Global Intergovernmental Organizations: Polyarchies, Competitive Oligarchies, or Inclusive Hegemonies?

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ABSTRACT: This paper looks into two dimensions of the alleged ‘democratization’ of global governance, that is, the increase in the levels of participation (inclusiveness) and political opposition (contestation) of states within the ambit of intergovernmental organizations (IOs), on a comparative basis. Four of the main IOs in the world – UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank – will be put into scrutiny with a view to diagnosing how polyarchic each one of them can be. Reliant on Robert Dahl’s (1971) three-tiered classification of political regimes (polyarchy, competitive oligarchy, inclusive hegemony), this paper aims at establishing a typology in which IOs could be better assessed and evaluated in what concerns their ‘democracy-enhancing’ capabilities for the Westphalian system of states in a scenario of global governance.

* The author is thankful to the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG) for providing financial support to his travel expenses to the 22nd IPSA World Congress in Madrid, Spain.
INTRODUCTION

From the 1970s on, it became commonplace in the academic discipline of International Relations the perception of the world supported by the premise of "systemic anarchy", be an author associated with a realist (Waltz, 1979), liberal (Keohane, 1984), English-school (Bull, 1977) or constructivist (Wendt, 1996) approach.

The premise of systemic (or structural) anarchy is the recognition that in an environment in which sovereign states embody the supreme authority within the limits of their respective territories, there can never be a "primus inter pares", nor a sort of Leviathan with formal authority superior to that of the states. It is just a corollary of the principle of sovereignty.

This modern international system (also dubbed "Westphalian"), based on the principle of territorial sovereignty, underwent reconfigurations over time. Despite systemic anarchy, today it is well possible to identify sources of political authority that compete with the states', interfering significantly in the direction and contents of international relations.

Authors have come to employ the term "governance without government" (Rosenau, Czempiel, 1992; Young, 1999) to describe the fluidity of political authority in contemporary world. For government, there is reference to the activities supported by a formal authority, the rule that ensures the implementation of policies duly instituted; for governance, it is referring to the activities supported by common goals, which may or may not derive from legal and formally prescribed sources and do not depend necessarily on police power to be accepted and implemented. Governance is - according to James Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel (1992) - a broader phenomenon than government, the former not being confined to the latter.

Noting the fragmentation and multiplicity of relations of political authority in contemporary world, Rodney Hall and Thomas Biersteker (2002) developed the concept of "private authority". If the expression ‘authority’ has been associated with public management throughout the course of modernity, the authors now realize that some private actors began to project authority and influence a growing number of international topics more recently.

Authoritative agents from the private sector are not only important in the international economy but they have become critically important in matters concerning different areas of systemic governance. These agents have been involved with the establishment of social norms, provision of welfare, protection of contracts, maintaining security, inter alia. It is not a piece of coincidence that Hall and Biersteker (2002) claim the emergence of private authority to be a clear sign of the existence of global governance. If "private authority" will not ever exceed, whatever may be the criterion of measurement, the authority of the national state (in the authors' view), indeed the concept turns out to be decisive for understanding the political dynamics of international relations - which involves today actors as diverse as the states, market players, international organizations, transnational movements, mafias, mercenary soldiers etc.

The complexity of this framework for global governance without a world government is compounded with the debate that has been promoted, most recently, on the political legitimacy of international relations. To put it bluntly: if there is in fact "governance without
government" on a global scale, so where is it drawing its legitimate authority from? The diagnosis commonly given is that if democracy has emerged as the political regime and the preferred source of legal standing within states, it still faces serious difficulties to become a universal and fully operational formula under the modern system of states.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Given the "systemic anarchy" and the absence of both a democratic constituency and a global Leviathan, it is made evident the theoretical and empirical difficulty to "democratize international relations." As part of this academic research, our starting question is: after all, considered the lack of planetary rule, how to design policies that work more effectively in a democratic system of sovereign territorial states?

The first step of the formula that I will adopt is to adapt the conceptual tools of conventional democratic theory, applying the concept of "polyarchy" - originally conceived by the social scientist Robert Dahl to the institutional environments of domestic politics - to the study of international politics. According to Dahl (2005), the polyarchization of a society - ie, the increase in levels of political participation and public contestation - should be seen as just "one aspect of democratization" (p. 17). The conceptual modesty of the author is consistent with his conscious choice to treat democracy as a Weberian ideal type, unattainable in factual situations, both domestic and internationally.

