscores, too, the need for the OECD to adapt to maintain its relevance, interacting cleverly with the G20 and other IOs.[433]

Past 2010 the OECD managed to get further wins in the tax portfolio using the same eclectic set up. The minimum corporate tax provision adopted through the G7 stands out as the major achievement in this regard. It was part 'changing circumstances and entrepreneurship on the part of Secretary-General Gurria [that] eventually gave rise to

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[431] See appendix 6.5
[432] See: https://www.oecd.org/ctp/pascal-saint-amans.htm <accessed 27 April 2023>
[433] Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011, p. 145.

success.'[434] of the OECD tax portfolio. The OECD has succeeded where many other inter-governmental would have failed. In the words of Angel Gurria in 2006:

> Taxation is one of the big success stories of the OECD. Our engagement with our member and non-OECD economies has enables us to maintain our lead role in setting rules of the game for international taxation. Our analytical work provides governments with unparalleled information on the design and implementation of our tax systems.[435]

Current OECD Secretary General Mathias reported in 2022 at the G20, that 'the level of compliance has more than doubled since last year and 2300 of 2400 between members should become compliant with the minimum standard in a near future.'[436]

However, as Secretary General the problem with side-lining and sacrificing one's own bureaucracy in the hunt for political wins and relevance comes at the expense of only being able to sustain this in the medium term as it pulls the bureaucracy apart, resulting in an adverse reaction.

3.4.4   Summary

Thorkil Kristensen saw rightly that when the Marshall Plan implementation was over, there was an even more crowded field in the European integration area, so becoming a think tank was probably the only option if the organisation was to stay relevant. Kristensen had deep research interests and the chosen path, also reflected his own personal preferences. It should be noted, that his renewal for a second OECD terms fell on states not being able to identify any other candidate deemed less problematic. His detachment from the bureaucracy and inert focus on research should also be seen in this light. However, it pawed the way an initiated the trajectory of the think tank known today.

Angel Gurria pursuit of an expansive interpretation of the OECD mandate with a strong independence from member states' delegations. Through the nearness to world leaders

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[434] Caroll, Peter, Kellow, Aynsley, *The OECD: A Study of Organisational Adaptation*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, 2011, p. 139.

[435] OECD, *OECD Work on Taxation: Tax in a Borderless World,* Paris, 2006, p. 3.

[436] OECD, *OECD Secretary-General Tax Report to G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors*, Paris, 2022, p. 11.

through the G7 system Angel Gurria saw it more useful for the impact of the OECD and to his own image simply not to engage with member state representatives below a certain level of prestige. The Deputy Secretaries-Generals would meet the agricultural minister, whereas head of government and ministers of finance could meet with the Secretary-General. This of course happened to the irritation of both national civil servants, but also to secretariat staff, who saw their work politicised and packaged in favourable political light. The mantra was political relevance and influence. The strategy worked, for example in the taxation area. The OECD had done twenty years of work prior to that, but they nearness of the organisation to the most powerful politician meant influence and policy implementation. The problem with linking an organisation to politician in this way, is that it then become sensitive to the political agenda and therefore potentially misses the inter-governmental organisations agenda setting capability and neutrality. Angel Gurria's near disregard for the formal structures of the OECD was what made it possible to reach these unprecedented levels of policy influence. However, politicising a think tank can reap benefits short term, but will in the longer term erode the credibility of the technical work done.

Relating Kristensen and Gurria to the analytical framework, it is clear that Kristensen pursued building the bureaucracy and its autonomy, whereas Gurria sought maximum political relevance at the expense of the bureaucracy and potentially its future autonomy.

3.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented a comprehensive review and discussion of the historical aspect of the two organisations, focusing in particular on their beginnings, which were similar but also somewhat antagonistic to one another. The discussion will include the historical trajectories of the two organisations with respect to the overarching political paradigm within which they were required to operate, as well as what this did to their relevance and effectiveness as inter-governmental organisations.

Since qualitative methods are 'most appropriately employed where the aim of research is to explore people's subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences'[437] The thesis applies a frame based on qualitative methods in the case studies. During the course of this research, this has been the situation consistently. For this reason, qualitative research methods are preferable to quantitative research approaches for the investigation of whether and how executive head agencies play a part in and influence international organisations. The same can be said for the investigation of the subjective experiences of players in inter-governmental organisations.

The thesis puts out the proposition of a role-centric analytic framework that can codify the one-of-a-kind tenets of dynamic agency possessed by executive heads while operating inside the frameworks of intergovernmental organisations. Therefore, one has to conduct study in order to appreciate (or even begin to comprehend) the amount of complexity that is involved. Within the context of the self-referential field of international relations, it is necessary to take into account both historical and factual occurrences. Doing so makes it possible to ensure that the theoretical and conceptual breakthroughs achieved in the thesis as well as the discussion contained within it have an influence on the actual world. Doing so also makes it possible to ensure that the thesis is defended. Since intergovernmental organisations are living entities that change over time, any learning or observation will be hindered if it does not contain an awareness of what their foundation is founded on in terms of the specific interests, norms, and values of, in particular, member states.

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[437] Devine, F., 'Qualitative Methods', pp. 137-153 in D Marsh. D., Stoker, G. (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Macmillan Press, Basingstoke, 1995, p. 138.

In collecting the data, research was carried out at both official and informal levels inside the UNECE and the OECD will serve as the major foundation for the thesis that will be presented. It was possible to communicate with high-level officials and leaders of that organisation. Conducting the interviews ended up being a task that required a significant amount of time and effort. The first thing that needed to be done was to break the ice with an introductory email. After receiving a reply, I would then send a research project teaser or short introductory note to give the background and awaken the interview subjects' curiosity. Finally, I would send an interview guide so that they could get an idea of what the conversation would be about more specifically.

At the interviews, After the first introduction, the first topic for the open-ended conversation was about the participants' thoughts on the relationship that exists between the person and the function of the executive head. In most cases, this then led to a free-flowing discussion on the tasks of executive heads and the scope of their responsibilities. To begin investigating where on the political and bureaucratic spectrum the executive head functioned, it was necessary to first have an understanding of any portions of the role that may be assigned. Were the administration of the organisation and the substantive pursuits of the organisation considered as separate entities, or was there no distinction between the two? The interviews were conducted with the intention of covering the relationship aspects with the players that populate the processes and structures of the intergovernmental organisations. To begin, with the external political, which specifically refers to the connection that the executive heads have with the member states and other political players. To hold this up against the executive head's relationship with the secretariat, in particular the part of the secretariat through the substantive committee's interaction with non-political or bureaucratic actors from external entities in the political domain, this was as well as the element of engagement with other inter-governmental organisations and non-state actors, to understand where the focus was in both relative and real terms, and to hold this up against the executive head's relationship with the secretariat. The purpose of the inquiry was to discover the extent of the respondent's engagement with either the political or the bureaucratic, as well as to determine whether or not a preference existed. This was typically followed by a question that was more functionally directed and aimed to understand the level and sophistication of the translation between the political and the bureaucratic and vice versa in the nexus between the two where the executive head was operating. This could occur either in the formal

structure, where the impulses of member states coming to the council or committees with member state representation needed to be translated into bureaucratic action, or through informal channels. In addition, it was tried to determine whether or not the head of the executive branch had made any genuine steps to balance or evaluate the coherence of signals coming from various messengers representing member nations on political and bureaucratic levels. In the end, there was a fairly loaded question on autonomy that was asked in order to evaluate the institutional self-perception of the relationship between the secretariat and the executive head, on the one hand, and the member states, on the other. Even if the interview guide had a great deal of structure, the vast majority of interviews themselves were just semi-structured. It is important to note that the interview guide had another role, which was to allow the interviewer to get past the gate keepers and speak with the actual topic.

This thesis accepts that empirical attention is required in order to create the scene for the executive head and their endeavours in a manner that is more than simply a self-referencing international relations fashion. This section explains the similarities between the histories of several international organisations and, by extension, intergovernmental organisations.

For the OECD, historically, Chapter 3 points to the beginning of the kind of think tank that we are familiar with today, in which policy is developed by direct contact with the representatives of other governments in committees that are driven by the subject matter at hand to ensure a consultative approach. Even if the OEEC had accomplished its goals with a good degree of success, the political climate in Europe was not favourable for the organisation to exist in its current configuration. As the intensity of the Cold War increased, other organisations, particularly in the Western Europe, made headway on the goal of integration. The OEEC was an organisation that required a shift in perspective and direction, which it got with the transformation to the OECD.

For the UNECE, got caught up in the struggle between East and West and attempted to resolve the impasse by shifting their attention to a greater emphasis on technical matters while maintaining an all-European perspective on the work; nonetheless, this was something that contributed to the conflict. However, if he had not maintained this approach, an East-ECE and a West-ECE would have been operating in parallel, which would have led to organisational demise on the part of the UNECE.

Yves Berthelot personally experienced a sense of marginalisation at the hands of bigger multinational organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. He was opposed to the prevalent Washington consensus based economic shock treatment as well as the wholesale privatisation of publicly owned businesses and commodities. Unfortunately, he was a minor, marginalised technical actor with very little political power and that he was caught in the greatest global geo-political and – economical recalibration, that has occurred since World War II up to that point, meant that his hands were tied. As was the case with Myrdal, by both the East and the West, but for very different reasons. Executive Secretary Christian Friis Bach was more politically oriented, and he was eager to utilise the sustainable development objectives as a tool to profile the UNECE. On the other hand, a lack of appreciation for the importance of substantive knowledge, interest and emphasis, made him go against the legacy left by Myrdal. On the surface, it would seem that following Myrdal, any Executive Secretary would be a step down, particularly given the fact that he offered actual competence on par with the Nobel Prize. A less substantively grounded and more politically orientated Executive Secretary would have resulted in the death of the UNECE. In light of the very difficult political climate in which the UNECE was operating at the time, there is no question that Myrdal made the most of the agency at his disposal.

