# Article

# How did international economic regulation survive the last period of deglobalisation?

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## Abstract

As trade wars and protectionism again present severe challenges and obstructions to international economic regulatory organisations (IEROs), it is timely to ask how their predecessors survived the last deep deglobalisation of the interwar years. This article presents a fresh neo-Durkheimian institutional explanation. It highlights contrasting pathways to survival and bequest of IEROs in three fields of regulation – international infrastructure, capital and labour, and commodities. Our explanation shows that functional imperatives and short-term market pressures in these different areas of regulation facilitated specific forms of social organisation within IEROs (such as hierarchy or individualistic brokering). These contrasting forms of social organisation cultivated distinct regulatory styles during deglobalisation and cultivated capacities for contrasting survival and bequest strategies. Our approach is thus able to account for variation in pathways to survival in a way that other possible explanations, such as theories of regulatory capture or bureaucratic autonomy, cannot.

## Introduction

Today global economic regulatory regimes face several threats. Great power tensions, mercantilism, trade wars between the US and China and also with Europe, populist backlash against open borders and trade are leading to incipient deglobalisation in policy (e.g., van Bergeijk, 2019, James, 2018). This dynamic may well continue even as trade flows recover from Covid-19 (Abdal and Ferreira, 2021). During a period of deglobalisation, international economic regulatory organisations (IEROs) which sustain a rules-based international economic order will face threats from states aggrieved by the consequences of common standards and openness. Dangers include withdrawals, reducing funding, stymying or blocking of decision-making, the circumvention of international regulation, not implementing agreed standards, and insistence on exemptions for uni- or bilateralism by major powers. For example, US blocking appointments to the WTO’s appellate body began under President Obama and continues under President Biden. Under President Trump the US strongarmed some intergovernmental regulatory bodies to amend agreements to allow for more unilateral action.[[1]](#footnote-1) President Biden too is pursuing protectionist policies in microchip production and public procurement.

 Deglobalisation does not inevitably mean the withering of global economic regulatory regimes. The world has been through periods of deglobalisation more than once. Regulatory history may have lessons for the present (*cf.* Balleisen and Brake, 2014). The 1930s saw one of the most severe reversals of the integration of economies, the emergence of separate blocs and a sharp decline in world trade (Boyce, 2009; Frieden 2006; James, 2001; Horowitz, 2004; O’Rourke and Williamson, 1999). Then too IEROs were weakened and under threat. Although the present incipient deglobalisation is not a simple repetition of the great interwar crisis, similar challenges are being presented to international regulatory authority, capability, reach and membership. Understanding IEROs’ resilience through deglobalisation should also help us to understand the resilience of collaborative regulatory capacity more generally.

 This article thus studies how IEROs survived the last deep period of deglobalisation. The puzzle about how IEROs survived the interwar deglobalisation matters for regulatory studies, because it challenges both regulatory capture (Carpenter and Moss, 2014; Croley, 2008; Young, 2012) and theories of bureaucratic autonomy (Carpenter, 2001). The puzzle also raises questions about regulatory studies’ use of international relations theories of regimes (Hasenclever *et al*, 1997) to explain regulatory systems’ resilience. To understand regulatory regimes, the field has drawn upon international relations’ realist arguments for the fragility of regulatory regimes or for their domination by hegemonic states (Drezner, 2007; Mearsheimer; 1995; Stone 2011). It has also used functional liberal institutionalist theories of responsiveness to transnational economic requirements (Keohane, 1984) and “norm” based constructivist theories of states’ commitment to regulatory cooperation (Braithwaite and Drahos, 2000; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). Our focus is on IEROs as organisations rather than on multi-organisational regimes, but the regime literature offers pertinent alternative explanations at the organisational level.

 We suggest that these approaches cannot provide a full explanation of the diversity of pathways through which IEROs survived. In our alternative approach, we identify economic forces acting on IEROs operating in capital intensive infrastructural sectors, those working across general factors of capital and labour, and those arising to regulate defensively the production of commodities. We argue that each type of IERO is associated with a particular neo-Durkheimian form of social organisation which orders the process of how regulation is constructed and performed (variants of the theory have already made valuable contributions to regulatory studies: Lodge and Wegrich, 2012; Parrado, 2020). Each form of social organisation is cultivated in and suited to a particular context for economic regulation even before deglobalisation. Under stress during deglobalisation, these underlying forms of social organisation enable the organisation to survive and bequeath its capabilities. Under deglobalisation, we argue, IEROs can be resilient where they can sustain particular forms of social organisation which work in specific ways within their niches in political economy.

 This article uses secondary sources, which enable us to show the power of this novel theory development work. A full examination will require extensive multi-archival work.

 The next section discusses the puzzle and research question. The following section outlines our theoretical argument in detail, showing the interaction of economic forces with forms of social organisation within IEROs. The subsequent section shows how the argument explains survival and bequest and discusses the extent to which existing explanations can account for the diversity of pathways and outcomes observed. The conclusion discusses the significance of the explanation for theory of international economic regulatory regimes.

The puzzle

Hardly any IEROs failed to survive at all without bequest during the 1930s deglobalisation (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2018, 2020; Wallace and Singer, 1970; see online supporting information). Together, these bodies provided capacity to re-construct international economic governance after international conflict and economic collapse, thus playing a role in re-building economic prosperity. The fact of almost universal survival is a puzzle deserving explanation because the scale of threats from withdrawals, stymied decision-making, and conflict among economic blocs would lead us (e.g., on some realist assumptions) to expect a far higher death rate than occurred. Some IEROs did bequeath not only archives but organisational capacity (skills, networks, approaches, work systems) to their post-war successors. Often key figures worked to secure these transfers. This phenomenon has been examined, for example, by League of Nations historians (e.g., MacFadyen *et al*, 2019). We show below that during the war, the League of Nations Economic and Financial Organisation (LoN EFO: Clavin, 2013), achieved effective bequest to several UN committees and agencies before the League’s assets and liabilities were transferred to the UN and its powers replaced.

 In some cases, survival was achieved by IEROs going temporarily into reduced operation, abeyance or hibernation during the second world war, before resuming operations. (For definitions used here of the categories of survival, bequest, reduced operation, abeyance and hibernation, see online supporting information). For some, hibernation persisted after the war (cf. Yates and Murphy, 2019). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) entered reduced operation in 1940, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer went into abeyance, while some of the commodity agreement bodies (e.g., the Sugar Council, Mahler, 1984) went into hibernation for a period. Reduced operation and abeyance were often crucial stages in pathways to resumption and survival, as IEROs used the time to prepare for relaunch (ILO), bequest (LoN EFO) or to wait for political permission from victorious states to resume (tin and rubber bodies). This article focuses on the question of *how* rather than *why* survival and bequest were achieved. Our aim is thus to provide a better understanding of how IEROs responded to the pressures of deglobalisation, and how the pathways to survival differed between different types of IEROs.

