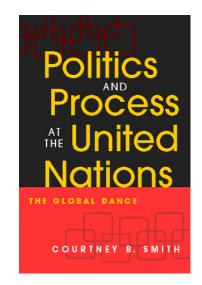
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Politics and Process at the United Nations: The Global Dance

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Introduction to the Global Dance

IN MARCH 2003 AN INTENSE PERIOD OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AT THE United Nations collapsed when the United States failed to secure Security Council authorization for its military action against Iraq. The tension and hostility that characterized these difficult negotiations resulted in a divided and paralyzed Council. However, just two months later Council unity was restored when the United States was able to lobby the other member states to endorse a US-authored plan for rebuilding Iraq. This series of events raises important questions: Why was the most powerful UN member, the United States, unable to obtain Council support on an issue in which the Bush administration clearly felt the vital interests of the country were at stake? Conversely, why was the United States able to achieve a postwar resolution very favorable to its interests in the face of what had been such a hostile environment at the United Nations? Finally, why were both permanent and elected members of the Council unwilling to compromise in March but prepared to do so in May?

Complicated questions about the political processes of the United Nations are not limited to peace and security issues. Economic interdependence, technological change, faster travel, and other aspects of globalization have resulted in increased activity in all areas of global policymaking in the early twenty-first century. On issues as diverse as global warming, terrorism, drug trafficking, infectious diseases, weapons of mass destruction, and political oppression, the international community has come together in search of coordinated responses to address these complex and challenging problems more effectively. As the world's only universal membership and general purpose international organization, the United Nations has become the primary vehicle for pursuing these efforts.

As can be expected, the results of these efforts have been mixed. In some cases the countries involved have agreed to and followed through on concrete steps to overcome the problems; in other cases dramatic policy statements were drafted, only to be neglected once the spotlight of attention was removed; and in still other cases the participants were unable to come to any meaningful agreement at all. This variation in outcomes can be found across the different political bodies of the United Nations system and in the series of global conferences that have been held under UN auspices since the early 1990s.

Understanding how and why this variation occurs requires a deeper examination of how the United Nations makes its decisions. More precisely, it involves considering how an organization that is composed of 191 sovereign member states, influenced by numerous nongovernmental organizations, lobbied by multinational corporations, and serviced by an international secretariat works to reconcile these potentially diverse interests in search of effective international solutions to pressing global problems. This is a challenging enterprise, and it represents the focus of this book.

■ The Nature of Parliamentary Diplomacy: An Analogy

Diplomatic interaction in international organizations like the United Nations is complex and multifaceted. Due to the wide range of participants involved and the numerous issues potentially on the table, a number of interrelated processes often unfold simultaneously. One of these processes reflects the need for participants in international decisionmaking to pursue the interests of the actor they represent. This is most pressing for representatives of member states, and here the mechanisms of multilateral diplomacy have a number of important similarities to traditional bilateral diplomacy. Representing the interests of your state (or for that matter any other actor in international organizations) certainly involves trying to persuade other participants of the merits of your position when there are areas of disagreement. However, it also involves listening to their arguments, gathering information about the roots of their positions, and laying the groundwork for future interaction (Muldoon, 1999, pp. 2–3). Beyond these various tasks, diplomatic representation can also require some internal coordination within the actors involved (Jacobson, 1979, pp. 120-122). Member states, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and even members of the Secretariat face diverse constituencies whose preferences must be reconciled, or at least considered, when it comes time to advocate for certain policies in a diplomatic negotiation. Since international organizations often require participants to adopt positions on a broader range of issues than is typical in bilateral diplomacy, these problems of representation and coordination are made all the more challenging.

Despite some similarities to bilateral diplomacy, the political processes found in international organizations are significantly more complex because the decisionmaking involved is both multilateral and parliamentary. The fact that decisionmaking is multilateral, with anywhere from a handful to several hundred actors involved, quite simply results in a much larger range of interests that must be reconciled. This, in turn, means there are at least three differences in the skills required of diplomats in multilateral versus bilateral settings (Muldoon, 1999, p. 3; Hamilton and Langhorne, 1995, pp. 199–209). First, skills such as adaptability, flexibility, and the ability to multitask are helpful in bilateral settings, but they are essential in multilateral settings. Second, since multilateral diplomacy often includes a more public and open component and involves more frequent oral, face-to-face exchanges, participants must possess excellent public speaking, debating, and language skills. Finally, multilateral diplomacy places a premium on individuals who can balance two contradictory roles: the specialist and the generalist. Over time the need for specialized expertise in diplomacy has grown dramatically, as many issues that are highly technical have moved onto the international agenda. However, these highly technical issues are often interrelated with each other, so effective negotiators need to be able to visualize and build solutions that take advantage of these linkages.