Thorkil Kristensen had the correct idea when he realised that after the Marshall Plan execution was complete, there would be an even more congested field in the topic of European integration, and that turning the organisation into a think tank was probably the only choice if it wanted to remain relevant. Kristensen had significant interests in research, and the route he picked also reflected his own personal tastes and priorities. It is important to emphasise that his reappointment to the OECD for a second term was granted because member states were unable to nominate anybody else who was considered to pose a lower level of risk. It is also important to keep in mind that he has a detached attitude toward the bureaucracy and an inert concentration on research. Nevertheless, it paved the way and launched the path that led to the development of the think tank that is recognised today.

Angel Gurria's goal was to pursue an expanded interpretation of the OECD mission while maintaining a high degree of independence from the delegations of member states. Angel Gurria thought that it would be more beneficial for the influence of the OECD and to his

personal image simply to avoid engaging with member state delegates below a certain degree of prominence. This was because of the proximity to global leaders that was afforded to him via the G7 arrangement. The meeting with the Secretary-General would be open to the head of government as well as ministries of finance. This, of course, occurred to the annoyance of both national civil officials as well as staff members working in the secretariat, who saw their job being politicised and presented in a political light that was favourable to them. The overarching theme was one of political significance and impact. The technique was successful, as an example in the field of taxation. The proximity of the organisation to the most powerful politician meant that it could influence and execute policy. The difficulty with attaching a politician to an organisation in this manner is that the organisation will then become sensitive to the political agenda, and as a result, it may lose out on the capacity of the intergovernmental organisation to establish the agenda and maintain its neutrality. It was Angel Gurria's almost complete contempt for the official institutions of the OECD that made it feasible for him to achieve these hitherto unimaginable levels of policy influence. However, politicising a think tank may have short-term advantages, but it will have a longer-term negative impact on the legitimacy of the technical work that has been done.

Relating the five executive heads analysed in this chapter, they can be plotted in our diagram as per their preferential orientation on the political bureaucratic spectrum:

POLITICAL LEVEL	G8 / G20			Global NGO/CSO and TNC actors
	Politicians	**Gurria** **Friis Bach**		
NEXUS			**Myrdal** **Berthelot**	
BUREAUCRATIC LEVEL	Member States' (MS) Organs			**Kristensen**
	MS Coordination Function			
	Ministerial Counterpart			

IGO Secretariat within ---------
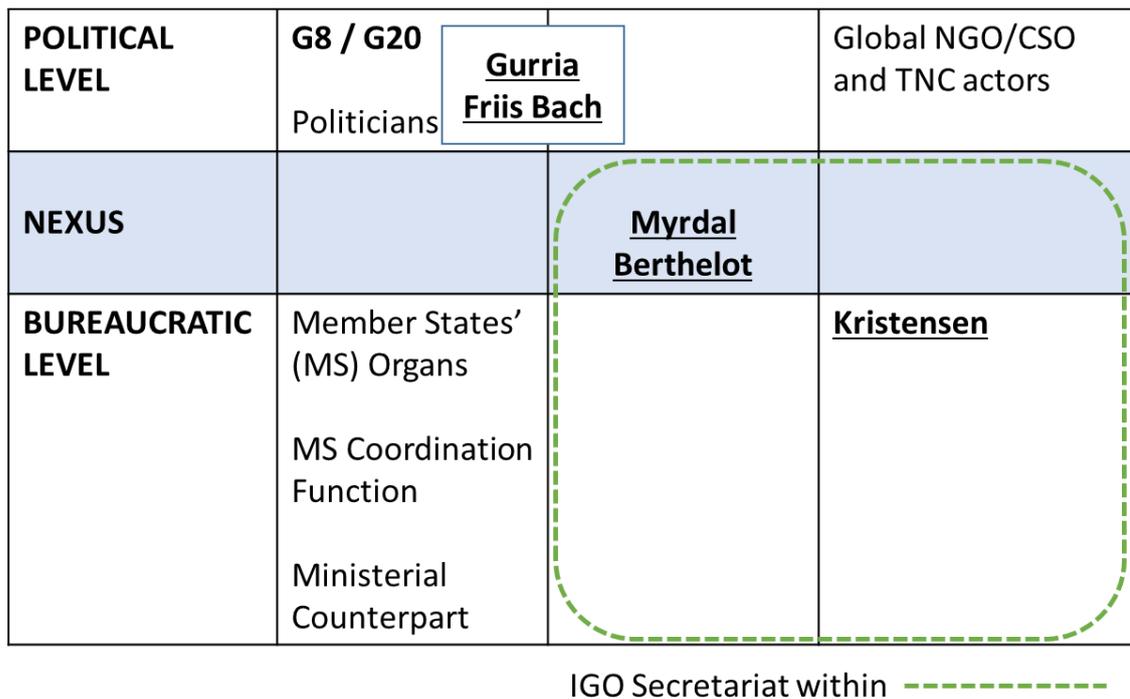
Figure 9: The placement of the five executive heads among actors, organs and players in an inter-governmental organisational structure[438]

The two outliers in this conversation is Myrdal and Gurria, both with a full toolbox for the executive head role, in particular in the substantive side. For Myrdal it was a case of sticking to the rules – no matter what – such that the UNECE did not implode. For Gurria, it was a case of side stepping the old and slow structures, but turbo-charging the organisation politically, great impact and relevance has been achieved, but it is a question if the organisation can stay credible. It is therefore clear that to fully perform the role the executive head has to be credible in the substantial areas of the inter-governmental organisation.

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[438] Author's drawing, where: NGO: non-governmental organisation, CSO: civil society organisation, and TNC: trans-national corporation.

4. Patterns of the Role of the Executive Head

4.1   Introduction

The journey taken in this thesis has been a rewarding one. In seeking to establish the patterns in the role of the executive head as they relate to the theoretical discussion and the findings in the two case studies, the UNECE and the OECD, I recall the premise from which the journey started.

The first chapter established the subject of the thesis as well as explanations of its limitations, in particular separating the conversation about leadership from the discourse on roles. The analysis of the relevant literature found many significant gaps in the research and the bodies of literature about inter-governmental organisations and their capacity to deal with the topic in the most methodical and standardised manner. The purpose of the second chapter was to construct an analytic framework to cover the gap in the existing literature, namely, a model that both explains and functions effectively within the nexus of politics and bureaucracy. Firstly, the structure and procedures of inter-governmental organisations were reviewed and analysed in detail. This was to gain the requisite degree of understanding regarding the structures, set players, and their interaction and interrelationship. Secondly, by comprehending and evaluating various aspects of the functions and tenure of an executive head, beginning with the appointment procedure and continuing through the active implementation phase, and exit strategy phase. The case studies were the primary subject of Chapter 3, which also included an in-depth exploration of the historical background of the two organisations in question, in particular their contentious beginnings. In the process, we covered the historical trajectories followed by the two organisations in relation to the paradigm within which they were required to function.

The thesis is not intended to add to the body of literature on leadership or to investigate personality cults, but to shed new light on the functional aspects of the political and operational role of the executive head, while bearing in mind the critical importance of distinguishing between the role of the executive head and the individual undertaking it.

To recap: a good body of literature deals with agency versus structure; but this, however, fails to fully systematise structure and the inter-relation between the two. Most literature is static in the way it describes inter-government organisations and does not engage with the executive head's (self-)perception of agency versus the ex-post agency concretised in the ability to implement; and few relate to organisational processes or operations. Therefore, the observations on structure and inter-relational dynamics are largely uncodified.

The research question in this thesis is: How does the role of the executive head of inter-governmental organisations, through its incumbents, influence and operate in the nexus between the external political stakeholders of member states, non-member states and other multilateral actors, and the internal stakeholders of the more bureaucratically-inclined secretariat? The thesis unpacks the executive head's search for agency and ability to take and implement their decisions in a way that will service the organisation. Recalling the original inspiration from Robert W. Cox (1969), that started the inquiry:

> The basic personal qualification for effective leadership is a clear perception of what action and initiative the state of the international system at any time permits. The definition of organizational ideology and the establishment of the political for an organization's actions have to be determined in the light of the executive head's reading of the constraint imposed and the opportunities opened by the world political situation.[439]

The perception of the surrounding world is the key to forming the self-perception and effective engagement with the structures and processes of an inter-governmental organisation. As an inter-governmental organisation is both a political and a bureaucratic structure, and the nexus, or pivot between the two is the executive head, the approach here gives new life to Robert W. Cox's ideas. Figure 3, in Section 2.3.5, illustrates this in the best possible and most precise manner, and facilitated the codification of the role. Intergovernmental organisations, as well as their roles and locations within the context of what may be loosely referred to as global governance, have been the subject of a great deal of discussion. There has been less discussion about the mechanisms that link the

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[439] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23 (02), pp. 205-230, 1969, p. 226.

political actors of and in countries and world forums through the substance and mandates of inter-governmental organisations; but this topic is important. The purpose of this thesis is not to add to the large body of leadership literature or to study the numerous cults of personality that exist. Rather, the objective is to shed new light on the functional aspects of the political and operational role of the executive head, by codifying the inter-governmental organisation governance structure from a relational point of view. This clearly shows the pivotal role of the executive head, and helps underline the translational and dual nature of the role.

The case studies that were chosen to represent the system of international organisations illustrate its diversity, competition, and complementarity. More specifically, they centre on the portion of the multilateral structural patchwork that can be interpreted as being engaged in multilateral competition. This topic does not receive a significant amount of attention from academics in general, despite the fact that, as the thesis argues, it is an essential component of the dynamics that occur inside the multilateral systems and in inter-governmental organisations.

In this synthesising and concluding chapter the outline is as follows:

1. Theoretical insights, ending in the middle-range;
2. International history and its effect on inter-governmental organisations;
3. Patterns of the role of the executive head; and
4. Synthesis.