 Any explanation for the puzzle of widespread survival and bequest must also account for significant new creations of international commodity price regulatory bodies for wheat, sugar, rubber, tin and tea, at the very depth of the 1930s deglobalisation (Khan, 1982; Davis, 1946; Hillman, 2010). Although negotiations for their formation were in several cases facilitated by the LoN EFO especially at the 1933 World Monetary and Economic Conference (WMEC) and afterward (Khan, 1982; Clavin, 2013), these organisations were very differently ordered, and their pathways to survival and bequest were diverse. Theories must explain these differentiated trajectories of birth during, survival through, and bequest at the end of deglobalisation.

 To understand pathways to survival or bequest, both structural factors and organisational work are important. Some organisational work was undertaken in pursuit of survival and bequest (as documented below). Other organisational activity (see below) indirectly contributed to survival by sustaining legitimacy. We focus narrowly on organisational activity of these types. We present a novel account of the role of structural and institutional context for that organisational behaviour.

 For theory development, our argument focuses on IEROs in three fields – those in capital-intensive infrastructural sectors, those working across general factors of capital and labour, and those arising to regulate defensively the production of commodities. Other interwar international regulatory sectors such as international aviation (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2021; Jönsson, 1987) will be examined in future studies. Within our three fields, we selected cases which are (a) centrally important ones in each field, (b) sufficiently well documented and (c) which together exhibit diversity in respect of survival, bequest, and reduced operation, abeyance and hibernation. Criterion (a) makes our case selection principle one of what Gerring (2016, 56-62) classifies as choosing typical cases inductively on an outcome of interest that is regarded to represent the central tendency in this particular universe of cases. For IEROs regulating capital and labour the choice of the ILO and EFO is straightforward, for there are few other candidates (the Bank of International Settlements had hardly any regulatory functions in its own right in the interwar years). In infrastructure which physically passed across many frontiers, telecommunications and railways were in this period the principal examples, and the ITU and the railway bodies were well established. The international commodities agreement bodies present a greater challenge for case selection, because criteria (a) and (b) are difficult to meet together. The wheat and tea committees, for example, were important but are not extensively studied. Therefore, we have drawn on those organisations which historians have examined. That criterion (c) was met is evidenced in the analysis which follows.

## Developing a fresh explanation: the role of social organisation

We propose a fresh explanation of how IEROs survived the last period of deglobalisation. To demonstrate its potential, we also discuss a range of alternative explanations. Studies on the resilience of international regulatory organisations during deglobalisation are few. Theories of regulatory design (public interest, responsive regulation, risk-based regulation and meta-regulation: Baldwin *et al*, 2011) hardly address the question; theories of national styles do not explain the international level; multi-level governance does not explain resilience. Therefore, the most relevant theories are capture theory and theories of bureaucratic autonomy from regulatory studies, and the realist, institutionalist and constructivist international relations theories of regimes.

 In principle, capture theory might offer an account of why IEROs have been resilient. Capture theory would argue that IEROs’ resilience is based on businesses influencing political decision-making to support them during deglobalisation. It is crucial to include this strand of theorising because it articulates the assumption that ‘big business’ is politically influential, and our industries here included large well-connected multinational firms. Stigler’s version of regulatory capture theory (1971) emphasises incumbent firms influencing regulation as a barrier to entry against competitors, even if the captured regime is economically inefficient. This also implies that incumbents would press for continued international regulation where they see benefits from it, even during deglobalisation. We argue below that this expectation’s explanatory power is limited for this puzzle because business influence was highly diverse across our three sets of cases, and contingent on other factors.

 Theories of institutional delegation to autonomous agencies with reputations for competence (Carpenter, 2001, 2010) might be important to explain why some IEROs survive. Agencies which establish known reputations for competence may accrue autonomy from policymakers and convince their principals of the necessity for their particular IERO. This literature has documented the crucial influence individual bureaucrats wield at the political level (Carpenter, 2001). We argue below that this strand of theory is less able to account for cases of IEROs where such bureaucratic brokering was less important and where individual influence was contingent upon other factors.

 Alternative explanations are also found in international relations theories. Functional explanations for regimes, taken from liberal institutionalist traditions, tend to over-predict. For example, international postal services would have benefited from a regime long before its creation in the 1870s (Lyall, 2011); despite the evident functional desirability by the 1920s and 1930s of an international regime for electricity, none was created (Schot and Lagendijk, 2008). Much work in regulatory studies on global regulation has been predicated on assumptions that globalisation itself is secure (Mattli and Woods, 2009; Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson, 2006). Yet deglobalisation is precisely the condition under which political pressures might overwhelm functional ones (Hooghe *et al*, 2020; Zürn, 2018) and challenge the “norms” which some constructivists (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998) argue explain persistence. Nor do epistemic communities (Haas, 1992) develop at the expected time or in expected fields to help liberal institutionalist explanations. For example, Lagendijk (2012) documents the failure of interwar continental European electrical engineers to secure the creation of a European regulatory body for transnational transmission, billing, and investment. Functionalist and realist theories cannot be fully synthesised as their assumptions conflict, but only combined as forces in tension. For example, Hooghe *et al* (2020) and Zürn (2018) treat functional and national autarchic imperatives as offsetting each other. Even if this tension can describe outcomes, it does not specify causal processes for diverse pathways to regulatory survival and bequest. None of these theories is adequate for explaining diversity in pathways to survival and bequest and a fresh approach can make a contribution.

 We suggest that it is necessary to understand the roles of social organisation within IEROs in accommodating pressures from nationalism and imperial preference as well as functional imperatives and norms. We identify distinct forms of social organisation among representatives and delegates of states in international bodies, their home departments of state, and secretariats of international organisations. These are cultivated in the presence of long-term structural economic features of industries and short-term economic pressures, creating different pathways to maintaining international capabilities in periods of deglobalisation.

 We draw upon neo-Durkheimian institutional theory to understand variations in informal institutions of social organisation of international bodies (Douglas, 1970, 1982b, 1986, 1992; Gross and Rayner, 1986; Thompson, 2008; 6 and Richards 2017; 6, 2011, 2014ab), because it has been used fruitfully in related fields of political science and public administration (e.g., 6, 2011; Heims, 2016; 6 and Swedlow 2016). The theory defines social organisation as the informal as well as formal institutional ordering of relations among people and among organisations. Before presenting the theory’s causal mechanisms, we begin with its typology. The framework argues that there are four elementary forms of social organisation which operate at any level or scale including that of global regulatory work and organisation-building.

 The first form is hierarchical ordering in which a bonded community is ordered by structured rules, roles and constraints. This hierarchy in the anthropological sense is not the same as domination or simple vertical control, because ranked superiors may owe duties to inferiors who have status of their own; both are integrated in a common community (cf. Dumont, 1980). Weberian bureaucracy would be an ideal-typical case. Here, power follows status. These institutions cultivate preferences for pursuit of absolute gains for the community, but acceptance of rule-based inequality in distribution of those gains among members.