In addition to their multilateral character, the political processes of international organizations have been described by Dean Rusk and others as examples of "parliamentary diplomacy" (as quoted in Appathurai, 1985, p. 98). In such bodies the component parts, the member states, are sovereign actors that rarely afford the organization the level of authority called for in the treaty documents that led to its creation. However, despite their limited authority, many international organizations structure decisionmaking with procedures that are more akin to those of domestic parliaments than those of bilateral diplomacy. For example, many international organizations can make their decisions through voting, often some form of majority rule. In addition, the parliamentary nature of these bodies extends into every aspect of how they operate, including processes for recognizing speakers, mechanisms for organizing debate, and the role of committees in decisionmaking. This complexity makes their political processes more challenging for participants and observers to fully understand.

Given the use of parliamentary rules and procedures in multilateral

diplomacy, the process of achieving policy outcomes essentially becomes an exercise in building and managing the coalitions required to secure the necessary number of votes. In some international organizations these coalitions remain relatively stable; however, it is also common for these coalitions to be rebuilt again and again over time, depending on the particular issue or issues under discussion and the number of votes required to pass any new policy agreement. In light of this reality, observers of multilateral diplomacy often describe it as an "art" whose "principal challenge . . . is to design the negotiations in such a way that they encourage the creation of coalitions supporting the agreement and minimize the possibility of coalitions opposing it" (Aviel, 1999, pp. 12–13). In these efforts, hard-and-fast rules, like those associated with scientific processes, are often difficult for both participants and observers to discern. However, there are certain common patterns and rules of thumb that can and should be identified so that scholars, students, and practitioners can better understand how the strategies and tactics that work in one situation can be applied most effectively in other situations.

Participants in international organization decisionmaking face a distinctive challenge, as compared to their bilateral colleagues, because of their need to build and maintain coalitions across a wide range of issues. Not only do they have to be an effective representative of their actor's interests, but they must also learn how to successfully participate in the give-and-take of the organization's political processes (Jacobson, 1979, pp. 122–124). This certainly requires that they have a thorough grasp of the procedures and rules of debate (Hamilton and Langhorne, 1995, p. 199), but it also necessitates an expertise in designing creative "package deals" that offer all participants greater benefits from supporting the agreement than they would enjoy from blocking it. Unfortunately, the strategies that enable participants to pursue their interests are not always the same strategies for facilitating the compromises necessary for building winning coalitions. As a result, all actors involved in international organizations are forced to make tradeoffs, often difficult ones, between the policies that they really want to see adopted and those that realistically can be adopted.

In light of such complexity, it is useful to consider an analogy: the political processes of international organizations like the United Nations can be conceptualized as a global dance. At any particular UN gathering, there are member-state delegates, Secretariat officials, and NGO representatives, each of whom may begin in his or her own little group or clique. Some of the members of the dance troupe naturally assume a role at the center of the dance floor; these lead dancers would

include the most powerful member states of the organization and those members who are most directly affected by the issue at hand. Gathered around these lead dancers would be a variety of supporting players: middle power states that serve as brokers, bringing together different key attendees to see if they can dance in the same routine; members of the organization's staff, who serve as the orchestra, offering music and language that have fostered common movements in the past; representatives of civil society, who seek to get the lead dancers and other players to consider new moves and music that has not been used before; and otherwise marginalized members, who lurk as outcasts around the perimeter, able to influence the unfolding dance only by attempting to block or disrupt it.