4.2   The Theoretical Insights: Ending in the Middle-Range

The essentials of international relations theory boil down to two main schools, realism and liberal institutionalism – and their more systematically-elaborated variants, neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism. Social-constructivism is the critical school rejecting the positivist premise of neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism. This means

that assumptions are made about the external relations of the inter-governmental organisations that are not socially constructed between states.[440]

This thesis rejects realism and neorealism as useful tools for a unit of enquiry that, according to the theory, has little or no agency, despite what is observable. The majority of (neo)realist positions can be summed up as follows: 'institutions are basically a reflection of the distribution of power in the world.' Further, 'They [institutions] are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behavior.' [441] Both quotes are from John Mearsheimer's infamous article, the 'False Promise of International Institutions' (1995)[442], that does, however, pose important questions on the real and relative relevance of inter-governmental organisations. Not everything is important.

Thomas G. Weiss (2014) had already refuted the fallacies concerning intergovernmental organisations and the loud realist laments (in particular by Mearsheimer), to which he provided a resounding pushback. His main claims are that power is wielded by more than just nations, that global incentives are effective, and that supranational organisations are real and operate effectively. We cannot continue to ignore or explain the absence of overarching authority, regardless of how robust the inputs are from official and informal networks or how much goodwill there is from individuals and governments.[443]

From the liberal institutionalist perspective, the neo-functionalism of Haas[444] and the lessons learned from, and the process of, European integration, have resulted in a significantly increased degree of interdependence.[445] The establishment of inter-

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[440] Reinalda, Bob, *The Routledge History of International Organizations - From 1815 to the Present Day*, Routledge. London, 2009, p. 7.
[441] Idem, p. 7.
[442] Mearsheimer, John J., 'The False promise of International Institutions', International Security 19 (3), pp. 5-49, 1994.
[443] Weiss, Thomas G., *Governing the World – Addressing "Problems without Passports"*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, 2014. See also: Weiss, Thomas G., *Global Governance - Why? What? Whither?*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2013; Weiss, Thomas G., 'Good Governance and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges', *Third World Quarterly* 21(5), pp. 795-814. 2000; Weiss, Thomas G., Wilkinson, Rorden (a), *International Organization and Global Governance,* Routledge, London 2014; and Weiss, Thomas G., Wilkinson, Rorden (b), 'Global Governance to the Rescue: Saving International Relations?, *Global Governance* 20, pp. 19-36. 2014.
[444] Haas, Ernst B., *Beyond the Nation-State – Functionalism and International Organization*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1964.
[445] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 17.

governmental organisations here serves as the impetus for forward-looking dynamic processes, firstly at the European level and then at the global level. This is important to remember once we encounter the more rational institutional design models, that from a principal-agent perspective seek to understand why 'major institutions are organized in radically different ways. Some are global, essentially open to all states; others are regional, with restricted memberships.'[446] This results in the secretariat being granted varied degrees of authority and autonomy, which in turn have an effect on the structure of the organisation as well as the formal agency that is given to the executive head in their role as the leader of the secretariat.

The most important theoretical revelation was Alexander Wendt's article, 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory' (1987)[447]. This confronted the neorealist use of reductionism in a manner conducive to assigning labels and 'standard' behavioural traits to groups of people – as Chapter 2 of this thesis – that in reality are a heterogeneous set. The rationalist approach to the question of why significant institutions are structured in such dramatically different ways involves a discussion of the concept of institutional design.

Wendt (1987)[448] provides a profound understanding of the complexities surrounding the debate between structure and agency, as well as the connection that exists between the two. However, he does not appear to be overly concerned about his starting point. In his article, in which the agents are the states, Wendt could also have described what occurs when a new state emerges. Cases in which the structural set is changed and agency is realigned include, for instance, the disintegration of the state as a result of an armed internal strugg,le or referenda. What takes place at the beginning of a nation's, or organisation's existence will shape its structure as well as the agency that will be projected both inside and outwardly. Conditions at the beginning of the process will define the trajectory, unless those conditions are interrupted by some kind of conflict.[449]

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[446] Koremos, Barbara, Lipson, Charles, Snidal, Duncan, 'The Rational Design of International Institutions', *International Organization* 55(4), pp. 761-799. 2001.
[447] Wendt, Alexander E., 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory', *International Organization* 41, 3, pp. 335-370, 1987, p. 365.
[448] Idem.
[449] Koremos, Barbara, Lipson, Charles, Snidal, Duncan, 'The Rational Design of International Institutions', *International Organization* 55(4), pp. 761-799. 2001.

According to the social constructivist perspective, the establishment of international institutions in general and inter-governmental organisations in particular requires the pre-existing presence of a normative and value-based agreement among the people involved.[450] States are social actors that not only pursue interests, but also question what goals, values, and norms are anticipated and pursued in the setting in which they operate. In other words, states do not only look out for their own best interests. Importantly, intergovernmental organisations 'may shape the action of states depending on the configuration of their interest, but they can also, through the values and norms embedded in them, influence the interests and identities of states and thus, ultimately, the structure of the international system.' [451] This is an important point to keep in mind. If this is how intergovernmental organisations are designed, then they and their secretariats will be able to 'constructively' promote the relevant principles and norms to member states and other stakeholders, thereby fulfilling the role of culture bearers or agents of change.[452] However, in order to moderate the expectations of the real capacities or pathologies of intergovernmental organisations, unattainably high goals, similar to those of global civil society, should be toned down.[453]

This thesis recognises that institutionalist theories do provide an approach to the formation of inter-governmental organisations. Once these rationales are projected onto the undertakings in the bureaucratic hallways of the organisations, the social construction inside the organisations may seem divorced from the rationalised principal-agent relationship between the states, and the executive head and the secretariat.

As the inquiry turned to the internal workings of the inter-governmental organisations, it became evident that the interpretation of the role of the executive head in the secretariat is the most important factor. It enables the application of the principles of international relations theory to see the organisation as the function that constitutes the central nexus

[450] Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, p. 23.
[451] Wendt, Alexander, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.
[452] Finnemore, Martha, 'International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization', *International Organization*, 47 (4), pp. 565-598, 1993
[453] Davies, Thomas R., 'The Rise and Fall of Transnational Civil Society: The Evolution of International Non-Governmental Organizations since 1839', *Working Paper City University of London*, 2008, p. 15.

between what Barnet and Finnemore (1999)[454] refer to as the internal and the external. This is the most important factor. Within the context of this thesis, I shall refer to it as the nexus between the 'political' and the 'bureaucratic'. Inter-governmental organisations are predicated on decisions and agreements (hereunder treaties and charters) that, in the final instance, are decided on by politicians from the respective (or soon to be member) states as the executive representatives of their country. These decisions and agreements form the foundation of the organisation.

Because bureaucracies are self-conceived from the standpoint of authority and legitimacy, Barnet and Finnemore's (1999)[455] strict description of the inter-governmental organisation as a bureaucracy does not, unfortunately, offer a symbiotic interaction with the external world. Even while it is difficult to understand how it may become more than a zero-sum game due to its own insulation, the bureaucracy is a valid starting point for the argument. This is similar to the position that realism holds at the opposite end of the spectrum of international relations theory. Understanding the inter-governmental organisation as a dual political and bureaucratic body provides the link to the outside world. This understanding is necessary in order to fully appreciate how the organisations function.

The landmark paper written by Robert W. Cox (1969)[456] gives a solid starting point from which to delve into various areas of the executive head's agency. He draws attention to the observation and interpretation of events and possibilities by the executive head, but also relates it to the structure of the organisation. All of these might prevent or influence the executive head from conducting an accurate assessment of it, leading to an inaccurate estimation of the amount of agency. Importantly, points on the informal and formal elements of structure are drawn, showing that decision-making follows intertwined routes, and pointing to a dynamic interplay between agents and the structure they populate. The thorny issue, from the point of view of this investigation, of whether or not agency can be reclaimed at all is best understood by Cox and Jacobson's perspective of

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[454] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations', *International Organization* 53 (4), pp. 699-732, 1999.
[455] Idem.
[456] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23 (02), pp. 205-230, 1969.

structure as power relations.[457] Their expanded vision of stakeholders, in comparison to the notion that Cox had back in 1969, lends greater subtlety to the operational component of the executive head's agency. Weiss (1982),[458] on the other hand, believes that the stakeholders have the ability to sway the agents; in this context, the member states – and, in particular, the agent's member state – and structure serve as the unseen adhesive that holds internationalism together. From the vantage point of a time continuum, the issue that must be answered is as follows: How do agency and structure evolve, both independently and in connection with one another? It is essential for there to be a distinction between the political and the bureaucratic role. It is not possible to communicate the realisation that the function of the executive head is in the nexus between the political and bureaucratic.

Schroeder (2014)[459] outlines one of main concerns of this thesis with the existing literature, namely: 'The empirics of IO studies frequently credit EHs [Executive Heads] with important changes, but these studies seldom consider EHs separate from the rest of the bureaucracy and thus makes [sic] few theoretical claims about them'. This approach leaves little room for any finesse when interpretating inter-governmental organisations. Either they are bureaucracies, or instruments of states; but the reality lies somewhere on this spectrum, it is not a binary either/or.

The secretariat of an intergovernmental organisation serves as the organisation's bureaucracy, which is sometimes referred to as boring and dysfunctional. On the one hand, according to Max Weber's theory, bureaucratisation is a major trait of legal-rational power, that is, governments that construct inter-governmental organisation secretariats.[460] Furthermore, bureaucratisation is an unavoidable manifestation of contemporary existence. Because it is the most effective form of administration, the existence of bureaucracy is necessary. On the other hand, bureaucracies have the capacity to avoid being controlled by a valid principal.[461] The last point delegates a not-insignificant degree

[457] Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973.
[458] Weiss, Thomas G., 'International Bureaucracy: The Myth and Reality of the International Civil Service', *International Affairs* 58 (2), pp. 287-306, 1982.
[459] Schroeder, Michael Bluman, 'Executive Leadership in the Study of International Organization: A Framework for Analysis', *International Studies Review* 16, pp. 339-361, 2014.
[460] Weber, Max, *Economy and Society,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978.
[461] Idem.

of discretionary power to the secretariat as well as to the executive head. When the topic of secretariats as independent actors is brought up for discussion, one of the primary concerns of states is the fact that this might be seen as scary, to paraphrase Weber's wording. This is the route that Barnett and Finnemore (1999)[462] take in order to provide 'a more complete understanding of what bureaucracy is [and] explanations of how certain kinds of bureaucratic behaviour are possible.'[463] In essence, they come to the conclusion that inter-governmental organisations as complex bureaucracies have a life of their own, separate from the interests of their principals, which are the states.