 The second form is individualistic ordering where a loose cluster of people operate with limited structure, where roles are fluid, individual discretion is extensive, and people negotiate their relations. Fluid personal social networks of acquaintance used instrumentally would be an ideal-typical case. Status, such as it is, follows power and ability to broker for control of resources. People are cultivated to pursue their private absolute gains, and to accept that others will do the same but that those in stronger bargaining positions will secure a greater share.

 The third form is enclaved ordering, in which a bonded community rejects or withdraws from externally imposed rules, roles and constraints. It polices its external boundary and limits differentiation among its own members; a clique, a sect or a tight club would an ideal-typical case. This ordering seeks absolute gains for members at the expense of non-members but limits unequal gains among members to avoid breaking up the enclaved group.

 Lastly, isolate ordering arises where a loose cluster of separated people (or organisations or states) have very little discretion and little ability to negotiate but face constraints imposed on them. They have simply to cope, unless constraints can be passed on to others by imposition (a despot would be an ideal typical case), or else evade constraints by guile (an ideal-type case might be a serf).

 The typology is jointly exhaustive, generated by cross-tabulating Durkheim’s (1951[1897]) two basic dimensions of all institutional ordering – namely, social regulation or the degree to which social life is ordered by rule and role or by discretion and transactional relations, and social integration or the degree to which it is ordered by bonds within bounded groups or by their absence. Thus hierarchical ordering is strongly socially regulated and integrated; individualistic ordering is weakly socially regulated and integrated; enclaved ordering is strongly integrated and weakly socially regulated; while isolate ordering is weakly socially integrated but strongly socially regulated.

 Empirical contexts (e.g., of international economic regulation) may be dominated by one form while others will be present perhaps at the periphery, in supporting roles or will emerge in reaction. Two-and three-way settlements and hybrids can form, usually with one more heavily articulated.

 The neo-Durkheimian theory’s causal mechanism is that the institutional relations of social organisation cultivate distinct thought styles (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963[1902]; Durkheim, 1995[1912]; Douglas, 1986; 6 and Richards, 2017). Thought styles are not ideologies. Rather, they specify not what people believe but *how* they think with whatever they believe (Douglas, 1986; 6, 2011). Thought styles, we shall argue, shape people’s efforts to order IEROs, engage in regulatory work, and shape their strategies for IERO survival.

## Functional imperatives enabling and cultivating forms of social organisation in IEROs

In this section we present our own framework before showing that the cases provide supporting evidence. We suggest that functional imperatives in the three regulatory fields cultivate particular forms of social organisation, and that social organisation in turn is key to IERO survival or bequest. This process runs through causal mechanisms which depend on the types of information especially prized in each of these regulatory contexts.

 Hierarchical ordering is particularly likely to emerge in fields of economic regulation of international immobile and indivisible infrastructure industries which tie up capital for long periods. In such capital-intensive infrastructure fields, operation at scale sustaining network benefits requires many explicit rules. Compliance must be monitored continuously during daily operation. In turn, rule-setting requires clear and efficient dispute resolution procedures for national member bodies, whether public or private. Very detailed information in highly structured form, much of it statistical, has to be collected and circulated to all national member bodies about small changes in operating practices of partners. Moreover, large amounts of information have to be transparent to all international operators. In turn, dispute resolution and information circulation are most efficiently administered by a central clearing house. Therefore, anomalies – especially where they threaten interoperability – have to be adjusted for by revision of procedures and rules. If a basic corpus of rules is in place before deglobalisation, these rules can be maintained even with reduced activity during deglobalisation. Constantly revising the rule set is not necessary for survival as long as trade continues. For these reasons, hierarchical internal ordering will develop in these capital-intensive infrastructural industries and be sustained during deglobalisation.

 Figure 1 summarises the structure of this causal pathway in flow chart form.

*[Figure 1 here]*

 By contrast, in fields which regulate general economic ‘factors’ of capital and labour, highly structured rule-based ordering will not be feasible and may hinder cooperation in periods of external pressure. These regulatory bodies operate over many industrial sectors and different working conditions. They seek to reconcile regulation over capital with regulation over labour. Such regulatory bodies benefit from greater internal flexibility in regulation because they are not constrained by the requirements of managing interoperability across infrastructure industries. In these areas of general economic regulation, international organisations require individualisticordering to negotiate, use informal networks, broker and reconcile varying interest groups to manage the pressures of deglobalisation*.* Individualistic ordering provides flexibility for key individuals in international organisations to broker coalitions between players in the regime at critical points in time. This facilitates bequest, or survival of such international bodies. In these areas of regulation, individuals have to acquire and manipulate and sometimes fudge unstructured information and informal intelligence. They may keep information private or control its circulation, rather than allow transparency. In this setting, anomalies are unavoidable, but they can be exploited or resolved in later negotiations. Here lack of momentum in agreeing new settlements can be a problem for the credibility of brokers and regulatory negotiating forums. This is because capital and labour markets are fast-moving, and no corpus of rules can remain stable. However, during deglobalisation and economic depression, power shifts back to nation states, making international bodies dependent on the responsiveness of national politicians (cf. Moravcsik, 1999). Therefore, secretariat leaders will cultivate individual networks with member state politicians. Thus, the theory suggests that in this context individual “entrepreneurship” – for example of the bureaucratic regulatory type emphasised by Carpenter (2001) – may be cultivated, albeit circumscribed by international relations (cf. Stubbs and Wedel, 2015). Figure 2 summarises the structure of this explanation.

*[Figure 2 here]*

 By contrast, in fields with volatile commodity trading subject to rapid increases and decreases in prices, there is pressure to use regulation to protect those sectors from the effects of that volatility. During economic depressions, key effects are falling or unpredictable commodity prices. To manage these price pressures, international regulatory bodies spring up to defend those sectors. Regulatory schemes which put a floor under prices typically do not require extensive rule sets needed for infrastructure regulation. Nor can they work with separate agreements for each producer in the manner of much capital regulation. Instead, a modest but integrated rule set is needed which is transparent to all. To achieve the trust of producers and governments requires mutual surveillance of others and their intentions. This is needed to a much greater degree than in infrastructure where simple interoperability pressures obviate the need for monitoring of compliance with group norms. For regulation of commodity producers, collective control of information becomes crucial. Competitive pressures among producers make trusting difficult. They sustain trust using internal enclavedordering, to reduce the transaction costs of mutual surveillance. Displaying commitment to shared distributional principles within the group becomes an important part of signalling trustworthiness. Anomalies which indicate untrustworthiness among members must be eliminated. Loyalty of core producer members requires both constant adjustment to volatile price movements and renewal of agreements to provide opportunities for checking information about the trustworthiness of others. This type of internal ordering is well suited to maintaining bonds and a sense of solidarity against a common external threat where cooperation is fragile. Where this kind of ordering can be sustained, these bodies may overcome the well-known problems of collective action which cartels typically face, which can make regulatory capture a possible strategy and thereby contribute to regulatory survival.