So, as one country develops a political system that allows opposition, rivalry or competition between a government and its adversaries, the level of polyarchy evolves; likewise, whenever one country expands the number of individuals and interest groups with access to the institutional mechanisms of participation in political life, the dosing of polyarchy increases.

It is pointed out, moreover, that a comprehensive system of public contestation and pluralism is not exactly equivalent to the full democratization of a society. In the elucidation of Dahl:

"Polyarchies (...) can be thought of as regimes relatively (but incompletely) democratized, or, in other words, polyarchies are institutional schemes that have been substantially popularized and liberalized, that is, they are highly inclusive and extensively open to public contestation" (Dahl, 2005, p. 31, emphasis added).

The following figure seeks to render the spectrum of "democratic" possibilities in Dahlian analysis:

Figure 1: Liberalization, inclusiveness and democratization (Dahl, 2005, p. 30)
As a second step for the viability of this research project, we shall assume the international organizations (IOs) as universal and multilateral arenas to host encompassing arrangements in regard to world politics - as open to public contestation and participation as it is reasonable to expect in international affairs. We assume four cases as representative of the political experience of States in the international world order after World War 2 - namely, the attempt of the United Nations (UN) to take up the proposal (failed with the League of Nations) to administer a regime of international peace and security, and the construction of a broad scheme of global economic governance born with the Bretton Woods Conference (1944), which later resulted in the establishment of three formal organizations, namely, the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

A brief historical background seems important. The UN has, since its origin, the presence of the United States - the hegemon of the post-second world war order - as a member state. The institutional design of the entity benefited from learning from historical experience. Two key factors seem to explain why the UN has become more successful, especially in the issue of geographic representation, than the League of Nations (1920-1946). The first was the creation of a body - the General Assembly - designed to house all states recognized as such by the international community. This condition of strict equality among states implied recognition of the principle of noninterference in domestic affairs of other states, besides the application of the "one state, one vote" principle on issues discussed within the General Assembly. This was perhaps the great institutional innovation represented by the advent of the Organization of San Francisco.

The second decisive element for the survival and increase of UN representation over time seems to be the composition of its Security Council - the body directly responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security in the world. Instead of restricting its
membership to Europeans (along the lines of the League of Nations after 1933 and before that, the Holy Alliance, 1815-25), the new Council was able to contemplate by way of its system of permanent representation three continents (America, Europe and Asia), and did not neglect the presence of Africa and Oceania, although in a non-permanent basis. Furthermore, UN goals stated by the Moscow Declaration (1943) envisaged a general international organization, quasi-universal, reaching all "peace loving" nations of the world (Belém Lopes, 2007).

Nagendra Singh (2003) noted, in addition to the institutional advances and the steep rise in the number of UN members, an attempt embodied in the Charter of San Francisco to purge all ethnocentrism that marked the existence of the League of Nations. The UN Charter contained provisions that would mitigate this trait, especially the ideas of "decolonization of peoples" and "political independence with territorial integrity of member states." These changes in the legal texts and political practice of the United Nations accompanied the need to expand the concept of "international community" in the post-second world war, in order to succeed in the contemplation of more states and regions of the planet.

The genesis of the WTO dates back to the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, where it was raised the possibility of creating an international institution dedicated to the formal regulation/liberalization of world trade. The proposal from the stillborn International Trade Organization (ITO) has been replaced, still in 1947, by signing a general agreement on tariffs and trade (GATT) by 23 states. The treaty entered into force in 1948, with the United States and China as founding members (Barton et al., 2006). The pro-free trade regime has gained stature and scope ever since, and in 1995, gave way to the World Trade Organization (WTO), a formal extension of GATT.

The creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD eventually taken over by the World Bank) took place in 1945, with the coming into operation of the two bureaucracies. They were interdependent organs, however with complementary functions - preventing balance-of-payments crises and catalyzing the infrastructural development of states - which were designed as remedies for the problems of coordination that resulted in the international economic crisis of the global capitalism in the 1930s (Woods, 2006).