As the music starts playing and the negotiation process begins, the various members of the troupe must move to form partnerships or be forced to watch from the sideline. What may begin as a dance in which each participant seems to have his or her own moves can gradually evolve into a more scripted routine in which all the dancers start to move in the same direction. However, getting to that point involves understanding both the written and unwritten rules of the dance, knowing which other attendees represent potential dance partners, and pos-



Members of the Security Council gather for a meeting on Iraq on June 8, 2004. These informal contacts among delegates are an essential component of the global dance throughout the decisionmaking process. (UN photo #NICA 7574, by Mark Garten)

sessing the ability to feel the rhythm of the music so that you can tell in what direction the process is moving. As this happens, different members of the troupe have different abilities to shape the unfolding dance. Some can simply rely on their stature and reputation to induce other dancers to follow their lead; others possess the creativity to offer new moves or scarce resources like a particular piece of music. Sometimes the dance may end with an empty dance floor, a frustrated orchestra, and no noticeable progress on the issue at hand. Yet the hope is that the number of participants willing to dance together, and to the same music, will increase over time, so that effective solutions to pressing global problems can be found.

Understanding UN Processes: Where Do We Start?

Scholarly study of international organizations dates back almost as far as the organizations themselves. The creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations was accompanied by a flurry of writings on the origins, structures, and early activities of these new organizations. The best-known of these efforts, such as Inis Claude (1984, first published in 1956), offered a wealth of information about the challenges and opportunities facing international organizations in a world of sovereign states. Unfortunately, reviews of these early writings are mixed. These authors offered important insights into how these organizations interacted with the international political system in which they operated (Martin and Simmons, 2001, p. 440), but such insights were often buried in rich historical detail or thick legal description. These writings tended to focus on what the organizations were rather than on how they functioned.

Over time, a number of scholars have tried to provide the study of international organization with a stronger theoretical footing. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, authors such as David Mitrany (1943) and Ernst Haas (1958) offered theories like functionalism and neofunctionalism, respectively, which focused on how international organizations could be vehicles for solving problems of war and peace. Functionalists saw international organizations as an ad hoc product of technical cooperation between states, designed to promote common economic and social needs. Neofunctionalists adopted a functionalist strategy of cooperation spilling over from one issue area to the next, but with a much more explicit and ambitious goal in mind: regional integration in Europe. Later, in the 1970s, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr. (1971; 1977) shifted the focus to transnational relations and complex interdependence, in an effort to push scholars beyond the

state-centered and conflict-based realist paradigm; key issues included nonmilitary interaction between states and the increasing presence of nonstate actors (including international organizations) in world politics. While all these theories acknowledged an important, or even central, role for international organizations, they suffered from a number of weaknesses (Archer, 1992, pp. 88–106); for example, they neglected to examine the formal and informal structures and procedures that characterize the decisionmaking processes within these actors.

Across the 1980s and early 1990s, theorizing about international organizations was dominated by regime analysis. In this approach, regimes were defined as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor's expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (Krasner, 1983, p. 2). While not synonymous with international organizations, regime analysis highlighted a number of important dynamics that were instrumental for understanding why states cooperate in international politics and what form that cooperation might take from one issue to the next. As such, international organizations like the United Nations could act as central players in regimes relevant to the different issue areas on their agendas. However, over time regime analysis seemed to lose sight of this early promise, and most dominant approaches to the study of regimes became state centered (Haggard and Simmons, 1987, p. 499). In the 1980s, regime analysis essentially hijacked the study of international organizations, then, without making any contributions to an understanding of how these formal international structures operate.

When the cold war ended in the late 1980s, the United Nations was rather suddenly thrust back into the spotlight of global politics as never before in its tumultuous history. The breakdown in superpower rivalry resulted in a dramatic increase in demands for multilateral management of a growing range of transnational problems, and much of this demand was directed at the institutions of the UN system (Fischer and Galtung, 1991, p. 289). Unfortunately, this increased demand for UN activity came at a time when scholars were only just beginning to move beyond the confines of regime analysis. As reflected in a comprehensive survey by Friedrich Kratochwil and John Ruggie (1986, p. 761), very few articles published in the leading scholarly journal on international organizations across the 1980s actually focused on formal international organizations like the UN. However, soon after this survey, the study of international organization was reinvigorated to some extent by authors who incorporated concepts originally developed in other academic disciplines. For example, Christer Jönsson (1986), Gayl Ness and Steven Brechin (1988), and Ernst Haas (1990) borrowed ideas from organizational sociology to study, respectively, how international organizations work collaboratively across linked policy areas, pursue their goals, and incorporate new areas of knowledge through learning.