 Figure 3 summarises the structure of this explanation.

*[Figure 3 here]*

 We argue that the weighting of forms of social organisation in international regulatory regimes was not consciously designed to ensure survival or bequest. Indeed, these forms of social ordering were operating before the onset of deglobalisation, but became critical to the survival of those bodies in times of depression and withdrawal of international cooperation. Patterns of social organisation turned out to be crucial for resilience and were suited to withstand the pressures of deglobalisation in particular areas of economic regulation.

 Social organisation is assessed across IEROs as wholes, made up of member states delegates, secretariats and their home departments, and often external advisory boards of people from industry, universities or independent experts. By contrast with theories which assume that role (state delegate, secretariat leader, etc) determines thought style, this theory argues that informal ordering across the IERO allows *variation* both in perceptions of interests and in the extent these interests are influenced by particular people Thus, social organisation combines with functional forces to contribute to particular pathways of IERO survival.

## Explaining survival and bequest of international regulatory bodies

To support the argument about interacting causal forces presented above, we consider each field of IEROs in turn, to explain their different pathways to survival and bequest.

#### First cluster: international regulation of capital-intensive indivisible infrastructure industries

Central bodies in this cluster were the many rail regulatory bodies (Wedgewood with Wheeler, 1946; Anastasiadou, 2007) and the International Telecommunication Union (Codding and Rutkowski, 1982; Balbi and Fickers, 2020). IEROs in these fields found it difficult to secure national-level ratification of new regulatory provisions but their core powers were not subject to full frontal challenge until the outbreak of war closed borders entirely.

 We argue that this group survived by sustaining hierarchical ordering in niches with fewer dependencies on other global bodies and member states. These bodies regulated operations directly across capital-intensive physical infrastructure crossing borders of many countries. The character of the regulated industries, together with the importance of widespread state-ownership (land line telegraphy and telephony, railways in continental Europe) or “national champion” relations with protected private monopolists (cable and wireless telegraphy in many countries) demanded clear, international rule-based systems. These could secure inter-state transaction management and long-term investment. For this reason, in general, immobile large scale infrastructure industries adopted a neo-Durkheimian hierarchical ordering for regulation.

 In turn this hierarchical social organisation enabled highly structured relations with executive departments of state in member countries, which could partially buffer against populist criticism. After initial failures by 1923 the LoN Communication and Transit Organisation secured the adoption of a Convention on international railways but it left regulation to agencies which were already established, which thereafter held effective responsibility: only two non-European countries ratified it (Schipper *et al*, 2010). Within Europe, hierarchical ordering within these international regulatory bodies sustained the defence of gains through agreements on prices and standards for member states in the telecommunications and railway bodies. For example, in the 1920s the Unité Technique, a key interwar railway body, settled detailed technical standards on gauges, rolling stock standards, continuous brakes and automatic couplings. The Union Internationale des Wagons agreed rules on how and by when empty wagons were to be returned and the *per diem* rents paid by receiving administrations. The Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer agreed rules on inter-railway accounting standards and set up a Brussels office for clearing accounts (Wedgewood and Wheeler, 1946). Each required detailed regulation, and these standards were settled in formalised committee-based processes. Little more could be achieved in the 1930s, when new agreements were stymied.

 In telecommunications, ITU regulations settled by the Regulation Committees at each conference required the use of Morse code, set format of telegrams, routing protocols, message priorities and transmission protocols, tariffs, shares between terminal and transit countries, and rules for quarterly settlement of accounts between national administrations. In the interwar years, these rules were adapted and extended for voice telephony and wireless telegraphy which became broadcasting. At the 1927 conference the principle of integration of the unions for telegraphy and wireless telegraphy was agreed and this was completed at the 1932 Madrid conference, where the concept of telecommunications as a regulatory sector of point-to-point linkage was defined (Tworek, 2020). At the 1927 conference the first highly detailed and structured radio regulations were settled by formal process in committee (Stewart, 1928; Codding and Rutkowski, 1982). This followed advice from the Brussels technical laboratory of the International Broadcasting Union which was increasingly integrated into the ITU’s formal system of consultation and referral of standards (Fickers and Griset, 2019). The ITU also expanded its consultation, formal integration of technical laboratory-based authorities and committee-driven rule making by its reliance on the Comité Consultatif pour Fernschreiben (CCIF) in its increasing technical standardisation (and not only tariff regulation) for telephony in the late 1920s and through the 1930s (Henrich-Franke and Laborie, 2020). Yet as deglobalisation deepened, little was agreed after 1932, other than a spectrum allocation in 1938, regulatory ambition had to be reduced and the regime appeared stalled.

 This form of organisation was prevalent prior to deglobalisation (by the late nineteenth century in the ITU, by the first decade of the twentieth in railways). Having been firmly established by the early 1920s, during the 1930s deglobalisation this kind of ordering persisted, because the high economic costs of dismantling it were recognised by departments and agencies in participating states. This is shown by the consent of most belligerent states in both world wars simply to moving ITU operations into abeyance during war, allowing the bureau to continue to gather and publish information but not to plan for any expected large scale postwar change in regulations. The Swiss government’s willingness in both world wars to assist the ITU bureau in sustaining abeyance rather than hibernation was crucial to the organisation’s ability to contribute to negotiations for postwar resumption. Indeed, after each of the wars when proposals were made for more drastic restructuring of the ITU (John, 2020; Codding and Rutkowski, 1982; Clavin, 2013) states quickly moved to preserve the union’s basic structure. Thus even the pressures of anarchy in international relations during deglobalisation and suspicion by hegemon states such as the US in 1946 could be buffered by hierarchical ordering managing an extensive corpus of rules in which many states had stakes.

 Explanations of regulatory capture are not neatly applicable to this cluster of IEROs because railways and telecommunications networks were mostly publicly owned. Therefore, capture of IEROs consistently favouring private business (*cf.* Shapiro, 2012) was not directly at stake. But ownership form need not be key to the mechanism of capture. Were national railway and telecommunications administrations maintaining IEROs to bolster their own power, perhaps at the expense of the public interest (*cf.* Carpenter, 2014) and other departments of their governments? That telegraph and national railway administrations were influential in IEROs is undeniable. However, this dynamic of ‘capture’ and bureaucratic politics alone cannot explain the resilience of IEROs in these sectors. States in Europe, where international regulation of the railways was most developed, either squeezed their railways for revenue (e.g., Lodge 2002 for Germany) or required they introduce “competitive” beggar-my-neighbour tariffs to lure freight business to their own ports (Wedgewood with Wheeler 1946). Germany was also under international pressure especially from 1924 and until 1933 from a subcommittee of the Dawes Commission to raise money from the railways to contribute to reparations, and after 1933 the state pressed the railways for revenue and for trade diversion for domestic reasons. The stalling of the IEROs’ regulatory advance in the 1930s demonstrated the limits of national administrations and the dominance of their governments. Interstate and inter-imperial competition in telecommunications meant that national administrations were unwilling to advance the regulatory remits of infrastructure IEROs. States’ willingness to subordinate wireless telegraphy to security concerns also curtailed the influence of national railway and telecommunications bureaux. Moreover, the successive reduction of tariffs, making telegraphy more affordable to the public, was a core activity of the ITU. The interests of national telegraphy agencies were thus subordinated to the public interest to a significant extent.