According to a widespread assumption put forth by John G. Ruggie (1982), the GATT was one of the pillars of the Bretton Woods institutional tripod (also built by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund), whose implicit goal was to instill liberal content in international economic relations after the Second World War. The United States, in partnership with European countries, sponsored the creation of international organizations whose mandate was to liberalize trade and finances and prevent serious balance-of-payments crises in the major debtor states, thereby setting the levers of governance for a powerful economic governance machine. The so-called "embedded liberalism" (Ruggie, 1982) relies both on an abstract element (the wide acceptance of "liberal virtues" in Western countries) and on the institutional structures of coercion (mainly represented by the Bretton Woods institutional tripod).
In the current stage of international relations, the emergence of global issues that potentially affect the entire surface of the planet, has required a new type of public management - the traditional territorial states face difficulties in performing their usual tasks satisfactorily. These are points that require an international and cross-border approach, since its causes and its effects are no longer circumscribed to either one given state, region or group of states. Global issues represent a new reality that few agents are able to cope with. UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank, thanks to their universal vocation and representation in a nearly planetary scale, are perhaps four of the formal institutions that have the most advanced tools - despite all setbacks - in public administration to exert influence over fields as diverse and wide such as human rights, environment, trade, intellectual property and finance. There comes substantial part of the political authority acquired by the four of them after the Cold War in times of economic and political globalization.

**HYPOTHESIS AND OBJECTIVES**

In light of the aforementioned, we state the main hypothesis of the work: there is a process of ‘polyarchization’ of international politics on the march, which has its loci of manifestation those multilateral international organizations with universal traits. This process is leading to the inclusion of more and new actors (state and nonstate ones) in decision-making procedures that take place within international bureaucracies (UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank, among others) as well as greater openness to public contestation with regard to international regimes of (a) maintenance of international peace and security and (b) liberalization of the international economy. Nevertheless, the two agendas of ‘poliarchization’ above obey different logics and paces, what stems from the various coalitions and power correlations that are established inside those areas of institutionalized governance of the modern system of states.

As a general objective, I intend to assess (and measure) the roles played by different intergovernmental organizations - the United Nations (UN), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank - for the process of ‘polyarchization’ of contemporary international politics.

It is also my intention: 1. To compare in historical series (1945-2010) the transformations undergone by all these international institutions - the UN, GATT / WTO, IMF and World Bank - in the sense of widening participation and political contestation by different agents of global governance; 2. To analyze the potentials and the limits imposed by institutional designs for the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank for the purpose of democratizing the governance of contemporary international relations; 3. To identify key coalitions and emergent power correlations, and their respective relational power, in order to diagnose trends; and 4. To compare two different international regimes (maintenance of international peace and security, liberalization of the international economy) and the plausibility of a plural management of collective-action problems faced by state and nonstate actors nowadays.
WHY STUDYING THE UN, WTO, IMF AND WORLD BANK?

The academic study of intergovernmental organizations (IOs) has provided, directly or indirectly, important clues for understanding the mechanisms of ‘polyarchization’ of contemporary international politics. Among the theoretical currents that have most significantly contributed to the intensification of the debate, we highlight the rationalist and constructivist.

The rationalist argument, exposed without nuance, that the IOs is nothing more than institutional tools available to its creators, the States. They would be appropriate to suit the rulers, with no operational autonomy. Thus, IOs are treated by the rationalists as “epiphenomena” of international relations - whether the emphasis is given to states military power (as realists prefer) or to the economic and productive aspects of international relations (as preferred by liberal institutionalists or marxists) (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, 1997).

Kenneth Abbott and Duncan Snidal (1997) exemplify this theoretical treatment given to IOs, contending that states resort to formal organizations only when they are able to fill two conditions at the same time: centralization of bureaucratic processes and independence to perform certain functions. That is, states rationally elect IOs as platforms (or arenas) if they correspond to the most efficient way to promote intervention in international relations. Throughout history, such intergovernmental constructions would consolidate as the preferred option of modern states, as shown, moreover, the evolution and proliferation of IOs during the twentieth century.

Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore (2004) also call for the central role of IOs in contemporary international politics, although they do it from a constructivist theoretical modulation. The authors state that IOs are bureaucracies with great capacity for symbolic power projection. This political authority is derived from a “savoir faire” specific and/or a special institutional setting - as in the case of the International Monetary Fund and its doctrines of fiscal austerity, the UN and its accumulated knowledge on reconstruction of states, or UNESCO and its certified expertise to structure programs of research and development within the newly independent states. All that would transform the IOs in veritable "teachers of norms" of the state system, subverting, at least momentarily and occasionally, the traditional hierarchy established between the sovereigns and their children (intergovernmental organizations).

In this field of research, we believe the four entities - the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank - are rich observatories of contemporary international politics. In addition to its universal vocation (each of which gathers more than 150 member states currently), they account for two of the most comprehensive and relevant international regimes of the world order created after the 2nd World War - and still in force.