Three additional areas of literature potentially relevant to the study of international organizations were developed across the 1990s. The first of these is the study of multilateralism, which focuses on the broad universe of international institutional forms that bring multiple parties together in particular areas of concern. However, the main volume on multilateralism argues that formal international organizations represent only a small part of this broader universe (Ruggie, 1993, pp. 6–7), and as a result international organizations have received limited attention in this research. A second area would be writings on global governance, which explore areas of international activity where relationships that transcend national frontiers are governed without the presence of sovereign authority. In other words, global governance is doing internationally what governments do at home (Finkelstein, 1995). Unfortunately, global governance is typically defined so broadly that the concept appears to include virtually everything, thereby preventing it from offering analytical leverage for examining the internal processes of international organizations. A third area of recent scholarship would be the literature on institutionalism, which borrows extensively from research done on domestic institutional structures. This scholarship examines how institutions can both be caused by state behavior and influence that very same behavior (Martin and Simmons, 2001, p. 451). This is true because formal and informal institutions have the ability to constrain choices, alter preferences, and influence outcomes. However, this focus on the impact of institutions on policy outcomes offers little insight into how the internal political processes of the institutions function.

Despite such efforts to make the study of international organizations more systematic and theoretically grounded, much of this research remains centered on the nature of the decisions made by the actors and on the subsequent effects of the decisions, but little attention is paid to the decisionmaking process itself. This focus is to be expected, since the resolutions and programs of international organizations are often seen as being the goal or culmination of global policymaking. However, even during the UN's adolescence in the 1960s, scholars had begun to realize that these outputs are "hardly ever the most important or meaningful point" of UN decisionmaking (Petersen, 1968, p. 128). As Keith Petersen argued, the dynamics of parliamentary diplomacy are of greater consequence for understanding the UN and its achievements than are the results of specific policymaking victories (1968, p. 131).

Put another way, we need to understand the forces and influences that can move the organization to act if we want to fully understand what it does and why it matters. The study of UN politics provided in this book will demonstrate that Petersen's observations on the importance of process are as relevant today as they were decades ago. After all, if the political process does not move, then no outputs can result.

Given the importance of considering process when one is trying to understand international organizations, it is unfortunate that so much scholarship on these actors has focused on the outputs of global policymaking rather than investigating its underlying dynamics of how and why certain decisions emerge from these efforts. This apparent neglect of process is all the more surprising given the fact that for some four decades scholars have regularly identified a pressing need for systematic studies of decisionmaking in international organizations. Writing in the late 1960s, Robert Keohane (1967, pp. 221–222), David Kay (1969, p. 958), and Chadwick Alger (1970, p. 444) all argued that scholars had neglected the political processes that are central to the functioning of the United Nations. A similar conclusion was reached by J. Martin Rochester (1986, p. 812) and Kratochwil and Ruggie (1986, p. 754) nearly two decades later, when they called for an increased focus on the structure and processes of formal international organizations. Finally, this appeal was repeated after the end of the cold war, when Johan Kaufmann (1994, p. 28), Rochester (1995, p. 199), Kenneth Abbott and Duncan Snidal (1998, pp. 5, 29), Courtney Smith (1999, pp. 173-174), and Alger (2002, p. 218) noted the continued scarcity of scholarship on decisionmaking in international organizations.

While the absence of a theoretical framework for examining the political processes of international organizations represents a serious shortcoming of the literature surveyed above, there are at least three areas of past scholarship that are directly relevant to this effort to investigate United Nations decisionmaking. None of these areas of scholarship led to much accumulation of knowledge over time, since they failed to build a common framework for situating their individual findings. However, despite this shortcoming, their research has important insights to offer this current effort to examine the political processes of the United Nations. A few examples of the many writings in each area will be mentioned here, and their true contributions will become more evident in the chapters that follow.

The first set of relevant research is empirical studies that have addressed certain aspects of the internal workings of the United Nations. While these studies were largely completed decades ago and none of them focused specifically on decisionmaking, they did address

related issues such as influence and participation. For example, Alger (1966; 1967) examined how member state delegates to the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee of the UN General Assembly interacted as they sought to reach agreement on funding peacekeeping and other issues. He discovered that essentially two processes were happening at the same time in the meetings: a public debate heard by all in the room and numerous private conversations that helped form the building blocks of the subsequent agreements. Another example concerns studies of influence in international organizations by Keohane (1967) and Robert Cox and Harold Jacobson (1973). In both cases, the authors sought to identify factors and mechanisms that enabled certain states to get their way in the UN body being studied. They found that state power was certainly related to influence but that other factors were also important, such as the personality of individual delegates and the use of procedures to manipulate the debate.