As was said previously, this indicates that the functioning of the secretariats of intergovernmental organisations as bureaucracies may not be what was intended when they were first formed.[464] Seen from the other perspective and perhaps noticing how organisations, secretariats, and executive heads behave in a self-sacrificing manner could potentially lead to the same conclusion as a result of the design.[465] The principal-agent agenda has the potential to overshadow the constructivist work that 'has focused on the "bureaucratisation" of world politics and how large international organisations can use knowledge and expertise, as well as their capacity for organised behaviour, to influence state behaviour.'[466] It is possible for this to happen, and it can function in either direction. It is imperative to keep these concepts in mind when the formal and informal components of the intergovernmental organisation are discussed.

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[462] Barnett, Michael N., Finnemore, Martha, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations', *International Organization* 53 (4), pp. 699-732, 1999.
[463] Idem, p. 701.
[464] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 10.
[465] Fierke, Karin M., *Political Self-Sacrifice: Agency, Body and Emotion in International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 55.
[466] Muldoon Jr., James P., 'International Organization and Bureaucracy', *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, International Studies* (online), 2018.

The structure, actors, processes and organisational culture in inter-governmental organisations are described and analysed in detail, as follows:

Fundamentally, the governance and organisational structure of an inter-governmental organisation may be broken down into the following components: i) Member states; ii) Executive heads of inter-governmental organisations; and iii) Secretariats. [467]

The seven distinct categories of actors[468] are directly linked to their processes. Some, such as the media and other organisations, are by their very nature observers of the proceedings; others, even if they offer individual assistance, may be part of a community of practice even though they provide individual guidance. It is imperative that the individuals serving in the secretariat of an inter-governmental organisation be acknowledged as the glue holding everything together and ensuring its functionality. The significant facet is how these categories project themselves onto the processes and, as a result, establish a partnership based on their interdependence.

The processes of an inter-governmental organisation can be codified as a political system.[469] Inputs are transformed into outputs by political systems. This is in accordance with the distinction between 'political' and 'bureaucratic'. Because of this, inter-governmental organisations transform political inputs into outputs by means of a translation from 'political' to 'bureaucratic', or rather substantive, in the nexus between the two. Within the nexus, this translation is carried out by the executive heads and the people they employ. The procedures of an inter-governmental organisation function on two levels: the constituent level, and the institutional level. With regard to the component processes, in most cases a founding treaty will detail the organisation's goal as well as its membership requirements. It will also create the organisation's main organs and decide how their respective responsibilities would be divided. Even if international organisations

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[467] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders*, Routledge, New York, 2015.

[468] i) representatives of national governments [operating with a clear delegation]; ii) representatives of national and international private associations [civil society]; iii) the executive heads of the organisations; iv) high officials and other members of the bureaucracy of each organisation; v) individuals who serve in their own capacity formally and informally as advisers; vi) representatives of other international organisations; and vii) employees of the mass media. See: Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973, p. 118

[469] Easton, David, *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1965.

cannot be fully comparable to sovereign nations, it may be said that they are 'constituted' by the treaties that established them. Formal modifications after an organisation's foundation are typically difficult and time-consuming because of the need for possible requirements such as supermajorities, consensus, or domestic ratification in the event that member states disagree with the organisation's overall mandate or structure. Some governments may employ less formal strategies in an effort to either slow down the organisation or undermine it completely. The institutional procedures of an inter-governmental organisation have a direct connection to the organisation's organs and bodies.[470] The function of the executive head in an intergovernmental organisation is analogous to that of a translator, since it is an entity that is defined both politically and bureaucratically. Cox and Jacobson (1973)[471] characterised this phenomenon by referring to the formal decision-making procedures of the intergovernmental organisations, which were then subdivided into participant and representative subsystems.[472] Every state is afforded the opportunity to have its unique voice heard inside the plenary body through its representative. In most cases, they carry out their activities in accordance with the directives provided to them by their state (and capital). In most organisations, the plenary organ is responsible for electing a subset of member states to serve on the executive council for a certain length of time in order to supervise and monitor the day-to-day activity and functioning of the organisation. The executive head interacts with this member state body more than with the other member state bodies. In most cases, the secretariat is divided into two sections: one deals with the administrative and organisational parts of the operation, and the other deals with the substantive component of the operation in relation to the mandate of the organisation. The participants of the substantive organs are a combination of experts selected from member states (at the national, sub-national, and regional levels), representatives from civil society, academia, and the private section, as well as the experts chosen from the secretariat.

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[470] These generally are: i) Plenary organ representing all member states – the highest authority; ii) Executive council, standing or steering committee – supervising/monitoring day-to-day business; iii) Secretariat – led by the executive head, responsible for implementing the mandate; and iv) Substantive organs – representing civil society, private sector, academia, national, sub-national and regional bodies. See: Rittberger, Volker, Zangl, Bernhard, Kruck, Andreas, Dijkstra, *International Organization*, Red Globe Press, London, 2019, pp. 60-61.
[471] Cox, Robert W, Jacobson, Harold K., *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973.
[472] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004.

The secretariat might have had the opportunity to build its own unique culture from the outset, but instead it chose to operate as a bureaucracy. Because of this, the secretariats now have a certain degree of cultural autonomy. It is not by chance that the starting point in organisation culture possesses the sticking point in the reaction function to a change in demand; this indicates that the starting point was not chosen at random. It is essential to recognise the manner in which the demands of international organisations are dependent on the political priorities created by states. As a result of the fact that inter-governmental organisations were 'born' at a certain point in history, the process of external adaptation and integration is an ongoing one from that point forward. The organisational architecture and structures are formulated at the outset, with reference to Schein's[473] definition of the culture of the organisation. This culture is taken from the founding member nations when the organisation first begins; and the moment at which an international organisation gets its start very definitely dictates what its culture is like. Because of this, the first executive head, in their role as culture advocate and standard bearer, plays a crucial role in the process of developing the organisation's culture.

To sum up, what repercussions can or does this have for the executive head? Where might a potential incumbent get information on the structure, actors, and procedures of the organisation, as well as its culture? To answer this an understanding of the functions of the executive head must be gained, as pointed out by Robert W. Cox (1969): 'If we want to answer the question "Are intergovernmental organizations merely instruments of national foreign policies or do they influence world politics in their own right?" then we must take a look at the executive head.'[474] The executive heads have three main functions: i) as diplomat, ii) as politician, and iii) as bureaucratic leader.[475] Individually, any of the three responsibilities is difficult; when combined, however, they present a significant obstacle for any incumbent to overcome. When a large and ideally strong knowledge of the organisation's fields of operation is added, the span increases. These three main roles

[473] Schein, Edgar H., 'Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture', *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Winter 1984), MIT, p. 3.
[474] Cox, Robert W., 'The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization', *International Organization* 23(02), pp 205-230, 1969.
[475] Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick, *The Working World of International Organizations – Authority, Capacity, Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, p. 57.

are measured against the tasks[476] at hand to determine what is required of the executive head.

The executive heads consequently negotiate their way through the structures and procedures mentioned above, with the goal of carrying out the operational aspects of the mandates that have been given to them. The self-perception of personal agency held by the executive head is critical to the process of deciding on the plan or method. For the new executive head to be able to construct a self-perception, it is vital for them to read the organisational landscape from both the political and bureaucratic points of view. The fact that states, or even just certain states, seek this specific person might be information that the future executive head does not want to have to explain. To understand this, the life-cycle of the executive head is analysed as follows: i) The impact of the appointment process on agency; ii) Tenure: information, decision-making and implementation; and iii) Tenure as transitory, within an elite pool.

The incoming executive head of an inter-governmental organisation is with almost no exception selected by member states through a competitive political process. This varies in transparency and interconnectedness with other inter-governmental organisations, issues in relation to the organisation itself, or the multilateral system, as seen from the perspective of a member state. The selected executive leader thus carries with them not only their own history, but also the relational outcomes of the contentious moment that an appointment process is for the inter-governmental organisation. In order for the new incumbent to have been selected, the other contenders needed to be either defeated or eliminated from consideration.

The task will get underway after the executive head has been selected. The order sequence, when the work of the inter-governmental organisation is launched by the executive head, is typically: i) information gathering and understanding, ii) decision making, and iii) implementation of the decision. The executive head of an inter-governmental organisation has a good starting point for understanding and forming the

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[476] These tasks are generally: i) maintain support and legitimacy in the eyes of both member states and the secretariat; ii) respond to the demands of accountability to their state masters while retaining the ability to lead; and iii) muster the necessary capacity, both politically and technically, to influence the agenda, understand the problems, and develop ways ahead for their institutions. (See: Idem.)

self-perception of their agency because they have access to the information that is kept within the secretariat, and the authority to influence and direct the processes that are carried out by the organisation. These procedures for formulating policy will, at some point, result in a classification of the domains that are taken into consideration. There is much room for variety in the topics that intergovernmental organisations consider when making decisions. The organisation is capable of demonstrating the necessary leadership to convince member governments to accept new policies. They can help build consensus around difficult collective problem-solving; but regrettably, this is often seen as playing to the lowest common denominator rather than achieving a first- or second-best outcome. This is unfortunate because they can help build consensus around difficult collective problem-solving. When one considers not only the hats worn by state representatives but also those worn by secretariat staff, as both the organisation and their country of origin make claims on their loyalty, the likelihood that the inter-governmental organisation will emerge victorious increases in direct proportion to the degree to which the supranational nature of the organisation is emphasised. In order for a policy to be approved or agreed upon, it has to be presented during a time period known as a 'policy window', a period in which it is politically feasible to reach such an agreement.[477] In the context of the principal-agent relationship, monitoring the organisation entails combining the functions of the executive head and the secretariat. Trust is necessary in order to avoid stifling the executive head's ability to conduct business with the secretariat in an efficient manner. It is of the utmost importance to determine who gets to decide or who has the upper hand in the process of establishing the metrics. A well-established bureaucracy has the option to accept a performance framework as an undesired transplant, accept it as an extension of its usual operations, or reject it as an undesirable transplant.