The UN was founded by 51 member states on October 24, 1945. A decade later, it had already reached the mark of 76 members. The following jump was even more impressive: as a balance the process of African and Asian decolonization (which the UN helped catalyze), the United Nations would count 144 members in 1975 - almost twice as many participants as in 1955. The expansion continued, despite the pressures (typical of the Cold War) for non-admission of
certain states, and in its fiftieth anniversary (1995) the UN gathered no less than 185 members. Today, more than six decades since its founding, the United Nations can claim the status of “universal” organization in terms of membership, totaling 193 members - a number almost four times higher than that of founders in 1945. Another important fact is that there has never been a permanent withdrawal of a UN member from the institution. The lonely case of temporary withdrawal of a member state has involved Indonesia, which, after announcing its withdrawal from the organization on January 20, 1965, returned to the body of members in September 28, 1966 (Belém Lopes, 2007; UN, 2010).

The WTO is the legitimate heir of GATT, an international regime that was formalized on October 30, 1947, in the Swiss city of Geneva, when 23 countries have signed a general agreement on tariffs and trade which came into force in the following year. The escalating number of members of the institution is also rampant: at the end of the 3rd round of negotiations in 1951, the institution had 38 accessions. In 1967, after the Kennedy Round, 20 years after the conclusion of the GATT, there were 62 states taking part in talks on liberalizing international trade. Just about a decade later, in the end of the Tokyo Round (1979), 102 formal members had joined the regime. The Uruguay Round, well known for hosting the act of creation of the WTO, had, at its end, 128 members. And today, already under the aegis of the World Trade Organization, one can count 153 full members, and approximately three dozen other states to claim the “ticket” to enter the institution (Hoekman and Mavroidis, 2007, WTO, 2010).

Founded officially on December 27, 1945, as institutional developments of the Bretton Woods Conference (July 22, 1944), IMF and IBRD (from 1960 on, the main organ of the World Bank) held 35 members in the act of creation. Due to the “joint membership” rule (one state cannot take part in only one of two banks), the number of members of both IOs evolved in parallel, despite the differences both in terms of scope and modes of political action of the two institutions (Woods, 2006; Pereira, 2010). By 1965, 100 countries had been admitted as members of both banks. At the end of the Cold War, a new flood of admissions, mostly of Eastern European countries, made the number of members reach 170. Today, 65 years after their entry into force, the IMF and IBRD have reached a membership of 187 states, not to mention those states who, although not being members, also take part in some processes of the two institutions (IMF, 2011; World Bank, 2011; Vreeland, 2007).

Chart 1: Comparative evolution of the number of members in UN, GATT/WTO, IMF and IBRD (1945-2010)
Our preliminary assessment of the question is that the political dynamics of contemporary world help in broadening the membership of the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank. It means acknowledging that the possible evolution of international relations to a scenario of polyarchic global governance (with the emergence of new sources of political authority) contributes to the UN, the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank to redesign values and international rules that emerge from a process of rule-making whose centers are themselves. We can affirm further that, in relation to the increasing relevance of the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank in contemporary international politics, what is at stake is less the operational capacity to intervene effectively in all matters relating to the agendas of international security and economy, and more the political authority IOs have been vested with to perform the new functions demanded by global governance.

For the sake of explanation, one can also argue that the debate on democratization of international relations is definitely inescapable on present days, so that we cannot afford the option to pass it off. Susan Marks (2001) stated with great power of synthesis the reasons for that phenomenon: firstly, there is today a commitment to democracy that had never been so widespread around the world, and secondly, there had never been such an acute sense of democracy’s empirical limitations.

**DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**

The theme of global governance has often been associated with the role played by intergovernmental organizations (IOs) in the multilateral setting up and consolidation of "thematic regimes" of international relations. By "regime" I refer to the set of rules, principles, and decision-making procedures around which expectations converge in relation to specific agendas (issue-areas) of international relations (Krasner, 1983).
The demands for a more democratic global governance - that is, one that can lead to more open and plural decision-making processes on world affairs, with repercussions on a planetary scale - clash with the claims that, in practical terms, the operationalization of this goal is limited to technocratic elites of IOs, with little or no connection to any electoral constituency or with a truly global audience (Keohane, Moravcsik and Macedo, 2009; Marks, 2001). Rather, it is sceptically argued that international organizations entrusted with the tasks of global governance consist of mere bureaucratic systems of bargaining between rulers, opaque and fundamentally anti-democratic (Dahl, 1999; Dahrendorf, 1999).