 Sustained competition between states also means that realist predictions of fragility or hegemonic dominance provide weak explanations for regulatory persistence. Yet functional liberal institutional explanations require the backing of factors of social organisation, to explain how IEROs responded when they were stymied and stalled. Nor do the agencies’ autonomy and reputations for impartiality and competence (Carpenter, 2001) fully account for the survival of organisations in this cluster. For example, the US was deeply suspicious of the ITU in the 1920s: it joined only reluctantly in 1932 (John, 2020; Tworek, 2020, 259) and had to be persuaded to support its continuation in 1946. The fragmentation of the interwar railway bodies had left their authority weakened (Wedgewood with Wheeler, 1946), but their postwar resumption reflected the recognition of European states that their regulatory systems were crucial to reviving freight exports. Nevertheless, it is likely that the reputation for competence and effective management by some IEROs such as the international bureau of the ITU in Berne (Fari *et al*, 2013), which was based on their hierarchical social organisation played a part in ensuring their survival.

#### Second cluster: international regulation of general economic forces over labour and capital

A key example in this area of regulation is the LoN EFO (Clavin, 2013) which sought to maintain international economic order and to influence multilateral and national regulation of capital (Clavin, 2013; Clavin and Wessels, 2004). For labour the major international regulatory body was the International Labour Organisation (ILO) directly setting standards for working conditions and human rights (Maul, 2019; Rodgers *et al*, 2009; van Daele *et al*, 2010).

 This second, much higher salience group was more vulnerable to deglobalising pressures intensifying international anarchic competition among blocs. These IEROs faced intense challenge to their core powers from the beginning of deglobalisation.

 Directly (ILO) or indirectly through influence (EFO, after 1929 when it ceased to be able to negotiate conventions) this cluster of bodies regulated standards for capital and labour rather than industry-specific contexts. They both operated and bequeathed capacity to successors by using individualistic ordering at their core for brokering to build narrower coalitions of the willing among key states and international non-governmental bodies. For example, the first director of the EFO, Arthur Salter operated informally with great discretion working his own personal contacts with financiers and politicians to broker agreement for the financial rescues of Austria and Hungary which imposed conditions for loans on those countries (Clavin, 2014). Again, as Clavin (2013; Clavin and Wessels, 2004) demonstrates, from the end of the 1920s until the 1933 WMEC, Loveday (Finance Section) and Stoppani (Economic Section) who succeeded Salter as equally ranked heads, engaged in extensive individual behind-the-scenes diplomacy, both using significant discretion from their nominal superior, Avenol. In response to the depression, they created wholly new networks with policymakers in key states, and refocused on influence over convergence or coordination in national-level regulation rather than on convention-making as the EFO had pursued in the 1920s. Loveday and Stoppani engaged in personal diplomacy with central bankers and financiers and national civil servants, trying – ultimately unsuccessfully (Clavin, 2013) – to find some multilateral framework for currency stabilisation as the gold exchange standard came under increasing pressure and then collapsed. In the same way, in the mid-1930s, after the failure of the 1933 WEC, Stoppani engaged in informal shuttle diplomacy to negotiate a multilateral scheme of his own devising to limit the damage of protectionism. This too was stymied. However, in the attempt, Stoppani achieved more informal discretion for EFO although his and Loveday’s efforts to obtain for the EFO the extent of discretion allowed to the ILO were rebuffed (Clavin, 2013). Crucially, individualistic ordering enabled the EFO to pass on networks, skills, approaches and even some staff to the UN-era bodies which took over its main purposes. Working with national policymakers such as the Australians MacDougall and Bruce was key in this networking for survival and bequest (Way, 2013) A key figure in this informal brokering was Arthur Sweetser, the sometime journalist, sometime LoN staffer and sometime US government contractor who specialised in working between organisations (Herren and Löhr, 2018). Loveday and Sweetser both made great efforts to secure the continuity of EFO approaches to regulation. They did so by placing key staff in the emerging UN agencies such as ECOSOC and the FAO. They found new patrons among national politicians involved with UN era bodies for EFO networks. Loveday in particular used every opportunity to persuade key figures in these new agencies of the value of the EFO’s intellectual achievements for their postwar work, successfully negotiating Rockefeller Foundation support for the organisation’s work and transition to the UN era bodies (Tournès, 2014).

 Priorities for international labour regulation in the interwar decades included workplace safety, reducing forced labour, instituting sickness insurance, and limits on working hours. Individualistic ordering also mattered at the ILO both in regulatory work and in securing survival, but there the person with the most discretion for personal initiative was the director. The first director, Albert Thomas, made personal diplomacy by both informal and formal means the hallmark of the directorship in ways that his interwar and wartime successors were able to build upon. Its tripartite government, trades union and employer structure for internal decision-making required informal diplomacy among delegates and often required the director to intervene to break logjams by reaching back to member state governments. Thomas’s own initiative secured the ILO’s presence at the key 1922 Genoa conference, for which it had no guaranteed *locus standi* (Alcock, 1971). One of his successors, Edward Phelan (1936), describes in detail Thomas’s combination of informal brokering and use of formal legal procedures to deal with challenges to the ILO’s competence and to deal with difficult issues (such as the Soviet Union’s position in the organisation). Acceptance in the 1930s under Butler of the ILO’s inability to secure widespread national ratification but still to persist with standard setting was not a position of fatalistic resignation but a way of laying down markers for future negotiations on issues such as equal pay for women, forced labour and workplace safety (Alcock, 1971; Maul, 2019). In the same way, individual approaches by Butler through US Labour Secretary Frances Perkins in the 1930s smoothed the way to US membership of the ILO under Roosevelt (Butler, 1941). Winant’s personal approach to the Canadian government, in turn, secured the organisation’s wartime refuge at McGill University, where reduced operations were undertaken. Moreover, Phelan’s initiative to secure member states’ consent to his design for the major relaunch of the ILO at the 1944 Philadelphia conference was crucial for the organisation’s survival (ILO, 2009). Phelan’s work toward the Philadelphia conference was deliberately designed to ensure the ILO’s survival, both by cementing the support of the Roosevelt administration and key figures in the US Congress and also by using the conference to demonstrate the contribution that the ILO planned to make to governance in the postwar global economy (ILO, 2009; Maul, 2019).