A second area of research that offers important insights into how international organizations operate is studies written by experienced UN practitioners. Some of these individuals are former UN staff members, such as C. V. Narasimhan (1988), who served in many senior secretariat positions, including under-secretary-general for special political affairs and chef de cabinet of the secretary-general. Other practitioner writers are former delegates who were posted to the United Nations in New York, Geneva, or both by their governments for many years. One rather prolific example is Kaufmann (1980; 1988), who has written on UN decisionmaking and conference diplomacy more broadly, based on his experiences serving as permanent representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations. The insights and stories offered by these former practitioners are especially illuminating, since they actually participated in the public and private processes observed by Alger (noted in the preceding paragraph).

A third and final type of research that offers a window into the political processes of the UN is detailed studies that focus on one particular institution, usually either the General Assembly or the Security Council. Sydney Bailey (1960) and M. J. Peterson (1986) both address the General Assembly's role in world politics as well as its structures and procedures. The Security Council has received comparatively more attention in this regard, including a number of edited volumes such as Nicol (1981) and Russett (1997). These studies mix a focus on the performance of the Council with a discussion of the mechanisms, both formal and informal, through which it reaches its decisions.

The previous three areas of literature have much to offer; however, they have an additional limitation for the illumination of UN processes beyond their lack of a common framework. Many of them were completed decades ago, when the UN was a very different place than it is today. While some of their insights are just as timely now as when they were first offered, the formal and informal processes used by the UN have evolved over time. Some of this change relates to the end of the cold war, but much of it reflects a longer evolution across the entire life of the organization. For example, studies of UN voting patterns completed in the 1970s found that the nature of group and coalition politics in the General Assembly had changed as its membership increased (Rowe, 1969; 1971; Newcombe, Ross, and Newcombe, 1970). Furthermore, building on this earlier research, studies completed in the 1990s found that many of these blocs were undergoing some degree of realignment and were no longer as unified or cohesive as they once had been (Holloway, 1990). Simultaneous with this change in membership has been a gradual shift from majority voting toward the use of consensus-based procedures in the General Assembly and other UN bodies (Marin-Bosch, 1987; Kaufmann, 1994, pp. 27-28). Given that these procedures structure all subsequent interaction and help to specify how much influence each member will have over the content of the decision, their impact on UN political processes can be significant (Cox and Jacobson, 1973, p. 7).

As a result of these changes, existing scholarship on the political processes of the United Nations and other international organizations needs to be revisited. The goal of this book is to synthesize the insights offered by classic writings on international organizations, such as those surveyed above, into a more systematic framework for understanding how the UN actually works. This synthesis will also draw on more recent examinations, where available, of the actors involved in UN processes and the procedures through which they interact.

However, merely synthesizing existing research would still leave significant gaps in our understanding of UN decisionmaking. These gaps are partly the result of the internal and external changes just discussed, but their roots also lie in the fact that much of the most difficult coalition building in the UN happens out of the spotlight, in private and informal settings. Unfortunately, as the preceding literature review indicates, these are the areas of UN politics most likely to be overlooked in existing scholarship. One mechanism for overcoming this neglect is to draw on the insights of current UN practitioners, both members of the Secretariat and representatives of member states and other actors that play a role in the organization's decisionmaking. When these insights are incorporated into a systematic framework, they can make a significant contribution to our understanding of parliamentary diplomacy,

highlighting important processes that would otherwise be ignored and providing real-world examples of the dynamics at play. For this reason, interviews with twenty-five UN practitioners are used to inform the discussion that follows. They are cited in the text and listed with the other references at the end of the book.

Understanding UN Processes: The Plan of the Book

The remaining chapters of this book develop a framework for understanding the political dynamics of the United Nations and, at least to some extent, other international organizations. Based on the complex nature of parliamentary diplomacy described above, any effort to divide the many different processes involved into separate chapters necessitates some tradeoffs. The discussion that follows is divided into two rather straightforward parts: a consideration of the actors involved in UN decisionmaking, followed by an investigation of the formal and informal procedures and processes through which these actors can wield influence at the UN. Some mechanisms, such as the role of UN groups and the importance of political leadership, are discussed at key junctures in both parts, since they involve both actors and processes depending on the particular manner in which they are being used.