It is admitted, however, that tensions between the democratization of international relations and the performance of IOs can be perceived by other angles. Magdalena Bexell, Jonas Tallberg and Anders Uhlin (2010), despite recognizing the unfulfilled promises of multilateralism and the major obstacles to the achievement of a democratic global governance, posit the existence of intense transnational activity nowadays, in some cases reaching the interior of intergovernmental organizations (see the cases of the European Union, the International Labour Organisation and the UN itself), bringing democratizing potential (for example, the formal inclusion of non-state actors in consultation and decision-making procedures). According to Robert Keohane, Stephen Macedo and Andrew Moravcsik (2009), another way to assess those formal international institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the European Union, is to think of how they contribute to the promotion of a conception of "constitutional democracy" in international relations, provide protection for individuals and minorities against the interests of powerful coalitions or ruthless majorities. In addition, they hypothesize that the promotion of multilateral cooperation triggers the publicity of information and arguments - and, as an unexpected outcome, there comes accountability - as it often happens with cases that are brought to the UN Security Council and also to international courts of justice.

Thus, thinking about the complex relationship between democracy, global governance and the modern system of states requires, in our opinion, a previous attempt of classification of approaches in order to compare objects not too dissimilar from each other. There are at least two established ways of thinking about the literature on democratization of global governance, which I label, by way of didacticism and clarity of argumentation, (a) traditional and (b) cosmopolitan.

Traditional approaches to the phenomenon of "democratization of global governance" primarily focus on the aspect of the plurality of state actors with proven abilities to participate in formal multilateral arrangements, vocalize their preferences (in condition of formal equality with other players), and make decisions for the various agendas of international relations. They are derived from a diagnosis that territorial and sovereign states matter and are still absolutely needed to conceive of the possibilities of (more or less) polyarchic global governance.

In this regard, Hermet Guy (2002) understands that, although subject to the trends of globalization in myriad of contemporary themes, the territorial state remains the only actor able to handle global, regional and national political agendas all at once. It is an inevitable reference in terms of "space management", so to speak (p. 44). Therefore, any measure to
establish any democratic governance of the international system depends on the effective capacity of sovereign states to formulate collegially and adhere to those norms of international law we call international regimes.

Darren Hawkins et al. (2006) reconsider the decision-making processes that occur inside multilateral international organizations from the viewpoint of delegation and "agent-principal" theories derived from representative democracy. Within such a conceptual framework, delegation takes place whenever "some political authority is granted to an agent by the principal, that is, when one is empowering the other to proceed in a given direction" (Hawkins et al., 2006, p. 7). According to these authors, the delegation that happens inside IOs functions in a very similar manner to that of domestic politics, but with the difference that, instead of individuals, states will assign powers and competencies (which are always limited by a mandate) to international organizations. Thus, IOs are designed to be the agents that can implement decisions of states and pursue their strategic goals.

The traditional approach to "democratization of global governance" will require an emphasis on the concept of "state system" (to the detriment of "international system"). In terms of methodology, it resembles representative/constitutional democracy, insofar as a citizen can play influence over international affairs only indirectly, through national elections. As summarized by Susan Marks (2001), it is as if democracy could materialize only by means of the "container of the nation state" (p. 50). In addition, greater attention is paid to the formalities of international political participation, which will be starred (and recurrently, monopolized) by sovereign states (Bexell, Tallberg and Uhlin, 2010).

If states are the ultimate "hub" of political loyalties, how should one imagine an instance of legitimate power that is above and beyond the sovereign state? Robert Howse (2001) claims the mental operation to solve that question is relatively simple: he proposes an analogy between the formal delegation of authority that states promote in relation to international organizations on the one hand, and the (real or presumed) delegation of authority from individuals to states within the domestic realm on the other hand. The interstate multilateralism is imaged as the device by which relations are legitimized within the state system, pretty much like the liberal contractualist formula in modern political theory. It is clear, however, that invariably, the argument of "multilateralism as an extension of domestic democracy" will prove misleading, inasmuch as a considerable number of members of global international organizations will always be non-democratic states. Additionally, as it is convincingly shown by the available literature, the higher the number of members of a formal multilateral arrangement, the greater the tendency of states to incur "minilateralism" (Kahler, 1991), i.e., the formation of small "clubs" of actors whose interests can be similar or compatible, undermining then the very integrity of multilateral arrangements.