 A hallmark of individualistic ordering is that it cultivates a thought style in which anomalies are not to be adjusted for and eliminated through steadily expanding rulemaking but as resources to be exploited in brokering provisional settlements. We can see evidence of this thought style in ILO regulatory strategy in these years. The ILO used its work on forced labour, strictly excluded from its mandate because coerced workers have no employment contract, to expand its sphere of competence (Kott, 2019). The League’s economic policy exhibited this approach in its acceptance of inconsistency between commitments to reducing protectionism and freeing trade. We see this in its support for the most favoured nation principle on the one hand, and “rationalisation” in key commodity markets on the other, to sustain production as a temporary exception to MFN (Khan, 1982, 66). This led the League to facilitate talks to establish international commodity agreements (Clavin, 2013; Clavin and Dungy, 2020; Fakhri, 2011; Pemberton, 2002).

 Tripartism and states’ pre-eminence in the ILO prevented outright capture by trades unions while business interests secured a hearing in Economic Committee negotiations over conventions and 1927 and 1933 WMECs but never secured their preferences sufficiently for capture (Dungy, 2020). Indeed, we would not expect capture to play a strong role in areas of regulation in which there are multiple competing interests which are each well-organised. This competition between interests prevents concentration, making it far more difficult for any one party to capture regulatory agencies (Wilson, 1980; Rex, 2020).

 Yet neither functional imperatives nor any norms sufficed for bequest, without individualistic ordering sustaining capacities for negotiation especially with victorious wartime powers. For example, the adroit brokering work of Loveday for the EFO and later Sweetser with key policymakers in the Roosevelt administration was essential for the EFO to bequeath its networks, individual staff members, research designs and operating methods to the UN Economic and Social Council and the Food and Agriculture Administration. In the case of the ILO, Phelan’s work to secure US support for its postwar continuation was crucial. The EFO’s work in the 1930s to position social welfare as a goal of monetary and trade policy bequeathed commitments to inter-organisational working with the ILO and the League’s Health Organisation onto its UN era successors through the networks and personnel in the FAO, WHO and ECOSOC (Clavin, 2013; Sayward, 2020). Highly effective and well-regarded figureheads for IEROs built autonomous spheres of influence for their organisations, much as Carpenter’s theory on bureaucratic autonomy predicts (*cf.* Carpenter, 2001). This bureaucratic autonomy played a crucial role in these IEROs bequeathing organisational capacities to their successor bodies. Individualistic social ordering played an important role in the survival of key organisational capacities, precisely because it cultivated the skills and thought styles to exploit opportunities for brokering.

#### Third cluster: international regulation of mobile, divisible, traded goods, with concentrated production locations

The third cluster consists in the international commodity agreement bodies, with regulatory functions mainly focused on pricing (Davis, 1946; Khan, 1982). Examples included the International Tin Committee (Hillman, 2010), International Tea Committee, International Wheat Advisory Committee, International Rubber Regulation Committee (Knorr, 1945) and International Sugar Council (Fakhri, 2011; von Graevenitz, 2008, 2011).

 These bodies were mainly new creations, formed in defensive response to the rigours of deglobalisation and in particular to falling commodity prices.

 In these fields, short term market dynamics were significant in shaping the form of institutional ordering. In these commodity industries, short term market conditions of price deflation, high interest rates, volatility in exchange rates and general demand slump pushed them towards defensive regulation. The initial impetus for these bodies came from producers seeking intergovernmental support for protection, which was in effect producer capture, yet regulatory capture alone cannot explain the trajectory of their survival or the manner of their rebirth. They were mostly intergovernmentally-backed cartels, seeking to limit production in times of surplus capacity in order to push up prices from their very low levels during the interwar international economic rollercoaster. Some were formed in response to oligopsony in demand (e.g., the dominance of a few major US and European industrial concerns in demand for rubber: Knorr, 1945). Moreover, these bodies tended for the most part to be institutionalised fairly late in the deglobalisation process, after protracted negotiations allowing members to trust and bond with each other. Indeed, the negotiations in each price war involved threats of brinkmanship to bring producers into these agreements (Dye and Sicotte, 2006). This made social integration difficult even as it revealed that trust should be based on more than transactional considerations to achieve producers’ goals. Hardly any of these bodies had survived from previous, economically more optimistic and politically more open periods (Dye and Sicotte 2006, Fakhri 2011, 2014; Khan, 1982).

 Two routes to overcoming the collective action problems of cartels by achieving enclaving can be discerned. One route enabled major empires to collaborate where their markets were already interdependent and where they had common political interests in stabilising colonial control, as was the case for the British and Dutch rubber producers in east Asia (Knorr, 1945). A somewhat different route was pursued by countries which were not colonies, but which could use the League of Nations to appeal to colonial administrations’ local interests in common with theirs, as a basis for trust-building. Cuba sought to do this in sugar in its outreach to Java, and also to states in central and eastern Europe where beet production competed with tropical cane production (Fakhri, 2011; von Graevenitz, 2008, 2011; Khan, 1982).

 Enclaved ordering itself faced the challenge of sustaining collective action despite incentives for members to defect or for other producers not to join. This was exhibited in the weakness of the Stevenson plan for rubber in the 1920s which only encompassed the major estates and not the small producers (Knorr 1945), and in the 1931 Chadbourne agreement for sugar (Dye and Sicotte, 2006). It also became visible in the failure of the tea cartel in the early 1930s (Gupta, 2001), as well as the failure of various efforts in agreement over wheat in the 1930s (Tyszynski, 1949) such as 1930-1 London wheat conference (Aparicio and Pinilla, 2019). Enclaved ordering turns a recognition of common external threat into strengthening of bonds and a sense of solidarity against that threat. This proved crucial in the 1934 rubber agreement (Knorr, 1945). Greater challenges to enclaving arose which included consumer as well as producer countries in membership and with voting rights, sharing control over quotas or buffer stocks beyond producer interests alone. Despite urgings at the 1933 WMEC (Khan, 1982, 62-3) and in the EFO 1937 major report on raw materials (Khan, 1982, 65-66), only where consuming countries were few and interests concentrated was it possible to move beyond transactional relations. In the 1934 rubber agreement, a panel of key industrial users were partially integrated with rights to consultation (Knorr, 1945). Consumer country participation was much more institutionalised in the postwar commodity agreement bodies, with mixed results. At the heart of the tin committee, when it finally stabilised in the 1920s, was a tightly bonded group of the four core signatories, in which the British Colonial Office and its Dutch equivalent were bolstered by Dutch government relations with the two largest producers in the Dutch East Indies, Billiton and Banka. British commitment was bolstered by Howeson’s Anglo-Oriental group and by support from Chinese owned producers in Malaya, and the Patiño group in Bolivia (Hillman, 2010). By the late 1930s, the British had secured consumer representation on the tin committee too.