It is essential to have a solid understanding of the background of the executive leaders as well as their future plans. In this climate, executive leadership should be viewed as a trajectory for both present and future opportunities, as well as for the legacy of the past. If a person views their time as executive head as a stepping stone in their career, one that will bring them to the next level, this means that the incumbent's career progression and

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[477] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, pp. 237-241.

the speed at which they are ascending the career ladder may affect their willingness to take risks in office in order to achieve significant results.

This thesis presents an approach that occupies the centre of the debate on this problem and acknowledges the dual nature of the subject matter. Because individual states and only individual states are able to make the decision to establish an intergovernmental organisation, the construction doesn't start until the first incumbents of the secretariat pick up the pieces from individual states and begin adding substance to the frame of the organisation. Theoretically the end point is firmly in the middle range, taking on rational principal-agency arguments, while acknowledging the social-constructivist nature of the inner-workings of the organisations.

4.3 International History and its Effect on Inter-Governmental Organisations

The heading for this section is dual in its meaning: i) international relations is in itself self-referencing, and ii) history has dragged inter-governmental organisations firmly through the mud.

I shall investigate the conditions of the UNECE and OECD from the standpoint of the inside out, rather than from the outside in, for the purpose of the case studies. As a result of the fact that the foundation for international interactions is composed almost entirely of its own internal references, it is necessary to include elements of organisational design and growth. It is equally important to bear in mind that a framework for international relations has limitations. In this part, we shall analyse the historical route that the two organisations shared leading up to the founding of the OECD proper in 1961. These two protagonists had a solid grasp of an established backstory they had in common.[478]

It is essential to understand how the organisations contributed to each other's journeys and ultimately evolved into their current form. In addition, the purpose of this thesis is to make the connection, which is sometimes overlooked, between the historical research that has previously been conducted and the work that has been done in the field of international relations. The Marshall Plan, in and of itself, has been the subject of most

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[478] Williams, Andrew, *Failed imagination? – The Anglo-American new world order from Wilson to Bush*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2007, p. 1.

of the research about post-World War II European integration. This research does not include the intergovernmental organisation responsible for its implementation, nor the myriad of other organisations that each had a unique part to play in the formation of the mosaic that was post-war Europe. If this is the case, then the UNECE has been given even less focus.[479] The United States and Western Europe have frequently been the focal points of attention. It is essential to keep this in mind because the vast majority of the published works and studies that have been analysed centre their attention on European integration in and of itself, rather than the historical journeys taken by the organisations that have been a part of its implementation.

The UNECE was an important player in the landscape of expanding European intergovernmental organisations; nonetheless, it has received insufficient attention up to this point (2021). The role that the UNECE plays in history, both as it is recorded and as it is understood by the general public, is, at best, marginal. Despite this, it is the oldest of the post-World War II European intergovernmental organisations, as well as the one with the widest scope of membership. Many of the basic assumptions that have been made regarding the history of European integration and the Cold War are put to the test by the very presence of the UNECE. After World War II, the first attempt to establish an intergovernmental organisation for European economic cooperation was a success; this attempt took place within the context of the United Nations, and it did include socialist nations as members. After the destruction wrought by World War II, the United States made significant financial contributions between the years of 1945 and 1947 to assist Europe restructure and regain its footing. Most of this money was, however, moved from one party to another in the form of ad hoc transactions or bilateral agreements. These were not formal contracts. There was political divergence when the UNECE and Marshall challenged the Soviet agenda during the meeting predicated on heavy reparations paid by Germany, and the dismantling of Germany's industrial capacity. In addition, by the middle of 1947 it had become abundantly clear that this strategy was not producing the desired results. Intra-European commerce ground to a halt as a direct result of a decline in liquidity on the international market. The hard winter of 1946 was a contributing factor leading to a serious scarcity of food, fuel, and raw materials which added to the severity

[479] Ventresca, Roberto, 'The OECD as a Global Preacher for Capitalism', pp. 301-326, in Grin, Gilles, Nicod, Françoise, Altermatt, Bernhard (eds.), *Forms of Europe. European Union and Other Organisations*, Cahiers rouges, Volume 218, 2018, p. 303.

of the existing shortage. Because many economies in Europe were teetering on the brink of collapse, social unrest was on the increase, and communist parties were making inroads in both France and Italy, so the United States took the choice to become involved.[480]

Leimburger and Schmelzer (2017)[481] claim that the OEEC did not simply move along one linear route, where the successful execution of the Marshall Plan "gave" the organisation greater leverage, full membership by the United States, and a key role in creating the global post-colonial economy. Their argument is that the OEEC did not only go along one linear path since the Marshall Plan was effective in achieving its goals. Instead, they contend that the OEEC followed a number of different routes, all of which eventually culminated at the same location. Instead, the OEEC came perilously close to being wiped out on two different times when it faced the possibility of extinction as a result of political conditions and a lack of competence. The OEEC is seen, according to the more prevalent understanding, as an organisation that came dangerously close to becoming too successful. This may again be a sign of the general lack of research about the organisations.

The UNECE became embroiled in the conflict between the East and the West and tried to break the stalemate by shifting their focus to place a greater emphasis on technical matters while still maintaining an all-European perspective on the work; however, this was something that contributed to the conflict. However, if the then Executive Secretary had not maintained this strategy, an East-ECE and a West-ECE would have been working in parallel, which would have resulted in the dissolution of the UNECE as an organisation. Neither of these outcomes would have been desirable.

Gunnar Myrdal, the inaugural executive head of the UNECE, and Robert Marjolin, the inaugural executive head of the OEEC, both began the work of their respective organisations in ways that shared some similarities, considering the actions they took. After initially acquiring a grasp of the political restrictions surrounding that purpose, they

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[480] Woodward, Richard, *The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 13.
[481] [481] Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer, Matthias, 'From the Marshall Plan to Global Governance: Historical Transformations of the OEEC/OECD, 1948 to Present', Chapter 2, pp 23-58 in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, pp. 31-32.

started to establish a strategy to carry out the organisation's mission. This was done before moving on to the next step. Myrdal was caught in the crossfire of the conflict between East and West, but made an effort to extricate UNECE from the conflict by moving the focus to more technical topics while retaining a pan-European view on the work. If he had not taken this route, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe would have been in a condition of permanent stagnation. When it came to the subject of the integration of Western Europe, Marjolin was up against competition from other organisations in the West, particularly the ECSC. His answer was to shape the organisation and prepare it ready for the eventual step it would take, as the OECD.

This analysis relies heavily on the shared historical experiences that were essential in forming both the UNECE and the OECD from the time they were first established. It is difficult to have a conversation about or conduct an analysis of structure and the agency of the executive head without first discussing and analysing how these organisations came into being.

Table 3: Overlap of Member States of the UNECE and the OEEC/OECD[482]

UNECE members before 1989:	34
OEEC/OECD members before 1989:	24
Overlapping members:	21

% of overlapping membership for	
UNECE:	62%
OEEC/OECD:	88%

The shared 'birth' and future intertwinement between the UNECE and the OEEC/OECD is clear from Table 3 above (shown as well in Chapter 3). With such coinciding memberships, it would have been impossible not to share a connected destiny.

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[482] Derived from table in Stinsky, Daniel, 'Western European Vs. All-European Cooperation? The OEEC, the European Recovery Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 1947-1952', Chapter 4, pp. 65-88, in Leimgruber, Matthieu, Schmelzer, Matthias (eds.), *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, Palgrave Macmillan, Zurich, 2017, pp. 67.

4.4   Patterns of the Role of the Executive Head

Beyond the concept of leadership, there is still the issue of how the characteristics of an executive head may be appropriately articulated in their application within the context of the executive head's agency and the restrictions imposed by the specified structural parameters. The ability to serve as a diplomat, as a politician, and as a bureaucratic leader are the three primary characteristics that define executive heads.[483] The political position in which they are required to be able to collaborate with member nations who have a variety of interests and are fiercely protective of their sovereignty, and to convince those governments to accept multilateral activities and to cooperate toward achieving shared objectives. The bureaucratic function in which they are required to generate for their organisation a sense of goal and purpose; be capable of mobilising and managing foreign civil servants coming from numerous nations, with diverse cultures, educational backgrounds, knowledge, and abilities. It is only feasible to appreciate the complete range of options for executive leadership in respect to the three traits if one has a more in-depth knowledge of agency and structure, as well as their relationships with one another.

A role-centric analytic framework that codifies the unique tenants of dynamic agency of executive heads within the frameworks of inter-governmental organisations was proposed by the thesis. Therefore, research is necessary if one is to comprehend (or even begin to comprehend) this level of intricacy. It was found essential to incorporate historical and factual events into the self-referencing realm of international relations. In doing so, one may ensure that the theoretical and conceptual advancements made in the thesis as well as the discussion contained within it have an impact on the real world. Since inter-governmental organisations are slow to change, any learning and observation will suffer if an understanding of what their foundation is based on in terms of the particular interests, norms, and values of, in particular, member states is not included. In addition, any learning and observation will suffer if an understanding of what their foundation is based on is not included. In addition to that, the evolution of these standards and interests throughout history needs to be accounted for as well. In order to provide a response to the

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[483]Yi-chong, Xu, Weller, Patrick (eds.), *The Politics of International Organizations: Views from Insiders*, Routledge, New York, 2015, p. 11.

topic of the significance and influence of the executive head, the thesis is based on a case study approach of the UNECE and the OECD.