In a direction nearly opposite to the traditionalists', cosmopolitan thinkers indicate the emergence of "transnational democracy" (Zweifel, 2006) and the incorporation of non-state actors such as local governments, nongovernmental organizations, advocacy networks, social movements, associations, political parties, transnational corporations, charities etc. to global IOs decision-making processes (Alger, 2010; Bexell, Tallberg and Uhlin, 2010; Keohane, Moravcsik and Macedo, 2009). It is, therefore, time to recognize the growing importance
transnational democracy has acquired in the midst of a broad and encompassing process of globalization of social and human relationships (Marks, 2001; Held, 2004).

Interpretations of cosmopolitan democracy concerning global governance are modeled by institutional formats that allow for a more direct exercise of democracy by "global citizens" (the alleged stakeholders in global political processes), blending ingredients of representation, participation and deliberation (Bexell, Tallberg and Uhlin, 2010). The supposed advantage of that experimental method is its inclusiveness, since the participation of transnational actors (beyond and inside the state) expands and improves the access to the government of a significant stratum of the world population, which would in all probability remain marginalized by customary channels of representation (Marks, 2001). However, one must note that the argument does not go without controversy. As Margaret Keck (2004) drew attention to, transnational civil society activism indeed represents "positions" and "ideas" in international organizations, but not real people, or electoral constituencies. The inclusion it promotes can generate, collaterally, serious problems of biased democratic representation.

If we consider the assumption of moral autonomy of an individual as a prerequisite for the attainment of political self-determination, one should face serious difficulties to defend both democracy and reason of state, as long as one thing contradicts the other. In the face of that logical difficulty, authors such as David Held, Peter Singer and Jurgen Habermas tried to imagine possibilities of reconciliation between the traditional democratic method of decision making (assuming representation and/or participation of each and every citizen as a must) and the much desired effectiveness of the foreign policies of states.

As a first step, Held (2004) proposes a reform in the current model of global governance that was established in the 1990s. "The possibility of a global social democratic polity" - says - "is associated with an expanded number of states and agencies bound by the principles of rule of law, democracy and human rights" (p. 108). By rejecting the proposal of a gradual evolution by way of the already existing institutions, Held suggests the creation of a comprehensive and interconnected network of public fora, covering cities, states, regions, and finally the whole transnational order. In local zones, the 'demos' would experience participation, and in intermediary areas, democracy would be mediated by mechanisms of representation. In this context, one can envisage the formation of a world assembly, contemplating just about all states and agencies in the world. The purpose of this assembly would be the assessment of the issues that are placed at the center of global concerns (issues of public health and disease, food supply and distribution, financial instability, foreign debts, climate change, disarmament, nuclear, chemical and bacteriological hazards etc.).

In dissent, Ali Kazancigil (2002) labels Held's perspective on global democracy as "Kantian", inasmuch as "it requires that all States and nations of the world share similar visions, principles and political systems, a condition which will probably never be seen in the world "(p. 61). The author reveals the impossibility of an analysis grounded on the concept of "democratic constituency" of global scale, because it is "a distant prospect, almost utopian" (Kazancigil, 2002, p. 62). He admits, at most, traces of regional democratic governance in today's world (particularly in some parts of the European Union), reaching a very limited number of states and non-state actors.
Inspired by Max Weber’s ideas on traditional societies, Singer (2004) states that if the group before which one must justify their behavior is the tribe or the nation, their morality tends to be tribal or nationalist. If, however, the revolution on communications has created a global audience, one feels the need to justify their behavior to the whole world. Such a change arguably creates the material basis for a new ethic that reaches all the inhabitants of the planet. It then follows that only those individuals well adapted to the new dimension of global political decisions will be able to think beyond the limits of the neighborhood, city or country. Thriving in this ‘brave new world’ might require the virtue of thinking "the political" beyond the territorial boundaries of the state.

When it comes to democratizing international affairs, Habermas (1998) affirms that a political community must, if it sees itself as democratic, be able to distinguish those who are its members and those who are not. The self-referential concept of "collective self" points out the logical space occupied by citizens gathered as members of a political community (vis-à-vis other political communities, grouped under other states). This particular political community sets itself democratic in that it displays capacity to developing its own standard of conduct to promote interactions with other political communities around the world. The solidarity forged by the population within a state is established in a particular collective identity, anchored in historical references and moral persons. This is what shapes the nation and determines its potential for self-government.