 Determined to improve producers’ revenues, these bodies sought gains relative to consumers, but could only overcome collective action problems when members could be assured that other members would not benefit disproportionately. Thus, votes were limited to the shares of production agreed in initial quotas (e.g., Knorr, 1945, 116 for rubber). However, by the third tin agreement, this had moved partially – as we should expect in enclaved ordering – toward membership rather than just economic weight-based voting. It had also moved toward the elimination of anomalies, such as Siam’s special status in the second agreement (Hillman, 2010). This had the effect of providing some control over relative gains among member producing states. On the outbreak of general war, market conditions changed and prices rose again: sustaining collective action during wartime political conditions proved more challenging.

 Although producers certainly sought the creation of these agencies for capture in the way that Stigler (1971) would expect, their trajectory of survival is not well explained by capture alone if we define capture as a process that entails a sustained shift in regulatory decision-making away from the public interest in favour of private interests (Shapiro, 2012; Carpenter, 2014). To secure its joint commitment with the Dutch, the British government often overrode the interests of European tin miners in Malaya and Nigeria, while the Dutch government likewise sometimes overrode Billiton and Banka in the Dutch East Indies (Hillman, 2010). Enclaving at the apex of the committee was consistent with imperial hierarchy within member states for trust among the core membership. Shared imperial interests explain some of the enclaving (e.g., British rubber and tin interests in Malaya or remaining British sugar interests in the Caribbean which attracted imperial preference under the 1933 policy). However, it does not explain the place of the Bolivian Patiño group in the tin committee (Hillman, 2010) or free Cuba’s important initiative in the creation of the sugar union (Fakhri, 2011). By the late 1930s states also insisted on consumer representation in the commodity bodies and in wartime, state and joint allied procurement considerations overrode producer interests (Khan, 1982; Knorr 1945; Hillman, 2010). Delegation to fully autonomous bodies was resisted. The limited ability of the commodity bodies to use quotas, pools and buffer stocks to control the market left their reputations weak with both markets and many politicians. If realist considerations of security drove wartime procurement, they do not explain the tight 1930s Anglo-Dutch bonds at the heart of the tin and rubber committees. Functional pressures alone, on the other hand, hardly explain the fluctuating balances struck between producer and consumer interests. Far from settled norms determining the organisation of these bodies, as Hillman documents closely for tin and as Knorr shows for rubber, there were constant arguments over distribution fairness rules among states and among producers within states. Moreover, some norms under which the successor bodies were ordered after 1945 were significantly different, given US dominance by that period and given the currency stabilisation achieved under the Bretton Woods regime.

 Although most commodity agreement bodies moved into hibernation around 1940, joint allied procurement systems put in place in 1942 after US entry into the war gave several of them modest roles which enabled a few to shift to abeyance. With wartime demand for key commodities such as tin and rubber soaring, the latter group operated under rules not of their enclaved core’s choosing. Postwar resurrection depended on those enclaved cores’ ability to maintain the commodity bodies’ hibernation until US dislike for international cartels weakened and finally relaxed at the end of the 1940s and turn of the 1950s (Hillman, 2010).

## Conclusion

The organisational landscape of global regulatory governance rests on sedimentary layers laid down in previous periods and not entirely swept away in deglobalisations. Indeed, as we have shown, some layers were specifically laid down during and in response to deglobalisation. Survival and bequest are in part a social process, even though it is conditioned by structural as well as contingent forces in political economy.

 This article proposes an explanation of this survival through hard times for international economic regulatory bodies, despite many being weakened and stymied. Capture, bureaucratic autonomy, realist, functional and norm-based theories each identify dynamics of importance in some periods in some of the cases of IEROs discussed here. However, none fully explains the diversity of pathways to survival observed. Our approach shows that we need to supplement these explanations with an account of how social organisation was enabled by conditions of political economy. Forms of social organisation cultivated styles of thought and skills in forming weaker or stronger ties among members. These thought styles, skills and ties cultivated capabilities for survival and bequest. Thus, our explanation is synthetic. It integrates political economy forces with those of informal social institutional ordering, as explained by neo-Durkheimian institutional theory. We identify three contrasting kinds of interaction between the neo-Durkheimian forms of institutional ordering and the forces emphasised in international political economy and international relations explanations. We show that thought styles were cultivated across IEROs, which in some cases built upon opportunities afforded by roles (e.g., in individualistic brokering) but in other cases spanned people with very different roles (e.g., in the more hierarchical cases). This would be consistent with suggestion in Thompson *et al* (1990) that in response to adversity or anomaly, forms of social ordering might go into positive feedback or self-reinforcement. Adaptation to deglobalisation sometimes showed deepening or positive feedback in forms, as in the enclaving in the tin committees and the development of an informal “licence” for individualistic brokering by ILO directors. However, as Verweij and Thompson (2006) imply, depending on the prior relative weighting of forms of social organisation, systems might respond to the combination of negative and positive feedback to pursue hybridisation, or else might merely result in stasis or gridlock. Further primary archival work is needed on the infrastructure bodies to determine how far deepening or hybridisation were pursued in the later stages of deglobalisation. It is clear, though, that states’ perception of their interests in international regulation varied, as did secretariat activism, with the form of social organisation in the IERO as a whole, in ways that contributed to contrasting pathways to survival. Thus, the theory can explain *diversity* of ways in which IEROs survived the last period of deep deglobalisation, with which many of the standard explanations struggle.

 This is an important contribution to the theory of international regulatory regimes in global and international governance, showing that their resilience through deglobalisation depends on more than factors making up a causal process of demand for regulation (Acharya, 2016), available ideas and states’ temporary calculations of their convenience. We have argued that the maintenance of hard-won solutions to collective action problems (commodity agreements), the prioritising of types of gains (infrastructure regulation) and the ability to focus for the medium term on bequeathing skills, networks and connections when organisations cannot be maintained (EFO) are the work of forms of social organisation which were crucial to survival and bequest.

 Nothing in this article’s argument implies that all international regulatory activity is always and everywhere benign. It would be entirely consistent to regard price regulation created under international commodity agreements as normatively damaging or futile in the long run, while accepting the explanation for them offered here. What survives in global governance may be the ignoble as well as the noble.

 Today’s deglobalising trends resemble those of the 1930s at least in some key respects such as the reversal of economic integration among world regions and neo-mercantilist policies backed by populist nationalist political movements. This suggests that today’s international economic regulatory systems will face similar challenges of resistance, withdrawal, dangers of irrelevance, refusals to ratify, and non-compliance that their predecessors in the interwar crisis did. We suggest that whatever the WTO, ITU and other bodies do in response to the challenges they now face, their strategies will draw upon the same repertoire of styles of organising that their predecessors used in the adversity of the 1930s. Even if they shuffle the pack slightly differently, they will play with the same cards.