The selection of interviewers was based on their accessibility as well as the anticipated value of the data they provided. The research began with the organigrams[484] that were made accessible to the public. The goal was to determine which positions, in addition to the executive head, would be helpful. Positions that had a greater degree of open interaction with member states on different levels were favoured in comparison to substantial experts who had less exposure to a variety of political and bureaucratic actors. If this was not the case, then the positions could not be considered process-tracing. As was the case with the selection of interviewers, only those people who could be deemed to be process-tracing were chosen; the selection was made based on the individuals' acquaintance with the process as well as their engagement in it, rather than by random sampling. [485] Interviews were conducted using an open-ended style in order to explore fresh points of view and identify additional possible drivers. These interviews followed a standard set of subjects and rules that were stated in the research paper. The design of the questionnaire was appropriately examined, as was indicated previously, in particular when considering the level of the respondents and the possible antagonism that they may have had toward surveys.

The theoretical framework gives the executive head many levers to gain information, play iterative games with states, to in the end, reveal the 'true' level of agency. It seems that if the executive head overshoots the agency, and does not possess, in particular, enough substantive knowledge to be creditable with secretariat staff, this will undermine the executive head in a very certain way.

The patterns of the executive heads examined in Chapter 3 resulted in plotting them through the analytic framework:

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[484] See appendix 6.5 for UNECE and OECD organigrams and appendix 6.4 for the list of interviews.
[485] Tansey, O., 'Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling'. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40(4), pp. 765-772. 2007.

POLITICAL LEVEL	G8 / G20 Politicians	**Gurria** **Friis Bach**		Global NGO/CSO and TNC actors
NEXUS			**Myrdal** **Berthelot**	
BUREAUCRATIC LEVEL	Member States' (MS) Organs MS Coordination Function Ministerial Counterpart			**Kristensen**

IGO Secretariat within ----------
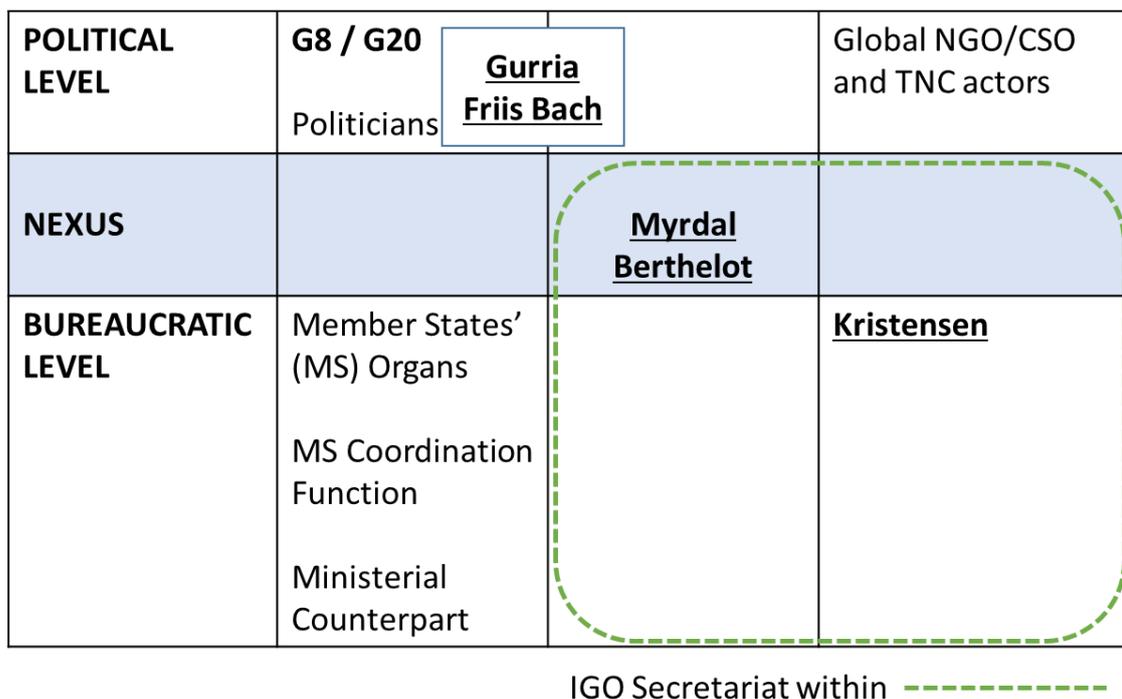
Figure 10: The placement of the five executive heads among actors, organs and players in an inter-governmental organisational structure[486]

Viewing the incumbents from the place they decided to concentrate their agency and effort leaves some thought as to the crucial points for them succeeding or failing. The ones that with some measure could have been said to have had success are: Gurria, Myrdal and Kristensen. All of which had a firm grasp of the substantive matters of the organisations. Both Friis Bach and Berthelot wanted to do the same, but simply did have the weight or credibility. However, as Gurria, blindsiding one's own bureaucracy in the pursuit of political wins and relevance comes at the expense of stretching the bureaucracy. This presents a challenge for the executive head.

Myrdal and Gurria stand out from the crowd in this discussion because they both bring a comprehensive toolkit to the table for the function of executive head, particularly on the substantive side. For Gurria, the situation required going around the outdated and inefficient structures while simultaneously turbocharging the organisation politically. As a result, a significant impact and relevance have been achieved, but it is unclear whether the organisation will be able to maintain its credibility. In order to prevent the UNECE

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from falling apart, it was essential for Myrdal to follow protocol at all times, regardless of the circumstances. The way they utilised their knowledge and insights into the political sphere and leveraged it towards the inside of their organisations, show a deep understanding of the agency they possessed

4.5 Synthesis

1. Little has been stated about the mechanisms that intergovernmental organisations use to connect the political players of and within nations and international forums via the content and mandates of their organisations. The purpose of this thesis is not to contribute to the large body of leadership literature or to study the numerous cults of personality that exist; rather, the objective is to throw fresh light on the functional elements of the political and operational role of the executive head. The literature addresses this topic, but it does not adequately systematise structure or the interrelationship that exists between structure and agency. The majority of the literature describes inter-government organisations in a static manner, and it does not engage with the difference between the executive head's (self-)perception of agency and the ex-post agency that is concretized in the ability to implement. Furthermore, very few references are made to the processes or operations of the organisation. As a result, the observations made on the structure and the dynamics of the interrelationships are only partially codified.

2. The principal-agent theory, which was presented previously, places a focus on the external, 'political', and the primacy of these factors in determining the policies and operations of an intergovernmental organisation. Constructivist theory, on the other hand, would be more suited to analyse the political effect on the organisations as well as how their bureaucratic norms and culture affect the practises of the intergovernmental organisation.[487] This indicates that what Reinalda and Verbeek[488] refer to as a 'middle-range' theoretical approach, which this thesis applied.

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[487] Weaver, Catherine, 'The World's Bank and the Bank's World', *Global Governance* 13 (4), pp. 493-512, 2007.
[488] Reinalda, Bob, Verbeek, Bertjan (eds.), *Decision Making Within International Organizations*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 27. See also: Zehfuss, M., *Constructivism in International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 5-6 and pp. 38-39, for a discussion on this position.

3. The thesis puts out the proposition of a role-centric analytic framework that may codify the one-of-a-kind tenets of dynamic agency possessed by executive heads while operating inside the frameworks of intergovernmental organisations. Therefore, one has to do study in order to appreciate the amount of complexity that is involved. Within the context of the self-referential field of international relations, it is necessary to take into account both historical and factual occurrences. Doing so makes it possible to guarantee that the theoretical and conceptual breakthroughs achieved in the thesis as well as the debate included within it have an influence on the actual world. Doing so also makes it possible to ensure that the thesis is defended.

4. This thesis rejects realism and neorealism as useful tools for a unit of enquiry that, according to the theory, has little or no agency, despite what is observable. This thesis acknowledges that institutionalist ideas do, in fact, offer a path for the establishment of inter-governmental organisations. As soon as these rationales are projected onto the undertakings in the bureaucratic hallways of the organisations, the social construction that exists within the organisations may appear to be divorced from the rationalised principal-agent relationship that exists between the states, as well as the executive head and the secretariat. They do however, offer a working pathway

5. The analytical framework applied on the case studies has shown its clear useful in codifying the five executive heads on political and bureaucratic levels, thereby enhancing the understanding of the factors that contribute to the executive head's ability to exercise agency in the organisations they lead.

The direct contribution of this thesis is the following:

This work is not the conclusion of an investigation that started in 1969; rather, it is a juncture along the path of that investigation. It provides an opportunity for the acceptance and testing of ideas constructed from a discourse on international relations and international history. The thesis has provided a codification of the role of the executive

head relying on new characteristics that have not before been utilised or juxtaposed in this precise manner.

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6. Appendices

<u>Overview of Appendices:</u>

1. Request for Interview
2. Research Project Teaser / Short Introductory Note
3. Interview Guide for Case Studies UNECE and OECD
4. List of interviews
5. OECD and UNECE organigrams
6. List of UNECE Executive Secretaries and OECD Secretary-Generals

6.1 Request for Interview

Dear [..],

[opening paragraph: relatable to recipient]

My interest in the field is as follows: I am seeking new insight into the role of the executive head of international organisations, in particular the nexus of the relationships towards the political world of members states, non-member states and other multilateral actors and the inward one towards the more bureaucratically inclined Secretariat. I am also interested in how the role of the executive head is organized, through cabinets - perhaps split responsibilities between individuals, and how the work is practically carried out. I will address this through, currently two, case studies: the OECD and the UNECE.