A similar argument is put forth by Howse (2001), according to whom it is still dubious the suitability of the use of the term "we" to refer to issues relevant to the realm of the modern system of states. The author elucidates his point, "as there is no transnational 'demos', transnational civil society will continue to derive its legitimacy from its capacity to represent the interests, values and stakeholders who have a domestic base" (Howse, 2001, p. 362).

Strictly speaking, the two approaches - the traditional and the cosmopolitan - interest me greatly, both for their analytical virtues and vices. I do not intend to propose a reflection on the theme of the democratization of global governance that is necessarily linked to the "container of the nation state" (Marks, 2001), nor should I be guided by the idea of "global governance against the state" (Hermet, 2001). I look forward not to pursuing the well-marked extremes of this debate, but instead to advancing an alternative approach to understanding the problem. The emphasis of this research project will be put on the alleged "polyarchization" that is taking place inside four highly institutionalized spaces of the modern system of states - namely, UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank. Perhaps it is reasonable to claim that between the traditional and the cosmopolitan approach, this research project tends to favor the former, but will not discard the potentials of the so-called "transnational democracy".

Thomas Zweifel (2006) recently promoted a pioneering exercise of comparing the levels of "democracy" of formal international institutions. To measure the degree of "transnational democracy" of each one, the author systematically resorted to the measurement of seven indicators, which are: appointment, political participation, transparency, availability of public arguments (reason-giving), institution’s ability to prevail over its members (overrule), monitoring, and independence. The results proved disappointing: out of the eleven entities evaluated, only two (the European Union and the International Criminal Court) sported
positive levels of "transnational democracy". All the other - the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank among them - were considered to perform deficiently.

The confrontation between UN and WTO figures is quite telling. The United Nations, taken from its Security Council, is to be acquitted solely on criteria of transparency and the ability of offer public arguments. In the universe of cases studied, it has outperformed only the defunct Organisation of African Unity. The World Trade Organization - in spite of its difficulties concerning monitoring of the members, transparency and inclusiveness - got good grades in the categories of appointment (the institution's director-general is appointed by consensus among member states), reason-giving and independence, and an honorable mention is deserved on the ability to prevail over members (overrule). It places fourth in the rankings, behind the European Union, the International Criminal Court and the World Bank.

IMF and World Bank achieve different classifications in this ranking. Procedures adopted by the World Bank seem to be slightly more amenable to processes of democratization than the Fund. Overall, IMF and World Bank are neutral or deficient in relation to most indicators. Both graded "-1" in "precedence over the members" (overrule), which leads to the conclusion that, when states take positions, bureaucracies of the two banks can do little to resist.

Negatively speaking, it draws our attention the absence of a mechanism for balancing Zweifel's criteria of "transnational democracy" (Zweifel, 2006). There was no hierarchy between the indicators in the calculation of the indices. They simply assumed values, in a somewhat impressionistic manner, in the range between "-1" (no democracy at all), "0" (mitigated or dysfunctional democracy) and "+1" (presence of democracy). We believe, however, that those indicators may result artificial and distort the findings, since there are certain elements for the functioning of a democracy that are more fundamental than others. In addition, it can be argued in defense of the United Nations that, by privileging the Security Council (UNSC) over the General Assembly (UNGA), the author dismissed all the political potential of the General Assembly, resorting to the proverbial technique of "throwing out the baby with the bath water"...

Even more important than the rankings proposed by Zweifel (2006) are, in fact, the reflections they give rise to. Let us first mention the institutional design of democracy the author evokes to proceed with his study. It is not precisely a transnational 'ontology' what he offers, since the parameters resemble those of domestic democracy as we know it. Secondly, it seems inappropriate to expect that international courts and international organizations can play democratizing 'roles' in the manner of modern states, in the absence of a global polity or a global demos. The biggest problem of the work, however, does not lie in its "methodological statism", but in the comparison that Zweifel wants to promote among objects as diverse as a court of justice, two multilateral banks, two global and six regional international organizations (with levels of institutionalization and ambitions rather discrepant; see the extreme cases of the European Union and NAFTA). The broad comparativist enterprise, though laudable per se, cannot fully achieve its heuristic goals.