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# Figures and tables for the article

# “How did international economic regulation survive the last period of deglobalisation?”

##### Figure 1: Pathway to survival for international regulation of infrastructure

Short term market conditions

*Capacity to buffer pressures from*

Neo-Durkheimian hierarchy

Indivisible, immobile, international infrastructure

 *Facilitates*

Survival

IR anarchy or IR hegemony

##### Figure 2: Pathway to survival for international regulation for capital and labour

*Facilitates*

Neo-Durkheimian individualism in IEROs

Brokerage, negotiation strategy, esp. in secretariats, seek to build at least coalitions of willing states

Survival or bequest

Generic categories of economic force: labour, capital

IR anarchy among great powers

*Legitimation threat*

Protectionism, economic autarchic bloc strategies

*Increase the likelihood of*

Short economic conditions: financial crisis, demand slump

##### Figure 3: Pathway to survival for international regulation for commodities

Neo-Durkheimian social integration and desire to evade social regulation by external forces

Enclaving (cartel, regulatory capture)

 Commodities

Survival

IR dominance in imperial relations with colonies and poor states in Asia, Latin America, Africa

Short term market conditions – price deflation, exacerbated later by exchange rate volatility and demand slump

*Facilitates*

# Online supporting information for the article

# “How did international economic regulation survive the last period of deglobalisation?”

Article published in “*Regulation and governance*”

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2021

## The lack of cases of termination of international economic regulatory bodies due to deglobalisation in the 1930s

The most authoritative analysis and listing of international organisations which persisted and expired in the first half of the twentieth century is provided in the online annexe for Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2018), available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11558-018-9340-5#Sec16

 Drawing from the Correlates of War Intergovernmental Organisations (COW IGO) database supplemented with Yearbook of International Organisations lists and other sources, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni provides for the most part a much fuller list than Wallace and Singer’s (1970) tables.

 Eilstrup-Sangiovanni’s data set is one of international organisations (IOs) generally, and therefore a majority are neither economic nor regulatory. Because our study selects the principal international economic regulatory organisations in the fields of infrastructure, capital and labour, and commodities, for these purposes, it was not necessary to access Eilstrup-Sangiovanni’s full data set and to code and count the sub-population of IOs in it which could justifiably be considered using clear criteria to be operating in economic fields and to have regulatory functions. Some of the IOs in her data set were entirely scientific; some ran social or cultural programmes; some worked in fields which could be argued to be economic but did not regulate or at most regulated standards for information to be provided by member states. In the online appendices for her 2018 article, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni provides a listing only of two subsets of all IO deaths. The first subset is of fifteen organisations which she classifies as having expired, not between 1815 and 2015 which is the whole period covered by her data set, but only of those which she codes as having expired during (i.e., in or after 1914) or in the immediate aftermath of the first world war (for which her cut off year is 1923). The second is of thirty-one organisations created prior to the first world war (with cut-off date of 1913 for creation) but which then survived temporarily (the earliest death in this set being 1929) or for longer periods (many being extant in 2015).

 For present purposes, because our interest is in the deglobalisation years, and using Boyce’s (2009) argument that deglobalisation began in earnest in 1927, we leave aside those bodies which expired in the early 1920s. Thus, of Eilstrup-Sangiovanni’s list of deaths, this excludes such cases as

* the International Maritime Bureau Against the Slave Trade (terminated 1919, and moribund before the Great War);
* the International Bureau for Information & Enquiries regarding Relief to Foreigners (terminated 1921);
* the International Association for Public Baths and Cleanliness (terminated 1923);
* the Scandinavian Monetary Union (terminated 1921);
* the Permanent Pan-American Railway Committee (terminated 1923);
* the International Sugar Union (terminated 1920) (however, in our article, we do examine the later, freshly created sugar bodies); and
* the International Central American Office (terminated 1920).

 From the 1927-1939 period, we exclude those international organisations which were not doing economic regulatory work. For this reason, we leave aside

* the International Physiological Laboratories on Monte-Rosa (terminated 1929)
* the International Commission for the Decennial Revision of the Nomenclature of the Causes of Death (terminated 1938; regulatory but not economic)
* the International Exchange Service (terminated 1939); and
* the International Commission on the Teaching of Mathematics (terminated 1939)

 Next, there are some cases which Eilstrup-Sangiovanni classifies as deaths but which we classify as either survivals or bequests:

* the International Conference for Promoting Technical Unification of the Railways (functions transferred to several of the alphabet soup of railway bodies, and in particular to the Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer: Wedgewood with Wheeler, 1946); and
* the International Radiotelegraph Union (merged with the International Telegraph Union at the Madrid conference specifically called for this purpose, to form the International Telecommunication Union).

 Finally, there is a set of bodies which were specifically killed because the international space which they regulated was swept up by one empire, namely the Third Reich, and from Eilstrup-Sangiovanni’s list of 1930s, the key one here is

* the European Commission for Control of the Danube.

 However, this is really a war death due to conquest which rendered the territories of the Commission’s regulation no longer subject to effective international borders, and not a death due to peacetime deglobalisation.

 From Eilstrup-Sangiovanni’s list, therefore, there is only one remaining case of a death during the deglobalisation period which was to any degree concerned with economic matters and which had any regulatory role at all, namely,

* International Bureau of Commercial Statistics (cr. 1913, d. 1935)

which may have had some regulatory role in setting standards for commercial statistics. Despite extensive searching and inquiries with major archives, we have found no significant information about this body. Cusso (2020) finds evidence in the League of Nations Archives that it was active in 1919 but provides no further detail after that date.

 All other cases of international organisations in the economic sphere and with regulatory responsibilities survived at least until the outbreak of the second world war.

 During the war, as the article documents, the League of Nations Economic and Financial Organisation achieved effective bequest to several UN committees and agencies before the League’s assets and liabilities were transferred to the UN and its powers replaced. As the article also reports, the International Labour Organisation entered reduced operation during the war, the International Telecommunication Union and the Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer went into abeyance, while some of the commodity agreement bodies went into hibernation at least for a period.

##### Table 1: Definitions of key categories

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Category*** | ***Definition*** |
| *Survival*  | Organisational continuity, not only persistence of regulatory approach, meaning either legal renewal, direct legal succession, effective succession in recognisably the same form with more or less the same powers and without significant temporal gap, or else fusion, merger or subsumption. |
| *Bequest* | No organisational survival, but prior to termination transfer of personnel, or networks of contacts, intellectual frameworks or traditions for regulation or skills, to one or more successor bodies, where direct legal succession is not found. |
| *Reduced operation (typically wartime)* | Survival but continuation of some development or proposal work on new regulations, advice and development work but at less ambitious and effective levels than previously, continuation of information and statistical collections, research and publications and active preparation for resumption. |
| *Abeyance (typically wartime)* | Survival but suspension of development, proposal or negotiation of new regulations, but maintaining the collection and inflow of information and statistics and the outflow of bulletins and as much analysis as the reduced numbers of staff could manage. Maintenance of authoritative records of body of existing regulations and their justifications, and maintenance of networks of connections with national civil servants responsible for the regulated industries, with expectation of resumption. |
| *Hibernation (commonly in wartime, but also after the war for some IEROs)* | Continuation of formal existence (minimal survival), but with no activities. |

/ends

1. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/25/un-universal-postal-union-mail-deal-trump [↑](#footnote-ref-1)