Part 1, "Members of the Troupe: Actors at the United Nations," discusses the various actors involved in UN processes. Previous international organization scholarship has identified nine distinct participants in UN decisions: representatives of member states, representatives of groups of states functioning as a bloc, representatives of other international organizations, the executive head of the organization, members of the organization's staff, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, private individuals working in their own capacity, representatives of multinational corporations, and the media. The influence of any of these actors on UN decisionmaking certainly varies across issues and over time. Part 1 is divided into four chapters dealing with the following most active UN actors: member states and their delegates, groups of states operating in concert, the organization's staff and its head, and representatives of civil society and the private sector.

Based on their power of vote and their payment of dues, member states represent the most important actors in UN processes, and they are the focus of Chapter 2, "Member States and Delegates." This chapter discusses how member states organize their UN missions to best pursue their interests in light of the power resources they possess within and outside the organization. Differences among these power resources and variations in their international reputations encourage large, middle, and

small powers to assume different roles in UN deliberations. Chapter 2 also examines the role of individual state delegates as they seek to balance the often contradictory pressures of representing the interests of their country and participating in the give-and-take of multilateral diplomacy. Key issues in managing this balance are their individual autonomy, or freedom to act, in relationship to their home government and the personal attributes and particular skills that they can bring to bear in the negotiation process.

Chapter 3, "Groups and Blocs," investigates how various collections of UN members function in concert on different issues. Many writings have highlighted the importance of these actors, but they are often treated in an overly simplistic manner, which makes it easy to distort the true implications of this phenomenon for UN decisionmaking. This book differentiates among three dimensions of group politics, each of which has important but distinct influences on the political process. The first dimension is the five geographically based regional groups (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe and Other States) that are used for elections to all limited-membership bodies and the selection of candidates for all leadership positions. The second dimension is groups based on common issue positions, ranging in size from the five Nordic countries to the 130-plus members of the Group of 77. This dimension also includes the various regional international organizations, such as the European Union and the Caribbean Community, which often try to speak with one voice in UN debates. The third dimension of group politics in the UN is small negotiating groups used to resolve critical issues that have reached an impasse within larger membership bodies. However, in practice this last type of group politics blurs the line between groups as an actor and groups as a process, so these groups receive attention in Part 2 of the book as well.

Chapter 4, "The Secretariat and the Secretary-General," looks at the role of the UN's staff and its executive head. These individuals constitute the international civil service and are, at least in theory, independent of national influence and loyal to the UN. However, this impartiality does not mean they are without influence in the political processes of the organization. Chapter 4 examines the mechanisms through which the Secretariat has a direct and indirect impact on the decisions that are made, and it also considers various obstacles complicating the Secretariat's work. Additionally, the chapter includes a separate discussion of the political dimensions of the office of secretary-general. Effective incumbents in this difficult job have managed to use their individual style and personal attributes to move the organization in new

and exciting directions; however, this can be a daunting task, given the often contradictory pressures they face in promoting and maintaining the UN's role in international politics. In balancing these pressures, the secretary-general can at times have a significant role in UN decision-making.

As the final section in Part 1, Chapter 5 investigates "Civil Society and the Private Sector." The focus is on two additional actors in UN processes: nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (MNCs). The relationship between the UN and NGOs dates to the drafting of the UN Charter; however, the mechanisms for this interaction have expanded considerably beyond the consultative arrangements with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), specified in Article 71. These include limited access to other deliberative bodies, NGO liaison offices in nearly every UN department, expanded involvement in UN-sponsored global conferences, and extensive cooperation in the field. Despite this progress, there is still significant frustration on the part of NGOs regarding the obstacles to participation that they face: onerous security procedures, complex processes for accreditation, and a lack of direct access to the General Assembly and Security Council. The situation for MNCs is much less developed. Contact has been sporadic, on an issue-by-issue basis, with many efforts ending in mutual distrust. However, that has changed in recent years, most notably in the form of the Global Compact, which aims to foster partnerships between the UN and the business community. But even with these developments, MNCs still have only limited mechanisms, such as the creation of an affiliated NGO, through which they can have an impact on UN processes.