I should insist on the need to evaluate, through the prism of international politics 'polyarchization', four international organizations (UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank), founded after World War II and representing two of the most important international regimes of
today's world (peace maintenance and liberalization of the international economy). The focus on the four institutions (and the two international regimes) will allow us to understand how sovereign states formulate and reformulate institutional paths for a more plural and open global governance, in conditions of "structural anarchy".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research consists of a comparative analysis of intergovernmental platforms for management of international politics. It is worth remembering here my main hypothesis: that there is a process polyarchization of international politics in progress, which takes place inside international organizations such as the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank. Such a process requires the inclusion of more and new actors (state and nonstate) in decision-making procedures that manifest within these international bureaucracies, regarding the international regimes of (a) peace maintenance and international security, and (b) liberalization of the international economy. However, the two agendas above mentioned obey different logics and paces, what stems from the various coalitions, and correlation of forces that are formed in the context of such instruments of governance of the modern system of states.

Anchored in qualitative methodology, this research combines different research techniques, such as: literature review, interviews and historico-institutional analysis. The following specifications have to be made:

• The analysis of the existing literature is central both to allow a previous mapping of the object of study as to the improvement of the analytical model to be used that combines democratic theory, international relations theory and sociology of organizations.

• Documents produced under the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank (laws, resolutions, statements, organization charts, flowcharts, etc.) are illustrative for the design/orientation of the routines of political debate and decision making within these organizations.

• Interviews with bureaucrats, diplomats, politicians, government and academic experts as well as negotiators and representatives of interest groups and transnational civil society actors acting within IOs. They will be conducted with the support of a previously structured questionnaire conceived to shed light on intra-organizational political dynamics that go beyond the formal-institutional dimension.

• The historico-institutional analysis implies a systematic collection and cataloging of the processes of creation and institutionalization of mechanisms for debate and decision-making procedures. It helps to assess the relevance of the institutional design in the move towards the polyarchization of international politics.

We also believe the use of a comparative approach in dealing with the problem will allow us to better classify phenomena directly associated with or related to the democratization of global governance, as well as testing hypotheses and making predictions about the influence of contemporary international events. On the other hand, one must remain alertful to risks that, although obvious, should be controlled, such as that of non-representativeness of the cases
studied and the extreme differentiation between them (which would preclude any significant rapprochement between the cases). As argued by Rod Hague and Martin Harrop (2004), it is important first to make sure that there is some degree of "functional equivalence" between those compared objects - what, in the case of international bureaucracies like the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank, sounds a reasonable assumption.

Among the main techniques of comparison available to the analyst, we will use the method dubbed "focal comparison", ie the qualitative comparison that focuses on a few cases that are typically representative of broader categories. The emphasis of this method lies in both case studies (idiography) and on the comparison itself (nomology). Case selection is focused in such a way that makes it possible to introduce variation (in a controlled way) to the dependent variables, in what it avoids an inherent limitation of individual case studies (Hague and Harrop, 2004).

TOWARDS AN INDEX OF POLYARCHIC GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

For the purpose of operationalizing and testing the main hypothesis of this work, we will seek to develop an "index of polyarchization" applicable to those international organizations under analysis (UN-GA, UN-SC, GATT/WTO, IMF and World Bank-IBRD), whose components as will the following variables: 1) access of states and nonstate actors to the international organization (membership criteria), 2) total number of formal members and accredited non-state actors by the international organization, 3) right to formulate and voice preferences in public, 4) voting rights, 5) parity of votes, 6) adoption of 'simple majority' rule for substantive issues, 7) possibility of contesting the ruling coalition without formal retaliation, 8) possibility of an "under-resourced" coalition of actors prevail over the more powerful, 9) effective dispersion of the voting pattern, 10) incorporation of non-state actors to deliberative processes of the organization; 11) incorporation of non-state actors to decision-making processes of the organization. The time range for the analysis covers the period from 1945 (t = 0) to 2010 (t = 1).

The elaboration of the index will take into account the two dimensions (or axes) of Robert Dahl's "polyarchic democracy" (Dahl, 2005), namely, participation (Z1) and opposition (Z2). The first six variables listed above seek to reflect the dimension of inclusiveness (with formal equality) of the actors in institutional arrangements, while the latter five will refer to the possibility of political contestation within global intergovernmental bodies. The index aims to give two-dimensional account of what the author has treated in his original writings, as the appearance of a wider process of political liberalization (the domestic one, not the international).

Figure 2: Operationalization of variables (index of polyarchic global governance)
It seems important to note that one should not rule out the alternative hypothesis – a perfectly plausible one - that the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank will constitute, in fact, not polyarchies, but competitive oligarchies or inclusive hegemonies, to refer again to the terms originally employed by Robert Dahl (see Figure 1).

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