[insert timing of requested meeting or interview]

I am undertaking my PhD at the Center of International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD), School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. As a University Academic, I want to be clear from the outset that I am bound by our 'Research Ethics at SOAS' policy, which gives any interlocutor oversight of the outcome of any interview. In short, anything that might be discussed will be remain confidential at the discretion of the interviewees.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,
Jonas F. Mikkelsen

17 March 2017

The Role of the Executive Head in Intergovernmental Organizations

Why Study the Role of the Executive Head?

I am seeking new insight into the role of the Executive Head (EH) of intergovernmental organizations, in particular the nexus of the relationships towards the political world of members states, non-member states and other multilateral actors and the inward one towards the more bureaucratically inclined Secretariat. I am also interested in how the role of the executive head is organized, through cabinets - perhaps split responsibilities between individuals, and how the work is practically carried out.

Renowned International Relations Scholar Robert Cox's[489] 1969 essay on leadership in international organizations states:

"The quality of executive leadership may prove to be the most critical single determinant of the growth in scope and authority of international organizations." (Cox 1969: 205).

It is of utmost importance to distinguish between the role of the EH itself and the individual undertaking it. The scope of this study is not to add the vast body of leadership literature or to investigate various cults of personality, but to shed new light on the functional aspects of the political and operational role of the EH. I will address *"the*

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[489] Robert Cox was an eminent proponent of the English School of international relations. His academic engagement with and views on international organizations has most definitely be impacted by his tenure as the first research director (1948-1972) at the International Labour Organizations (ILO), see Leysens: 2008, p. 12.

possibility that the executive head may be the explanatory key to the emergence of a new kind of autonomous actor [international organization] in the international system" (Cox 1969: 206).

To bring the inquiry forward two case studies have been selected: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE). The two organizations have an intertwined history, to which the Cold War provided the historical lines, and a, to a large extend, comparable operational practices.

Many academics agree that the OECD is a little studied and even elusive organization (Caroll 2011: vi, Mahon 2008: 3, Woodward 2009: xiv). Concrete bodies of work that describe and analyze the organization of the OECD and its operations in a comprehensive manner are hard to come by.

The UNECE seems compared to the OECD to have even less scholarly attention drawn to it for which reason the data collection through interview and archive visits has research significance.

The Stylized View of the Role of the Executive Head in Intergovernmental Organizations

Figure 1: IO Structure
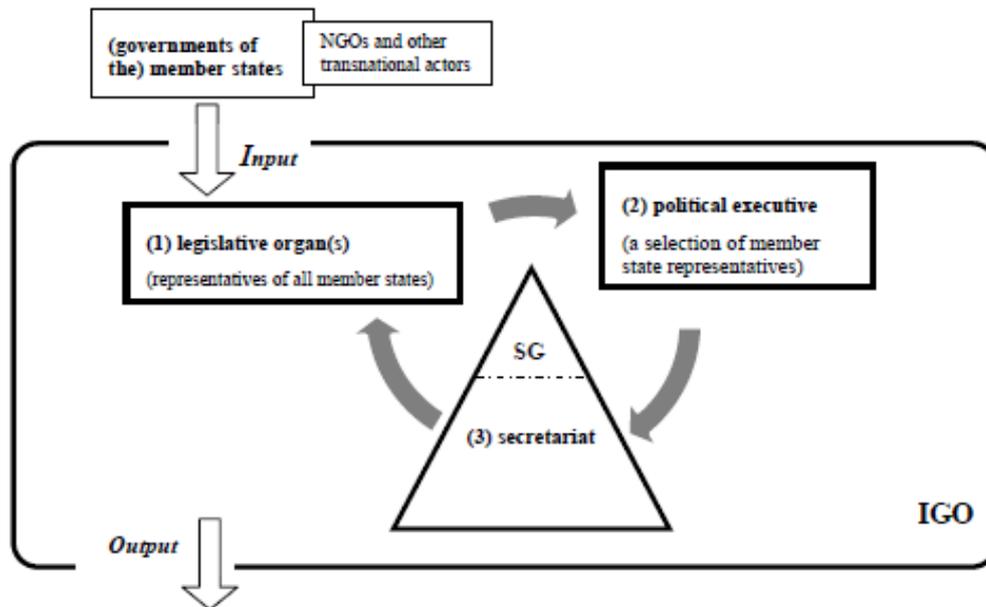
The governance and organizational structure of an intergovernmental organization consists in our interpretation of *three distinct elements*, who typically would be:

i)   Member states;

ii)   Executive Heads of intergovernmental organizations, and

iii)   Secretariats.

The crucial point is the entanglement of the executive function from the Secretariat, this provides the possibility of still utilizing international relations theory to view the organization as the function sits in the pivotal nexus between the internal and external.

The executive head is expected in a true to practice definition from Yi-chong (2015) to have three basic main functions:

1. As diplomats the executive leaders of intergovernmental organizations have to be able to pursue collective interests, represent their organizations in international arenas, mobilize political and financial support from key member states and relevant non-state players, and legitimize the actions and operations of the organizations;

2. As politicians they must be able to work with member states with diverse interests which are jealously protecting their sovereignty, and persuade them to support multilateral actions and to achieve common goals, and
3. As bureaucratic leaders they need to develop for their agency a sense of mission and of purpose; be able to mobilize and manage international civil servants coming from multiple countries, with multiple cultures, education backgrounds, expertise and skills.

The three functions are individually complex and merged possess a sizeable challenge for any incumbent. When adding to this a desirably robust substantial knowledge of the organization's areas of work the span increases further. The interviews with UNECE and OECD staff members will serve to shed light on these propositions.

Abbreviated Literature List

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6.3 Interview Guide for Case Studies UNECE and OECD

(Intended interview duration 45 minutes to 1 hour)

Note to interviewees:

This guide is meant as a road map for our conversation. The road map has been outlined as a result of the initial literature-based research and may be superseded by the nature of our conversation. See the guide as a backdrop and a pointer to where I would like to take the conversation.

1. **Introduction**
   a) Scope of research project and present interview's role in the project.
   b) General opening questions on background and key biographical detail.

2. **Type** (open ended discussion question)
   a) The Executive Head (EH) as role versus person.

3. **Functions and Scope** (open ended descriptive question)
   a) The functions of the EH and their scope.
   b) The delegated functions of the EH.
   c) Is there a clear delineation between the management of the organisation and its substantive mandate pursuit?

4. **Formal and Informal Interaction** (open ended descriptive question)
   a) The EH's relationship with Member States and political stakeholder (The EH seen from a role perspective can be narrow, one person, or broad, a set of individuals).
   b) The element of engagement with other IGOs and non-state actors[490] – is it large/small compared to a)?

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[490] Inter-governmental Organizations (IGOs), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Sub-national entities (regions, cities), Networks (one-tiered, two-tiered or pluralized), see Acuto, Michele, Rayner, Steve, 'City networks: breaking gridlocks or forging (new) lock-ins?', *International Affairs* 92 (5), pp. 1147–1166, 2016., transnational corporations or interest groups linked to them.

c) The EH's relationship with the Secretariat – in particular the part of the Secretariat that through substantive committee's interact with non-political or bureaucratic actors from the entities mentioned under 4 a) and b)

d) Comparison of the relative perceived importance and intensity of the engagements with the three groups in 4 a), b) and c).

5. Formal and Informal Management and Accountability (functional questions)

a) How does impulses from Member States, 4 a), translate into action in the bureaucracy through formal (Council/Committees) and informal channels?

b) How and through which channels does actors identified in 4 b) operate?

c) How does the EH read inputs from Member States, 4 a), from both political and bureaucratic levels from a given Member State and how does it weigh the cohesion of the interaction with the Member States?

6. Autonomy (open ended descriptive question)

a) How would you assess the EH's impact on the level of autonomy of the OECD / UNECE?

7. Suggestions

a) If I was to dig a little deeper where would you suggest?

- E.g. focusing on one substantive area and/or one Member State relationship with the organisation.

The below more stylized interview outline was shared with interviewees in advance of interviews:

(Intended interview duration 45 minutes to 1 hour)

<u>**Note to interviewees:**</u>

This outline is meant as a road map for our conversation. The road map has emerged as a result of the initial literature-based research and may be superseded by the nature of our conversation. The outline is meant as a backdrop and a pointer to where I would like to take the conversation.

<u>Proposed outline of the interview:</u>

The intension of the below outline is give a broad idea of the areas I would like to touch on. A more detailed Interview Guide has also been develop, which I can share if you wish. However, my intent is to try and attain an interview, which is organic and 'semi-orchestrated'.

1. Introduction – scope of interview

2. The type of Executive Head (EH) – role versus person

3. Functions and scope of the role of the EH

4. Formal and informal interaction between the EH and external and internal actors

5. Formal and informal management and accountability between the EH and external and internal actors

6. The EH and the autonomy of the organisation

7. Suggestions to the research

Ends.