The second part of the book, "Movements of the Dance: Procedures and Processes," shifts attention from the actors involved in UN decisionmaking to the processes themselves. Across the four chapters of this part, both formal and informal dimensions of UN decisionmaking receive attention. First the structures of the main UN deliberative bodies are discussed, and then the formal procedures through which these bodies operate are examined. Next the book explores the private side of UN processes through which delegates and other players work to build coalitions in a personal and informal manner. The final chapter of this part brings together the key insights from Parts 1 and 2, in search of an understanding of strategies through which actors wield influence based on their attributes and the nature of the arena in which a decision is being made.

Chapter 6, "Formal Arenas: The Structures of Decisionmaking," considers the different forums in which the cast of characters interacts.

These include bodies that encompass all UN members, such as the General Assembly and its main committees, as well as bodies that are based on a more restricted membership, like the Security Council. It also distinguishes between deliberative bodies, including those just mentioned, in which politics is considered a central factor, and those more technical and specialized forums, such as the Economic and Social Council and the Specialized Agencies, where political considerations may be assumed, usually incorrectly, to be less debilitating. Finally, Chapter 6 also discusses ad hoc or temporary forums of decisionmaking, like the numerous issue-specific global conferences held under UN auspices over the last fifteen years. As can be expected, these various structures can result in political processes that are unique to each arena.

Chapter 7, "Decision Rules and Parliamentary Procedures," continues the consideration of UN policymaking arenas by examining the impact of decision rules and procedural tradeoffs on the political processes that ensue. In terms of decision rules, the major distinctions are among simple majority rule, qualified majority rule (including the veto), and consensus. Since each requires different thresholds of support for the UN to act, different dynamics are involved in building winning coalitions. These dynamics are also governed by procedural tradeoffs that must be made. Each UN forum must find an appropriate balance between the broad participation of actors (thereby increasing the legitimacy of its actions) and needs for efficiency and unambiguous statements of preferred behavior. This balance is influenced by a diverse set of procedural considerations that govern how proposals are handled, including the type of leadership provided by the presiding officer, mechanisms for managing debate, and methods through which amendments can be advanced.

After these formal aspects of UN processes are covered in Chapters 6 and 7, Chapter 8, "Informal Networking: The Personal Side," focuses on the informal processes that lie at the heart of UN decisionmaking. A number of UN practitioners have argued that 95 percent or more of decisionmaking in multilateral settings takes place in private, informal exchanges among interested parties. In fact, these informal processes are so important to effective policy outcomes that a rather established vocabulary and set of procedures have been developed regarding them. Unfortunately, this is the aspect of UN processes most likely to be entirely overlooked in the academic literature on international organizations. From "the fine art of corridor sitting" to the roles of delegate personality and ad hoc leadership, Chapter 8 seeks to provide a systematic understanding of what these informal contacts look like and how they

affect the formal decisions that are made. It also includes a more detailed examination of how these informal dynamics play an essential role in the work of one particular UN body, the Security Council.

The concluding section of Part 2, Chapter 9, focuses on "Strategies of Influence: Positional, Personal, and Procedural." It brings together many insights from the preceding chapters by investigating how different actors attempt to wield influence in the United Nations based on their interests, their power, their personal attributes, and the arena in which a decision is being made. In general, representatives of different actors can draw on three types of strategies in their effort to influence policy outcomes: strategies that depend on the positional power of the actor they represent (for example, resources or votes), strategies that rest on the personality of the individual representative (for example, charisma or negotiating skill), or strategies that involve manipulating the formal and informal procedures discussed above (for example, premature closure of debate on an issue). Each of these choices has advantages and limitations, and these must be carefully balanced: all the actors involved in the global dance are aware that today's opponent may be tomorrow's dance partner, given the wide range of issues and interests that come before the United Nations.

The concluding chapter of the book, "The United Nations and State Compliance," examines another issue that has been given only limited attention in research on UN processes: do the decisions of the United Nations really matter? Evaluating the UN is fraught with difficulty, since many of its decisions are couched in vague language, subject to interpretation. On top of this, there is serious academic debate regarding exactly what types of outcomes the UN should be realistically expected to achieve. Thus UN observers must be careful when making judgments about the apparent impact of the organization's decisions. Certain considerations can lead us toward more thoughtful arguments regarding the results of UN processes. Chapter 10 addresses the most important of these, including the distinction between implementation and compliance, the differences between binding and nonbinding decisions, the appropriate time horizon for behavioral change, and the relationship between the process by which a decision is made and its ultimate effectiveness.