6.4 List of Interviews

#	Date of Interview	Time	Place / Medium	Name of Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Gender
1	26 Jan 2017		Skype	Christian Friis Bach	UNECE	Executive Secretary	M
2	23 Mar 2017	10:00 – 11:40	Face-to-face	Andrey Vasilyev	UNECE	Deputy Executive Secretary	M
3	23 Mar 2017	16:05 – 16:51	Face-to-face	Michael Møller	UNOG	Director General	M
4	24 Mar 2017	AM	Face-to-face	Jan-Anno Schuur	OECD	Archivist	M
5	24 Mar 2017	11:00 – 11:55	Face-to-face	Patrick van Haute	OECD	Director of the Council and Executive Committee Secretariat	M
6	24 Mar 2017	15:00 – 15:40	Face-to-face	Mari Kiviniemi	OECD	Deputy Secretary General	F
7	24 Mar 2017	16:00 – 17:00	Face-to-face	Greg Cristofani	OECD	Results-Based Budget Manager	M

8	24 May 2017	10:03 – 11:15	Telephone	Andrey Vasilyev	UNECE	Deputy Executive Secretary	M
9	24 May 2017	12:00 – 12:44	Telephone	Christian Friis Bach	UNECE	Executive Secretary	M
10	6 June 2017	-	Face-to-face	Yves Berthelot	UNECE	Former Executive Secretary	M
11	October 2016		Face-to-face	Yves Leterme	OECD	Former Deputy Secretary-General	M

6.5 UNECE and OECD organigrams[491] [492]:

Office of the Executive Secretary

Mr. Christian Friis Bach
(Executive Secretary)
Andrey Vasilyev
(Deputy Executive Secretary)
Parisudhi Kalampasut
(Chef de Cabinet and Secretary of the Commission)
Elif Kizildeli
(Associate Economic Affairs Officer)
Laurence Mancini
(Conference Services Assistant)
Amy Smith
(Personal Assistant to the Executive Secretary)
Agnès Jouenne
(Assistant to Ms. Kalampasut)
Felirose Gutierrez
(Programme Assistant)
Monika Sbeghen
(Assistant to Mr. Vasilyev)
Ryan Kennedy
(Team Assistant)

Information Systems Unit

Anjum Khan
(Chief of Unit)

Isabelle Bonello-Barbuscia
(Information Systems Officer)
Hakan Volkan
(Information Systems Officer)
Liazid Ighrarene*
(Information Systems Officer)
Nicholas Couteau
(Associate Information Systems Officer)
Tesfaye Abebe
(Information Systems Assistant)
Cédric Jacquiot
(Information Systems Assistant)
Isabelle Porcu*
(Computer Information Systems Assistant)

Executive Office
(Administrative/Finance)

Leslie Cleland
(Executive Officer)

Michael Sylver
(Administrative Officer)
Joon Kong Tay
(Senior Budget Assistant)
Fernando Krichilski
(Senior Administrative Assistant)
Isabelle Hansen
(Personnel Assistant)
Glen Carandang
(Finance Assistant)
Azra Shaikh
(Administrative Clerk)
Wei Zhou
(Administrative Clerk)
Rosalie Naluz
(Administrative Clerk)
Christina Drumea*
(Clerk)
Patricia Pitiot Marcos*
(Clerk)

Development Policies and
Cross-Sectoral Coordination Unit

Monika Linn
(Principal Adviser to the
Executive Secretary
and Chief of Unit)

José Palacin
(Senior Economic Affairs Officer)
Malinka Koparanova
(Senior Social Affairs Officer
and Gender Focal Point)
Michael Kunz
(Economic Affairs Officer)
Margaret Muindi
(Programme Assistant)

Programme Management
Unit

Zamira Eshmambetova
(Chief of Unit)

Catherine Haswell
(Senior Programme Officer)
Serhii Yampolski
(Programme Officer)
Agnese Spiazzi*
(Economic Affairs Officer)
Romi Chopra
(Programme Assistant)

Information Unit

Jean Rodriguez
(Chief of Unit)

Mariana Darnet
(Graphic Assistant)
Liliane Mauranne
(Information Assistant)
Marina Tejerina
(Information Assistant)

As of May 2015
* Short-Term

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[491] https://unece.org/organizational-chart-0 <last accessed 18 March 2022>

Approved organizational structure and post distribution for 2021

Office of the Under-Secretary-General
(executive direction and management)

RB:
1 USG
1 D-2
1 D-1
1 P-2
1 GS (PL)
4 GS (OL)

Programme Management and Support Services Division
(executive direction and management and programme support)

RB:	XB:
2 P-5	1 D-1
3 P-4	2 P-4
4 P-3	1 P-2
2 P-2	3 GS(OL)
1 GS (PL)	
5 GS (OL)	

Sustainable Development and Gender Unit
(executive direction and management)

RB:
1 D-1
2 P-5
1 P-4
1 GS (OL)

Information Unit
(executive direction and management)

RB:
1 P-5
3 GS (OL)

Environment Division
(subprogramme 1 Environment)

RB:	XB:
1 D-1	1 P-4
3 P-5	19 P-3
7 P-4	1 P-2
10 P-3	6 GS (OL)
1 P-2	
9 GS (OL)	

Sustainable Transport Division
(subprogramme 2 Transport)

RB:	XB:
1 D-1	1 P-5
4 P-5	5 P-4
7 P-4	5 P-3
9 P-3	1 P-2
5 P-2	4 GS (OL)
12 GS (OL)	

Statistical Division
(subprogramme 3 Statistics)

RB:
1 D-1
3 P-5
4 P-4
6 P-3
5 P-2
1 GS (PL)
7 GS (OL)

Statistical Division
(subprogramme 8 Housing, Land Management and Population)

RB:
1 P-5
1 P-2
1 GS (OL)

Sustainable Energy Division
(subprogramme 5 Sustainable Energy)

RB:
1 D-1
2 P-5
4 P-4
1 P-3
3 GS (OL)

Economic Cooperation and Trade Division
(subprogramme 6 Trade)

RB:	XB:
1 D-1	1 P-4
2 P-5	
4 P-4	
4 P-3	
3 P-2	
6 GS (OL)	

Economic Cooperation and Trade Division
(subprogramme 4 Economic Cooperation and Integration)

RB:	XB:
2 P-5	1 P-3
3 P-4	
2 P-3	
1 P-2	
1 GS(PL)	
2 GS (OL)	

Forests, Land and Housing Division
(subprogramme 7 Forests and the forest industry)

RB:
1 D-1
1 P-5
1 P-4
1 P-3
1 P-2
1 GS(PL)
2 GS (OL)

Forests, Land and Housing Division
(subprogramme 8 Housing, Land Management and Population)

RB:
1 P-4
1 P-2
2 GS (OL)

Abbreviations:
GS (OL), General Service (Other level); GS (PL), General Service (Principal level); RB, regular budget; XB, extrabudgetary.

[492] From http://www.oecd.org/about/whodoeswhat/ <accessed 20 August 2016>

Overview of OECD structures and OECD organigram

Who drives the OECD's work?

Council
Oversight and strategic direction
Representatives of member countries and of the EuropeanCommission; chaired by the Secretary-General; decisions taken by consensus

Committees
Discussion and implementation
Representatives of member countries and of countries with Observer status work with the OECD Secretariat on specific issues

Secretariat
Analysis and proposals
Secretary-General
Deputy Secretaries-General
Directorates

ORGANISATION CHART

(www.oecd.org/organisationchart)

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

SECRETARY-GENERAL
Angel Gurría

DEPUTY SECRETARIES-GENERAL
Aart de Geus
Thelma Askey
Pier Carlo Padoan
Mario Amano

Office of the Secretary-General

Advisory Unit on Multidisciplinary Issues

Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members

Council and Executive Committee Secretariat

Directorate for Legal Affairs

Office of the Auditor-General

DIRECTORATES

Development Co-operation Directorate	Economics Department	Directorate for Education	Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs	Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs and Local Development
Environment Directorate	Executive Directorate	Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs	Public Affairs and Communications Directorate	Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate
Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry	Statistics Directorate	Centre for Tax Policy and Administration	Directorate for Trade and Agriculture	

SPECIAL BODIES

Africa Partnership Forum	Development Centre	International Energy Agency	Financial Action Task Force	Heiligendamm Dialogue Process Support Unit	Nuclear Energy Agency	Partnership for Democratic Governance Advisory Unit	Sahel and West Africa Club	International Transport Forum

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OECD ORGANIGRAM

Secretary-General

Executive Secretariat

General Secretariat

Public Affairs and Communication Directorate

Global Relations Secretariat

Nexus / Mngt & Admin

Substantive

| Centre for Entrepreneurship, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Local Development | Centre for Tax Policy and Administration | Development Co-operation Directorate | Directorate for Education and Skills | Directorate for Employment, Labour, and Social Affairs | Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs | Directorate for Science, Technology, and Innovation | Economics Department | Environment Directorate | Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate | Statistics Directorate | Trade and Agriculture Directorate |

6.6 List of UNECE Executive Secretaries and OECD (and OEEC) Secretaries-Generals

UNECE[493]**:**

Olga Algayerova (Slovakia), 2017–

Christian Friis Bach (Denmark), 2014–2017

Sven Alkalaj (Bosnia and Herzegovina), 2012–2014

Ján Kubiš (Slovakia), 2009–2011

Marek Belka (Poland), 2005–2008

Brigita Schmögnerová (Slovakia), 2002–2005

Danuta Hübner (Poland), 2000–2001

Yves Berthelot (France), 1993–2000

Gerald Hinteregger (Austria), 1987–1993

Klaus Sahlgren (Finland), 1983–1986

Janez Stanovnik (Yugoslavia), 1968–1982

Vladimir Velebit (Yugoslavia), 1960–1967

Sakari Tuomioja (Finland), 1957–1960

Gunnar Myrdal (Sweden), 1947–1957

OECD[494]**:**

Mathias Cormann (Australia), 2021–

Angel Gurria (Mexico), 2006–2021

Donald J. Johnston (Canada), 1996–2006

Jean-Claude Paye (France), 1984–1996

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[493] See: https://unece.org/former-executive-secretaries <accessed 3 April 2022> and
https://unece.org/executive-secretary-1 <accessed 3 April 2022>
[494] See: https://www.oecd.org/about/secretary-general/ <accessed 3 April 2022> and
https://www.oecd.org/about/secretary-general/listofoecdsecretaries-generalanddeputiessince1961.htm
<accessed 3 April 2022>

Emile Van Lennep (Netherlands), 1969–1984

Thorkil Kristensen (Denmark), 1961–1969

OEEC[495]:

Thorkil Kristensen (Denmark), 1960–1961

René Sergent (France), 1955–1960

Robert Marjolin (France), 1948–1955

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[495] See: Griffiths, Richard T. (ed.), *Explorations in OEEC History*, OECD Historical Series, Paris, 1997.

THESIS ENDS.

Robert Marjolin, Secretary-General of the OEEC (Paris, April 1949), records a message in the Paris studios of 'Voice of America', to be broadcast from the New York studio on the first anniversary of the Marshall Plan in April 1949 (photo copyright OECD).